

TOPSoccer: A Special Program for Kids with Special Needs

By GRACE ALLEN

It's a typical sight on a Sunday morning: a soccer field brimming with activity while parents cheer from the sidelines. For families who have kids with disabilities, that experience once might have seemed out of reach. TOPSoccer is changing all that.

The Outreach Program for Soccer, or TOPSoccer, was developed by US Youth Soccer for children and youth from ages 4 to 26 with physical and/or mental disabilities. The participants are paired with volunteers who teach them how to play soccer in a safe and fun way.

A local TOPS chapter has been operating in Norfolk since 2011, with participants from several surrounding communities. Starting in the spring, the program will move to King Philip High School in Wrentham, which is offering the field for free so there will be no cost for families.

John Rainone, the director of the TOPS program, says the



TOPS Director John Rainone and his daughter Kelsie, with TOPS athlete Jonathan Love.

move to the high school is significant because the turf field will make it easier for kids with disabilities to play, without the worry of uneven terrain.

"Our TOPS program has

some of the highest numbers in the state," explained Rainone. "We have multiple kids

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Wrentham Town Charter Amendments Proposed

SUBMITTED BY JERRY MCGOVERN

Wrentham's Town Meeting on November 13 will ask residents to vote on several proposed amendments to the Wrentham Home Rule Charter. The Charter, first enacted on January 1, 2015, codified the Town's structure, authorities, and processes to help ensure operational consistency.

The Charter requires that a special committee be established at least once every 10 years for the purpose of reviewing the charter and to make a report to the Town Meeting concerning any proposed amendments.

The Charter Review Committee (CRC) met from May – October to develop proposed amendments and receive public feedback. Based on the reviews and feedback, a draft amended charter was finalized and provided for public review on October 12.

The Substantive Proposed Amendments

The most substantive proposals are to change several elected boards and officials to appointed boards and officials. The affected boards and officials are:

- Board of Assessors
- Board of Health
- Library Board of Trustees
- Town Constables
- Town Clerk

The Election Trend

Over the last six years (2018-2023) there have been 24 races for these positions (not including Town Clerk). Twelve of the 24 races did not have a candidate and required a write-in vote to fill the office. The winning candidates averaged 20 votes (eight received less than 20 votes). This is less than half of the required number of signatures to get on the ballot.

The Impact

These are positions that have important regulatory and statutory requirements. The impact is an ever-increasing complexity and an associated need to have requisite competencies and qualifications for the positions. This is exacerbated by unchallenged elections and a reliance on write-in candidates. There is

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in wheelchairs, multiple kids on crutches and leg braces, and a couple that are legally blind. The turf field will make the program even more inclusive.”

Rainone has been involved with the Norfolk-based TOPS chapter since its start, and in 2020 became its director. He runs the program with the help of his daughter, Kelsie, who began volunteering with TOPS when she was in 6th grade.

According to Rainone, the primary goal of TOPS is to provide a fun, social outlet for special needs kids while learning to play soccer. But another, equally laudable goal, is to provide the parents of these kids with the opportunity to just sit and watch while volunteers take over.

“Parents can relax, knowing their child is safe, having fun, and involved in a sport in a way they probably didn’t think would ever be possible,” said Rainone.

Mark and Erin Botelho’s son, Leo, has multiple disabilities, including cerebral palsy, and is legally blind. Leo has participated in the TOPS program for twelve



From left, KPHS soccer players Lauren Obara, Natalie Seropian, and Halle Leblanc, with TOPS athlete Rowan Lee.



KPHS football players Tommy Kilroy and Aiden Astorino with TOPS athlete Rowan Lee.

years, beginning at the age of 3. He started out with a walker but now uses leg braces and walks independently. He enjoys playing goalie, says his mother.

“The volunteers from King Philip are amazing and kind students,” said Botelho. “We are thankful our son has found a place where he is welcome and expected only to be himself.”

Another parent, Lauren Love, says TOPS has provided her son Jonathan with the opportunity to practice the fundamentals of soccer at a level appropriate for him. Love says her son has participated in TOPS for close to ten years, and calls the experience rewarding for everyone involved in the program: players, parents, and volunteers.

“It’s provided Jonathan with a wonderful social experience, and has given us a sense of community,” said Love. “It has

allowed me to meet and share information with other parents who experience both the joys and the struggles of having a child with special needs.”

Love says that another son, Ryan, plays soccer for King Philip High School, and this year is one of the TOPS volunteers who works specifically with Jonathan.

“It’s heartwarming to witness how much they are learning from each other,” she said.

Kayla Swedits is yet another parent who speaks highly of the TOPS program. Her 7-year-old daughter Riley has a rare genetic disorder and subsequent developmental delays. An attempt to play in her town’s recreational soccer program was disheartening for Riley.

“We tried TOPS and it was a completely different feel,” said Swedits. “The volunteers meet

her where she is, skill-wise. Riley loves it and I get to sit back and watch her play with a big smile on her face.”

While anyone can volunteer with the program, the biggest group of volunteers are high school athletes, primarily from King Philip. The boys soccer team has been the backbone of the program, especially during the height of COVID, but this year all the fall sports teams have stepped up to help, says Gwen Prater, president of the King Philip Soccer Association (KPSA), which offers the local TOPS program. She expects all the spring sports teams also to volunteer when the program moves to the high school in 2024.

“The volunteers might even be getting more out of the program than the individuals playing in TOPS,” says Prater.

Kelsie Rainone, now 24, agreed that the volunteers have embraced the program, learning along the way that the participants, even the kids with severe special needs, are typical kids too, with similar likes and dislikes as the volunteers.

“When I first started volunteering, some of the TOPS kids were my age,” Kelsie said. “And they were doing the same things I was. I play soccer, they’re playing soccer. Yes, they play a bit differently but they’re still doing the same things I’m doing.”

Prater says KPSA families have made financial donations to the TOPS program, which will enable the organization to get new equipment, including specialty balls, uniforms, and medals for the end of the sea-

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Mother's Luncheon Set for November 20

Annual Gilly's House Event Helps Grieving Mothers Move Forward

BY GRACE ALLEN

Losing a child of any age is a profound and painful experience for a mother, and the grief never ends. A yearly luncheon hosted by a local non-profit attempts to acknowledge that grief and offer a way forward through the often-crippling sadness.

The 4th annual Gilly's House Mother's Luncheon will be held at noon on November 20 at Chabad Jewish Center in Milford. The luncheon will include speakers, goody bags, and raffles. The event is free, with food provided by the Chabad Jewish Center.

Barbara Gillmeister, co-founder of Gilly's House, a sober home for young men, says the luncheon is for mothers who have lost a child for any reason but are still stuck in the grieving process.

"It could be last week, it could be twenty years ago," said Gillmeister. "We want to help mothers shift their approach to grief by demonstrating that something positive can come out of tragedy."

The yearly event features speakers who discuss how they found new purpose after losing a child. At this year's luncheon, South Shore resident Robyn Houston-Bean will be one of the scheduled speakers. Her foundation, The Sun Will Rise, offers grief support groups for those who have lost a loved one to substance abuse disorder. Houston-Bean established the foundation after losing her own son to an accidental overdose in 2015.

The mother's luncheon is always held in November before the holiday season, which can



be especially painful for mothers who have lost a child, noted Gillmeister. Her hope is that grieving mothers, by attending the event, will consider how they can move forward to honor the memory of their child by giving of themselves for others. She recounts the example of a woman who lost a daughter to suicide and now bakes cakes for the men at Gilly's House.

"It doesn't have to be a big thing that helps you on your grief journey," said Gillmeister. "Something that might seem small to you could be amazing to someone else. And it gives mothers a chance to help others when they can't help their own anymore."

To register for the luncheon, or for more information, visit gillyshouse.com. The event is capped at 80 attendees, but there will be a waiting list if necessary.

Sponsors of the event include Kim Williams Real Estate (Norfolk), Charles River Bank (Medway), SK Services (Walpole), Robert Roofing & Gutters (Norfolk), AG Maggiore Construction (Hingham), and the Holly Club of Wrentham. Contact Gilly's House if your organization would like to help sponsor the event.



Rabbi Kivman of the Chabad Jewish Center addresses the mothers at last year's luncheon.

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son. KPSA also funds an ice cream truck for the last day of the session.

TOPS Director Rainone, who sits on the board of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association and serves as liaison for the state's 27 TOPS programs, hopes to grow the program in new directions. He'd like to have enough participants so they can hold real scrimmages each week. This past fall session, he invited the Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham Police resource officers and their community resource dogs to a TOPS session, enriching the experience even more for the kids. Rainone also envisions having therapists in the program, working with the volunteers to better serve the TOPS athletes, and also engaging with the parents on the sidelines.

"John is thinking big," said Prater. "With Kelsie at his side, he has successfully run this program and KPSA has done

everything we can to support them. Every week I've watched them greet each TOPS player with a huge smile, and I literally find myself wiping tears away as I watch the kids play. It's clear they've created more than a rec program. This is a community, and we want this resource to continue to grow and serve even more special needs families in the area."

Registration has opened for the spring session, which will run on Sunday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., starting on April 21, 2024 until June 2. There are no restrictions regardless of physical or mental disability. Participants from area towns are welcome, and volunteers are always needed.

Visit <https://www.kpsoccer.org> for more information and to register for the spring session. Email topsoccergold@gmail.com with any questions.

To help support the TOPS program, which will need more specialty equipment and nets, donations can be made via Venmo: @kp-soccer with TOPS in the memo line.

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significantly less scrutiny and an increased risk to effective town operations and compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements.

The Working Solution

Currently, when a mid-term vacancy for an elected position occurs (which is common), the procedure to fill the vacancy involves a joint meeting between the affected board and the Select Board. This involves interviews with interested individuals in open meeting. It has the effect of providing more rigorous scrutiny on experience and qualifications than occurs with write-in votes.

Under the proposed amendments, this appointment procedure would expand to all the above positions except for the Town Clerk. This is already the procedure for the Appeals Board, Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, and Recreation Commission. They are all highly effective and maintain the necessary inde-

pendence of action even though appointed. This appointment practice provides increased scrutiny and is beneficial to the affected board as it allows them to recruit highly qualified volunteers and provide their recommendation to the Select Board.

The Biggest Challenge

Changing the Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed is significant. This is a position steeped in history and tradition. But the job is much more demanding in 2023 than it ever was before. As an elected position, the only requirement is for the individual to be a registered town voter. No background or experience is required.

Our current Town Clerk has done an absolutely terrific job, and even more so when considering all that has changed in the last four years. But the next Town Clerk will not be entering a "clerk's" job. The position has grown such that it would more appropriately be titled "Director of Elections and Public Records." This is not an entry level position. The need to direct and manage all the changes to elec-

tion procedures (early voting, mail in voting, etc.) as well as increased provisions for properly maintaining and providing public records alone presents a risk to the Town unless properly done. This is not a job that allows a learning curve.

For full disclosure, the CRC is not unanimous on this proposal. But the majority of the CRC believe that by making the position appointed, it not only opens the field of applicants beyond Wrentham residents, more importantly it enables the town to hire someone with experience and a proven record. It is meant to safeguard our election procedures and your public records.

Summary

The proposals to change elected boards and officials are meant to be thought provoking. In discussions thus far, the primary argument against the proposals is that they reduce the opportunity for residents to vote on important positions. There is merit to this argument.

But the trends show that there are fewer people that want to run for an elected office at the same time as these positions

are becoming increasingly complex. With so many elected positions requiring write-in votes, and with the elected member so often being chosen by a number that is less than the required number of signatures to get on the ballot, this opens the Town to a risk, especially when considering the knowledge and experience needed to adhere to statutory and regulatory requirements. Quite frankly, the CRC would be extremely remiss to not offer an alternative, especially since the alternative is already in practice and proven to be effective.

Appointments for these offices are becoming increasingly common for towns in our Commonwealth. Every new or amended town charter that we have researched for the past five years has included these changes. At least 130 towns have transitioned from an elected town clerk to an appointed position, and the numbers are also in line with the other boards included in the proposals. The CRC has received strong feedback that the transitions have been highly effective and have

become widely accepted once implemented.

The proposals are intended to provide and safeguard what is best for effective, professional, and compliant town management going forward. The proposed amendments are not a reflection on past or current performance but are to address current trends and increasing complexities going forward. It is not about the last 10 years, it is about the next 10 years.

This does not sacrifice tradition or the right to vote. Our town government is based on Town Meeting as our legislative body. Nothing in these proposals changes that.

The proposed amendments will be decided by the voters at Town Meeting.

More information is at: https://www.wrentham.gov/government/boards_committees/charter_review_committee/

The CRC consists of Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator; Cindy Thompson, Town Clerk; Jim Anderson, Select Board; Mike King, Town Finance Director; and Jerry McGovern, Chairman and Citizen-at-Large.



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OPINION: Why We Oppose Wrentham CRC's Attempt to Eliminate Voting Rights

BY EDWARD GODDARD AND
MICHELLE ROUSE

In assessing the Charter Review Commission's (CRC) proposals for Town Meeting, we recall Winston Churchill's admonition that "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." The CRC suggests removing many elected positions, such as Town Clerk, Boards of Assessors and Health, and Library Trustees, into Town-appointed roles. This would eliminate residents' rights to elect these representatives, and further concentrate power within the Town Administrator/Selectmen roles. The CRC argues eliminating elections would

broaden available talent, with the Town Clerk, for instance, no longer required to be a Wrentham resident. The CRC also warns that the voters might elect a poor candidate as Town Clerk. And they cite lack of contested elections as additional support.

We have both served as Selectmen and on the Wrentham Elementary School Committee; Ed has also been Town Moderator for the past seven years. We emphasize that CRC members, who are our colleagues and friends, act in good faith. Still, their arguments lack persuasion and must be challenged. First, the CRC concedes that the Town Clerk and affected boards are all operating efficiently, even

with unprecedented changes to voting laws since the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, if no one steps forward to run for the affected positions, the Selectmen appoint the boards, essentially replicating what the CRC is proposing now. Third, we remain confident, given recent history, that a locally elected Town Clerk can handle further election law changes, which we expect will not rival Covid-era changes. Finally, we take serious issue with and challenge the notion "Government knows best" that CRC relies upon to take away voting rights to protect us from ourselves for a possible poor Town Clerk candidate choice. Yes, democracy is messy, and a lesser can-

didate could possibly be elected. So too may our unelected Town Administrator appoint an equally poorly equipped friend from outside of Wrentham, without any oversight or checks and balances from voters.

In the end, the attempt to end-run voters and concentrate power with the Town Administrator/Selectmen is a bridge too far for us, however well-intended. Including the Boards of Health and Assessors and the Library Trustees instead of a stand-alone vote on the Town Clerk position suggests this is an attempt to make lives easier for them and in the process implicitly questions the judgment of Wrentham voters. We are unwilling to support

this autocratic approach to town government.

If you believe similarly, attend Town Meeting and vote against these changes. Utilize social media, reach out to friends, and engage with your elected officials to voice your concerns about eliminating your right to vote. This is a once-in-a-decade vote in Wrentham.

We close with a recent quote from Israel Supreme Court Justice Amit: "Democracy dies in a series of small steps." Defeat the CRC's proposals at Town Meeting and reinforce that Wrentham's authority rightly derives from the votes of the residents, not Town Administration or the Board of Selectmen.

Guest Column

Death by Dogma

BY G. GREGORY TOOKER

It seems a supreme irony,
Religious faiths deemed so pure,
Spur bloody conflict, misery,
Man cannot long endure.

Dogma embeds in youthful minds,
Prisoners before age of reason,
Marching forward, thought in bind,
Question not, risk charge of treason.

Perplexing, yes, this mental slavery,
Logic says, just break the chains,
Purge choking edicts from memory,
Intelligence will produce true gain.

But who will lead the real crusade,
Bring us back from looming brink,
Expose flawed logic, halt the parade,
Before mankind forever sinks?

Around the globe the crimson creeps,
Someone must step forward soon,
Or dark hooded fate will grimly reap,
Each blindly marching elite platoon.

Author's Comment

Throughout the history of mankind, religious strife has plagued human civilization. Each faith that has evolved staunchly maintains it is the genuine explanation for all that exists in the universe and the formula for man's salvation. So far, it doesn't seem to be working. Who will step forward to resolve these disputes and stop the carnage?

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Local Deacon Pens Children's Book

BY GRACE ALLEN

Norfolk resident Ron Tibbetts is a deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. He's now a children's book author, too. His book, "The Whimsical Adventures of Marvin," is a collection of short stories about a 4-year-old rhinoceros named Marvin. The stories take place during the time of the birth of Jesus Christ and offer hope to readers of all ages.

Tibbetts, 70, has been active in the battle against substance abuse disorder and is one of the people behind the #2069 movement. For many years he was also the director of Neighborhood Action, an outreach program in Boston for poor and homeless people.

He agreed to answer some questions about his book for readers of Local Town Pages.

Did your work with marginalized people inspire this book?

Nothing about the book is accidental. Growing up in a small town like Norfolk, poverty, addiction, and homelessness were

never part of the conversation. We may not have been rich, but we were not the kind of poor you see in the cities. When I worked in Boston, I discovered there were two types of people living on the streets: some who had grown hopeless and those who remained hopeful. And the hopeful had a dream that things could get better. They believed in better. Later, when I served at Trinity Church in Wrentham and started the #2069 movement, I saw again, in suburban folks, that those who navigated their addiction with the courage and certainty that they could overcome it were those who had the ability and hope to imagine things being different.

Tell us about Marvin. Is he based on anyone?

I was serving at the All Saints Episcopal Church in Attleboro and it was Christmas time. We were getting ready to start the children's procession to fill the creche at the front of the church, populating it with the sheep and the camels and all the



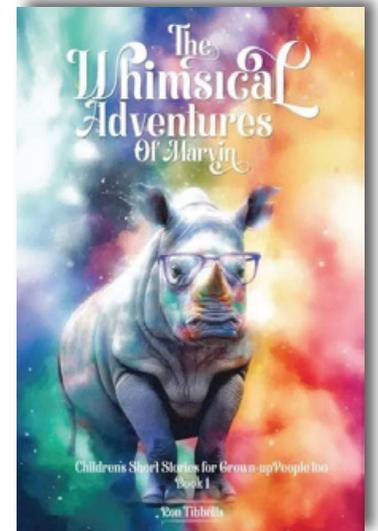
Deacon Ron Tibbetts has written his first children's book.

things that might be in a manger. I looked in this little basket and I saw a small plastic rhinoceros. I picked it up and looked at the priest, and she shrugged her shoulders and said, "Why not?" So we brought the rhinoceros to the manger and I turned around and said to the congregation, "I want to introduce you to Marvin." And that was the beginning of the story.

It seems like the target audience for the book isn't just children. What would you like readers to take away from these stories?

These are children's stories for adults too. My background

is Christian; therefore, my frame of reference is around Christian teaching. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich to get into heaven. But he doesn't say it's impossible. Jesus goes on to say that with man, these things are impossible but with God all things are possible. So I am grounded in that belief, that things we think are impossible in this world—enough food for all, housing, education—it's all possible, with hope and with God. So the real takeaway would be to never let somebody tell you something is impossible.



"The Whimsical Adventures of Marvin" is a collection of short stories offering a sense of hope for the world.

This is actually your second book.

Yes. I wrote a book in 2006 called "One Point of View," and that was a series of essays, poems, and reflections, mostly on what my work with the marginalized community had taught me.

Is there anything else you'd like readers to know?

In our life together, my wife Vicky and I have faced some real health and financial challenges, challenges that are not uncommon in this world. But it's been imagination and belief in the possibilities that have served us well and kept us together and working together, and now enjoying time with our children and our 10 grandchildren.

Where can people buy your book?

"The Whimsical Adventures of Marvin" is available at Barnes and Noble and Amazon, in hardcopy, paperback, and eBook form.

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Health and Wellness Vendor Fairs this Month

The Metacomet Public Health Alliance Nurses will be hosting the 3rd annual Health and Wellness Vendor Fair in both Norfolk and Wrentham this month. Admission is free.

Wrentham's fair will be held on Thursday, November 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wrentham Senior Center, 400 Taunton St. in Wrentham.

Norfolk's fair will be held on Tuesday, November 7 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Norfolk Senior Center, 28 Medway Branch in Norfolk.

The fairs will focus on the needs of the se-

nior citizens in both towns. Over 20 local agencies and companies will be available to discuss their services, including HESSCO, physical therapists, home care companies, medication pre-packaging companies, podiatrists, adaptive home equipment companies, assisted living facilities, and more.

Flu shots and health screenings will be offered, and the Lions' Eye Mobile will be on site.

Complimentary massages, giveaways, and numerous raffles will be available.

Southwood Hospital Redevelopment Options Discussed at Meeting

By JOE STEWART

On Tuesday, October 11, the Norfolk Planning Board held a public meeting and presentation on the Southwood Hospital redevelopment scenario analysis performed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency serving the cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. Josh Fiala, Principal Planner, summarized the analysis and results.

The Southwood Hospital site is an 88-acre parcel on route 1A near the Walpole border comprising the abandoned Southwood Hospital complex (vacant for 20 years), wetlands and open space, and polluted areas requiring substantial remediation before the site can be developed. The property is owned by GFI Partners through its subsidiary 111 Dedham Street Inc.

Last year, a community workshop and survey were conducted by Norfolk and the MAPC which concluded that Norfolk residents prefer use of the property as open space followed by restaurant, retail, clean energy production, mixed use, and senior living while the majority do not support housing (ranging from single family homes through large scale multi-family).

This year, the MAPC conducted scenario analysis to help Norfolk understand potential



redemption options. Mr. Fiala discussed how the 15 analyzed scenarios were selected, organized, and evaluated. He went on to explain the factors selected for the analysis, including three factors that determine development viability: financial feasibility, market potential, and environmental remediation.

The analysis concluded that there are five scenarios that are both viable and aligned with Norfolk's preferred uses:

- Light industrial/warehouse
- Light industrial/warehouse with residential

- Assisted living
- Major residential (more than 400 units)
- Modest residential (more than 300 units)

The analysis also uncovered that current zoning would prevent development of the site for those uses and there are uses that are simply not feasible. Among them are a solar farm, hospital, retail, office park, open space only, and single-family homes. In other words, zoning changes are required to redevelop the site.

Bill Buckley, GFI Partners' Project Manager, said that they

are embarking on additional testing at the site because extensive cleanup and remediation is required before any development can take place. The testing will involve additional borings and new groundwater monitoring wells, both of which require Norfolk Conservation Commission approval. The testing will provide additional data which will be used to assess the scope and scale of remediation. And that, in turn, will inform which scenarios are viable. He wrapped up by noting, "We all want a good product that will clean up the site."

A longtime Norfolk resident attended the meeting, Mr. Roy Hamlin, who founded Hamlin Cabinet with his wife Eileen in 1964. Mr. Hamlin noted that Norfolk needs new sources of revenue and recommended that the town prioritize tax revenue when assessing development options.

In a subsequent conversation, Richard McCarthy, Jr., Norfolk's Town Planner, said that the site has development challenges including a deed restriction that the Massachusetts legislature would need to lift, water issues as Norfolk needs to secure additional supply to support ongoing growth, and no wastewater treatment facilities. Mr. McCarthy also shared that the town is in the midst of its Master Plan review that will likely inform future development of the site.

Mr. Fiala highlighted that there are multiple "tracks" involved in redeveloping the Southwood Hospital site: future site uses and zoning are in one track while the contamination and remediation are in another track. Interested residents are encouraged to stay informed on both tracks.

The Norfolk Planning Board has organized an online folder in which presentations, reports, and related documents are available to the public: <https://bit.ly/SouthwoodHospital>.

Heather's Hungry Turkey Trot Set for Thanksgiving Day

Registration is now open for the 2023 Heather's Hungry Turkey Trot. The annual 5K will take



place on Thursday, November 23 at 8 a.m. The race will kick-off at 132 Main St. (commuter rail parking lot next to Dunkin'.)

Register online at <https://heathershungryturkeytrot.racewire.com>, or at 7 a.m. on race day. Cost is \$25. Race medal included. Awards for the top three finishers.

The race is held in memory of Heather Olivieri, who passed away in 2019 at age 41 with non-smokers lung cancer. She was a life-long Norfolk resident and King Philip graduate who loved

running. In January of 2018, Heather accomplished a long-time goal by finishing the Walt Disney World Marathon while battling cancer. The 5K Thanksgiving Day race is the route she used multiple times while training for the marathon.

Proceeds from the 5K will go towards a scholarship established in Heather's name. For more information about Heather or to donate to the scholarship, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/heatherscholarshipfund2023>.

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College-Prep: To-Do List for High School Juniors

Junior year in high school sneaks up on families quickly. Students are now at the halfway point and in less than 2 years, many students will be heading off on a new adventure - college! Junior year is a critical time to put a college prep plan in place. Creating a timeline now, versus waiting until senior year, will definitely alleviate some of the college stress, and will set your student up for a successful college admissions experience their senior year.

Robert D. McCaig, Monmouth University Vice President for Enrollment Management, sums it up perfectly when he said, "The most important thing students should do when applying to college is pace themselves and prioritize. Starting early certainly helps students with the pacing, and knowing when to put time into SAT prep versus studying for an exam versus visiting another college, for instance, is an important part of prioritizing."

@Students: Here are some helpful tips to get you moving in the right direction this fall:

1. The #1 question an admissions rep will be thinking when they are reviewing

your college application: "Did you take the most rigorous courses you could, and did you earn good grades?" GPA and course rigor, without question, are the 2 most important factors. Make your studies a top priority. Other factors like leadership activities, strong SAT scores, and athletic prowess are secondary considerations. They will help- but you still need good grades!

2. If your grades start to slide, don't wait until you are drowning. Raise the red flag immediately and meet with your teacher or tutor and ask what can be done to help. Asking for help is not a sign of failure - but of strength.
3. Visit your guidance counselor early junior year. Determine the courses you should take to put you on the right track for college admission. Course selection is important. Colleges like to see growth in a student's transcript. If you have 2 years of A's in College Prep Math - think

about taking Honor's Math the following semester or year. A good question to ask- "How much can I push myself without being shoved."

4. Plan early for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. You'll need to register 5 weeks before the exam. Many students opt to take the test more than once and a student should plan accordingly.
5. Start building your activity resume and update it throughout the year. Make a list of your extracurricular activities, accomplishments and work experience with a short description. It's never too late to begin an activity or join an organization. Colleges are looking to build a well-rounded class with students that show depth and commitment in a few activities that interest them. My advice: Do what you love and do the work (engage and create impact).
6. Begin visiting colleges as early as possible and definitely by the fall of your junior year. I recommend



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

touring local colleges first, even if you think you may want to attend college out-of-state. It will help determine the factors that are important to you in selecting a future college. A few factors to consider: rural, urban, or a suburban setting; small or large student body; public or private school.

7. Create a college list that includes affordable choices. As a family, determine early your available finances and what/if any loans will be necessary. It is important that your family is all on the same page. Research the availabil-

ity of merit or need-based aid that will support the student throughout their four college years. Excellent financial aid resource: studentaid.gov. And It is never too late to start saving - 529 plans!

8. As a family, determine early on if you need assistance from an outside source. Independent Educational Consultants (IEC) have broad experience in navigating the many aspects of the college admissions process. Some consultants offer comprehensive packages beginning sophomore and junior years as well as hourly work for specific pieces of the application process.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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Rep. Vaughn Opposes Gun Reform Bill

Legislation Will Negatively Impact Law Enforcement and Licensed Gun Owners

State Representative Marcus Vaughn (R-Wrentham) recently opposed a major gun reform bill, saying it will do nothing to reduce crime and will instead have a negative impact on lawful gun owners in the Commonwealth by infringing on their Second Amendment rights.

House Bill 4135, An Act modernizing firearm laws, was engrossed by the House of Rep-

resentatives on a vote of 120-38 on October 18. In voting against the bill, Representative Vaughn cited a number of concerns, including the process used to bring the bill to the House floor, the lack of information on how much it will cost, and the restrictions it will place on law enforcement officers that will severely compromise their ability to perform their job.

The gun bill has drawn strong opposition from the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA), whose members recently voted unanimously to oppose the bill. The Gun Owners Action League (GOAL) also opposes the bill.

According to Representative Vaughn, House Bill 4135 would establish a gun registration database, impose restrictions on ghost guns, expand the state's extreme risk protection order (ERPO) law, and increase the number of "prohibited areas" where firearms would not be allowed. Additionally, House Bill 4135 would require the Department of State Police to auction certain firearms surrendered or seized due to a suspension or revocation of a license or permit, rather than dispose of them, while also requiring State Police officers to conduct inspections of licensed gun dealers.

One of the biggest concerns cited by the MCOPA is that the

bill's "prohibited areas" provision - which was included in response to last year's Supreme Court decision in the case of *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* - contains no comprehensive carve-outs for off-duty and retired police officers. An amendment adopted during floor debate only partially addressed this issue in a very narrowly defined manner.

Retired Chief Mark K. Leahy, who currently serves as the MCOPA's Executive Director, also noted that the gun registration requirement included in House Bill 4135 "will do nothing to reduce gun violence or reduce gun deaths," and instead emphasized the need to focus on "the swift and vigilant prosecution of the criminals engaging in these felonious acts, and a renewed embracing of what 'mandatory minimum sentences' means."

Representative Vaughn noted that Massachusetts already has some of the strictest firearms

laws in the country, along with the lowest rate of deaths associated with gun violence. He said the vast majority of gun-related crimes are committed with illegal weapons and not with legally owned firearms, adding that the focus of the bill should be on punishing those who break the law rather than targeting law-abiding citizens.

Representative Vaughn criticized House leadership for doing an end-run around the joint legislative committee process by attaching the gun bill to a supplemental spending bill in the House Ways and Means Committee and reporting it "in part" with only the gun bill language included. He also criticized the lack of a fiscal note detailing the costs of the legislation, which is required under House Rules for any proposal that is expected to cost more than \$100,000 to implement.

House Bill 4135 now moves to the Senate for its consideration.



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Stop Making Sense: Massachusetts Updates Estate Tax Laws

It's taken 2 years, but Massachusetts lawmakers finally provided legislation for Governor Healey to sign on October 4th impacting the lowest (worst) U.S. estate tax threshold as part of a "\$1 billion tax relief package."

There are several positives in this package. Benefits for expanded childcare credit (over 30% of package), seniors, renters, septic systems, low-income housing, commuters, and short-term capital gains reduced from 12% to 8.5%.

Recall an estate tax may be owed based on net value of the estate of a deceased person before distribution to non-spousal heirs. To calculate net value, add all assets (real estate, investments, IRAs, small business, life insurance proceeds, personal property etc.) minus liabilities.

Key facts on MA update:

- Estate tax exemption rises to \$2 million from \$1 million, first increase since 2006.
- Provides a uniform credit of \$99,600.
- Eliminates "the cliff effect" when all assets were taxed if over threshold.



Glenn Brown, CFP

- Retroactive for estates of decedent's death on or after January 1, 2023.
- Filed 2023 estate tax returns or estimates paid are entitled to a refund.

This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody).

Before celebrating a victory for the Commonwealth by echoing legislators that this "doubles the previous threshold," understand there are only 12 states in the U.S. that still tax estates.

Yes, you can live in 38 other states and pay \$0 state estate tax regardless of your wealth.

Furthermore, the federal estate tax exemption is now \$12.92 million, over 6X greater than MA. For most, there's little concern of having a life's work of earning, planning and saving being taxed upon death by the federal government.

Same As It Ever Was, Same As It Ever Was...

The new \$2M threshold moves MA from tied for 49th worst to 48th of U.S. states.

Consider actions of other states since 2018 per taxfoundation.org.

New Jersey and Delaware eliminated their estate tax.

Vermont raised to \$5M, Maine \$6.4M, New York \$6.58M and Connecticut now aligns to federal government's \$12.92M.

Additionally, Illinois (\$4M) and Oregon (\$1M) legislators have proposals to increase to the federal government's \$12.92M or higher.

Take Me To The River (or another state)?

How quickly can one's estate exceed \$2 million in MA?

Consider the median single-family home sale price in Middlesex County is \$845,000. Add savings, 401(k), 403(b), any insurance proceeds, value of a small business, maybe a generations Maine lake house... it can add up.

Connect with an estate planning attorney. New laws and life events are opportune times to connect as well as provide an updated net worth and review your process. Remember, revocable living trusts bypass probate, not estate tax laws.

Know your net worth. Run updated estate tax estimates after \$99,600 credit applied. MA is still a graduated tax rate starting 0.8% up to 16%. For example, \$3M is now ~\$82,400 in MA estate taxes, \$5M is ~\$292,000 taxes, and \$10M is ~\$968,000 taxes.

Plan to be agile in retirement. Connection to seasons, family and friends can be strong. However, proper planning can create alternatives for residency in 38 states to no longer deal with state

estate tax or 5% MA state income tax (make that 9% if earning over \$1M).

At \$10M net value, does one put \$1M towards a new or 2nd home in another state, declare residency so heirs receive this value? Or stay in Massachusetts to pay ~\$1M in estate tax?

As a fiduciary, it's a responsibility to educate on the possibilities for those interested.

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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Annual Camy 5K Run to be held on November 11



The 23rd annual USATF-certified Camy 5K Run & David 5K Walk will be held on Veterans Day, Saturday November 11 at the Walpole Italian-American Club, 109 Stone St., Walpole.

The Camy 5K Run starts at 10 a.m., the David 5K Walk starts at 9:50 a.m., and the free Rosina Fun Run of 50 yards for

kids 11 and under starts at 9:30 a.m.

The event benefits local charities and is named in honor of Camilio "Camy" Clerici and his grandson, David Clerici, longtime Walpole residents and members of the I-A Society, who both died in 2000.

Register online at <https://www.active.com/walpole-ma/running/distance-running-races/23rd-annual-camy-5k-run-and-david-5k-walk-2023>, by email at www.paulclerici.com/camydavid5k, or on race day. For more information, email camydavid5k@yahoo.com or call 508-668-2249.

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8 Estate Planning Mistakes to Avoid

Estate planning can be complicated, and it's not uncommon for people to make mistakes with their plans. But financial advisors make errors, too, so here are the most common mistakes I have encountered from other financial and estate planners.

1. Improper beneficiary designations

I frequently see advisors improperly completing beneficiary designations. Examples: not changing the beneficiary due to divorce or a death, or listing a special needs child or grandchild directly as a beneficiary, rather than a trust FBO (for benefit of), thereby affecting their eligibility for Social Security disability benefits.

2. Not changing asset titles to trusts

Incorporating revocable living trusts into a client's estate plan but forgetting to update all the account titling to the name of the trust. Not changing titles creates problems that include having to pay additional probate costs, losing the private nature of settling the estate, etc.

3. Incorrectly assuming clients' goals

Many advisors assume a client's main goal is to save estate taxes, for example. However, when really connecting with a client, we might find that taxes are only a small aspect of their objectives. Sometimes, in



Jeffrey Schweitzer

listening to the client, we realize that their fears are more about their heirs' ability to manage the inheritance as well as decisions such as trustees, etc.

4. Naming minor children as account beneficiaries

Letting clients name minor children outright as primary or contingent beneficiaries of life insurance or retirement plans. When minor children inherit, a court must appoint a guardian who must be bonded and must file a laborious annual accounting with the local court.

5. Wrong choice of executors and trustees

Naming a financial institution as successor execu-

tor/trustee after surviving spouse or instead of surviving spouse. In some cases, this is to the detriment of the spouse and other beneficiaries because large institutions usually follow their fiduciary responsibilities with a less personable approach than another trustee could provide.

6. Failure to address medical directives

Many attorneys will draft a health-care power of attorney (POA) and living will. If the two documents co-exist, they may conflict since the POA allows another to make decisions while the living will already states what is to be done. Absent statutory (or document) direction, health-care providers may experience a conflict in what to do.

7. Ignoring state estate and inheritance taxes

Many states follow the federal \$5 million-plus exemption for taxable estates, but the states do not always exempt this larger amount. For example, in Massachusetts, estates over \$1,000,000 that are not left to the surviving spouse are subject to a Massachusetts estate tax.

8. Failure to address asset protection

Most couples fear losing their assets to nursing homes. For couples nearing retirement, strategies that protect assets should be explored. Strategies include lifetime credit shelter trusts, life estate deeds, gifting and other techniques that make assets available for use but beyond the reach of creditors. We have a great FREE guide entitled "Planning Your Estate". Please feel free to contact me and I will send you a copy right away. My number is below.

Jeffrey N. Schweitzer, EPA, CEP, ATP, RTRP can be found at Northeast Financial Strategies Inc (NFS) at Wampum Corner in Wrentham. NFS works with individuals and small businesses providing financial and estate planning, insurance, investments and also offers full service accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, income tax preparation, and notary public services. For more information, stop by the office, call Jeffrey at 800-560-4NFS or visit online - www.nfsnet.com

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Exhibit Commemorates Boston Tea Party Anniversary

The Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) has announced its newest exhibition, "The Dye is cast: The Interest and Ideals That Motivated the Boston Tea Party," commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party. The special show delves into this pivotal event in American history through the perspectives of six Bostonians from diverse backgrounds and features a collection of artifacts and documents from MHS's collection. The exhibition will be on view through February 29, 2024, in the second-floor gallery spaces.

"We are thrilled to bring forth this exhibition and celebrate an event that had a significant role in shaping the path toward American independence," shared Catherine Allgor, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Visitors will have the chance to explore the historical context, understand the participants' motivations, and gain a deeper appreciation for the lasting impact this incident had on shaping the United States."

By examining the tea crisis of 1773 through the eyes of six Bostonians, each with

their unique experiences and circumstances, this exhibition offers a fresh perspective on the events that unfolded that fateful day. Featured individuals include Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, Phillis Wheatley, Prince Hall, John Rowe, and Thomas Hutchinson, whose stories give insight as to why the Boston Tea Party happened.

The exhibition will showcase historical artifacts, including the Tradesmen's Protest against

EXHIBIT

continued on page 15

Notable People and Places of Wrentham

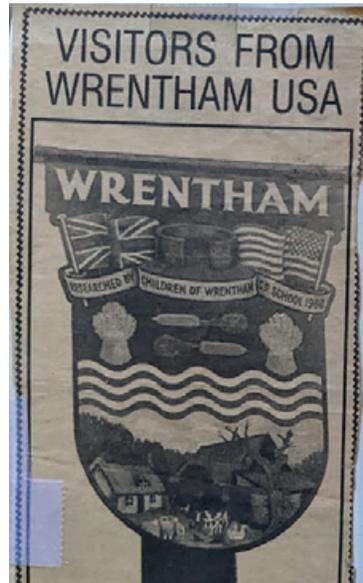
As part of Wrentham's 350th anniversary celebration, the committee planning this year's events has asked residents to submit memories of significant people and places in the town's history. Following is a submission the anniversary committee shared with Local Town Pages. Visit wrentham350.com to see the complete story and photos.

The Heartwarming Story of Two Wrenthams

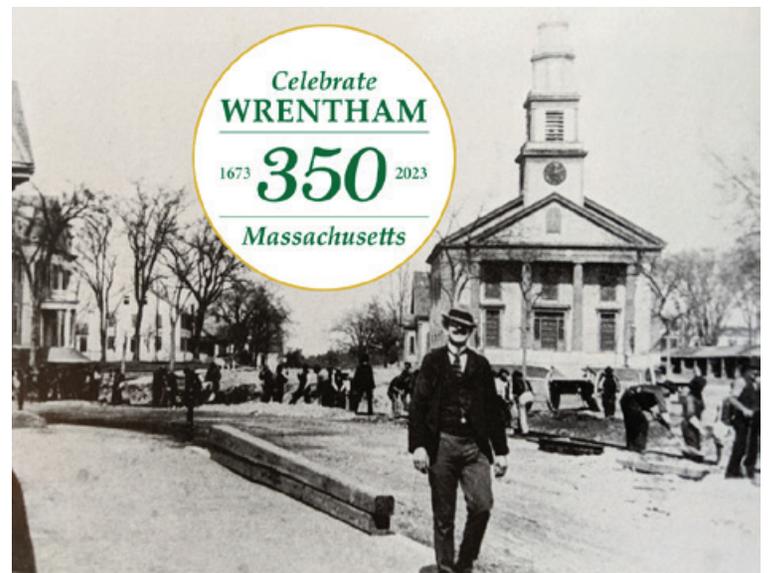
In January of this year, Wrentham community member, Kristine Brown, reached out to us to share a wonderful story. She and her British husband, Barry, had visited Wrentham, England, some 35-40 years ago and had the pleasure of meeting with the

town's mayor. It's worth noting that Wrentham, MA was named after Wrentham, England, where John Thurston and other settlers hailed from. After Barry's recent passing, Kristine came across postcards that they'd received from Wrentham, England, along with articles from an English newspaper and the Sun Chronicle. We were thrilled to meet with Kristine where she fondly recalled sharing a glass of wine early in the morning with the mayor and visiting a local elementary school to answer questions from the students.

We'd like to express our gratitude to Kristine for sharing the news clippings and postcards of Wrentham, England, with all of us today.



COMPILED BY GREY ALMEIDA, WRENTHAM 350 ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE MEMBER.



Wrentham K of C 5K Planned for November 5

The 6th annual Wrentham Knights of Columbus 5K will be held on Sunday, November 5 at 9 a.m. The 5k Run/Walk will start and end at Parker's Pub, 303 Shears Street, Wrentham.

The USATF-certified flat course will loop around scenic country roads. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three male and female finishers, and other valuable prizes will be awarded for

the top finishers in each age group. There will be a DJ, sponsor tents, and fun for the entire family.

Register for the event at <http://wrenthamkofc.racewire.com>. The council has raised over \$20,000 to date from the annual 5K race, all of which has been donated back to the community's charitable causes.

Wrentham Launches Town News Portal

Town Administrator Kevin Sweet has announced the launch of Wrentham's News Portal.

The town of Wrentham News Portal, <https://wrenthamnews.com>, features a modern, interactive design with a categorized news blog for users and visitors to explore.

Users can subscribe to the news portal to receive notifications via email. In addition to email notifications, the news portal is linked directly to social media, so residents are encouraged to follow the Town of Wrentham on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Additionally, users can view a photo gallery of various landmarks around Wrentham.

"Our town news portal will allow residents to remain in the know about what's going on in and around town," said Town Administrator Sweet. "I encourage everyone to visit and explore the new site, subscribe to categories and follow us on social media."

The town of Wrentham News Portal was designed by John Guilfoil Public Relations.

Holiday Toy and Children's Book Swap

The Fiske Library in Wrentham will hold a toy and children's book swap on Saturday, November 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Everything at the swap is free. Please bring your own bags.

Have items to donate? Toys and children's books in good condition can be dropped off at the Fiske Library on Tuesday, November 21 from 4 to 8 p.m., or on Wednesday, November 22 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Please no clothing or linens. Donations will be accepted the morning of the event, but people are encouraged to drop off items on the designated donation days if possible.

Contact Alex at acassie12@gmail.com with any questions.

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Community Ties and a Commitment to Customer Service: Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe you're planning to move and need to clear out the basement and attic before your open house. Maybe you've spent way too much time at home lately and are feeling the need to declutter.

But figuring out who to call can be a pain. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2003. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with ten trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with

Business spotlight

stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of



your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices,

so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston as well as Resellables, a thrift store in Bellingham. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

For more information, contact Jay Schadler at (774) 287-1133 or visit Affordable Junk Removal online at www.takeawayjunk.com.

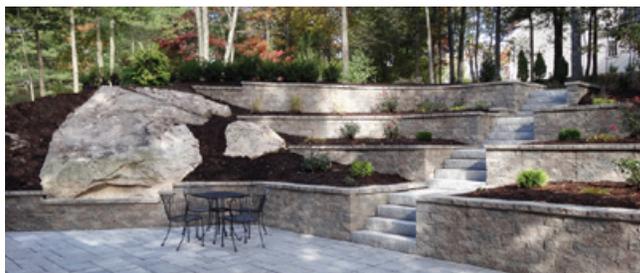
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Wrentham Voter Registration

An in-person voter registration will take place on Friday, November 3 for the Special (Fall) Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, November 13. Any Wrentham resident who is not registered or will become 16 years of age on or before November 13 may pre-register/register to vote.

The registration will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Town Hall located at 79 South Street. Voter Registration forms may also be downloaded from the Town Clerk's page of the Town's website. Please call the Town Clerk's office at (508) 384-5415 with any questions.

Celebrate the Holidays with FPAC Holiday Productions

FPAC Holiday Productions will present two shows as part of its annual holiday season.

December kicks off with the holiday classic: *The Nutcracker*, presented December 2 and 3 at the Franklin High School Auditorium. Experience all the festive magic and colorful splendor of *The Nutcracker* as FPAC stages its cherished annual production of the holiday classic with live orchestra, special guest artists and more than 100 area dancers. The *Nutcracker* remains a highly anticipated and treasured part of the FPAC season - a popular holiday tradition for more than 20 years. The world-famous ballet, set to Tchaikovsky's beloved score, delights the imaginations of audiences young and old with a professional production at a reasonable price. The production is staged by Cheryl Madeux of American Ballet Theatre, Hartford Ballet, and Joffrey Ballet. Madeux is currently director of BalletFranklin- the ballet conservatory at the Franklin School for the Performing Arts.

The FPAC Holiday Productions December season continues as *Humbug!* returns December 16 and 17. A family favorite since debuting as part of FPAC's 2008



season, *Humbug!* is an original musical retelling of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, starring the script's writer, Nick Paone, as Ebenezer Scrooge. With musical hits of every genre and live accompaniment by a 10-piece band of professional musicians, *Humbug!* transports audiences from Dickensian England to contemporary America as the novel's iconic characters

and storyline are cleverly reimagined with modern setting and dialogue. *Humbug!* delivers a holiday gift of hilarity with a timely – and timeless – message.

FPAC Holiday Productions are presented at the Franklin High School Auditorium. For tickets and more information, visit www.FPACOnline.com or call the box office at 508-528-3370.

Seth Glier to Perform at Circle of Friends Coffeehouse

Seth Glier returns to the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse on Saturday, November 18.

Glier is a seasoned troubadour, a singer-songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist who averages over 250 live performances annually. He's shared the stage with artists as diverse as James Taylor, Ani DiFranco, Edwin McCain, Martin Sexton, Emmylou Harris and Ryan Adams, and has quickly become known for his passionate live sets and powerful command of both piano and guitar.

His new album, "Everything," is a collection of eight songs inviting us to imagine a future in which humans and the planet are re-aligned into mutual restoration. The album is an acknowledgement of the sacred connections that exist between all living things and is an active questioning of what might be possible collectively. "Everything" is a reminder that the future is something we always have an influence over.

Paste Magazine notes "Grammy-nominated musician Seth Glier continues to gain momentum," while USA TODAY says, "Singer with an exquisite



tenor echoes Bruce Springsteen and Billy Joel."

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin's First Universalist Society. Concerts are presented in a smoke free and alcohol-free environment at the Society's handicapped accessible Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin, and begin at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available. Admission for this performance is \$20. Please visit <https://www.circlefolk.org/> to purchase tickets or for more information.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Big Thanks...

By GINA WOELFEL

I recently sat down with Heather Cohen, the owner of b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway. We had a chance to catch up and reflect on 2023 and what a crazy, wonderful year it's been, with so much to be grateful for!

During our talk, Heather shared that one of her favorite things to do in the fall is to take long walks with her dogs. "I hike my dogs most mornings, but our autumn hikes are my favorite. The air is crisp, and my pups love playing in the crunchy leaves." She also shared that it's her time to disconnect from her "salon" brain and focus on other aspects of her life beyond the day-to-day operations of her studio. The beginning of November is the calm before the busy holiday season, and Heather likes to take this time to reflect on how grateful she is for everything in her life. "Well, I'm blessed with my family, friends, and dogs. I have a tight-knit group of people who really support and love me, and that's allowed me to work as hard as I have."

As a child, Heather's family sometimes depended on their local church and community services to make ends meet. Despite their financial struggles, she never went without or felt ashamed of needing assistance. "In hindsight," she explains, "that helping hand was a blessing in disguise because it taught me the importance of taking an active role in my community and giving back. I didn't know the

significance of it at the time, but now, those acts of kindness speak volumes, and I'm extremely grateful for them. We organize volunteer opportunities at the salon for our staff to participate in, cutting hair for the Franklin Senior Center, packing food and raising money for The Franklin Food Pantry, working with PAWS New England, and donating yearly beauty scholarships to our sister school in Cancun, Mexico, who we visit each year to bring new supplies and teach classes. I'm really impressed with how our staff always joins in. If it's important to our community, it's important to b.LUXE."

During our conversation, we discussed the keys to running a successful beauty salon with over 30 talented and influential women. Heather expressed her gratitude towards her employees: "They're the backbone and heart of b.LUXE. I'm fortunate to have the creative and management teams that I do! They are the best in the business, and their incredible talent and work ethic inspire me to set the bar higher and consistently exceed expectations. We didn't become Massachusetts' most highly-rated salon just by chance! We made that happen together."

Heather also expressed her gratitude towards John Green, the owner of Medway Mills, where her salon is located. This historic, eight-acre complex is surrounded by wooded grounds, with Chicken Brook flowing directly underneath the salon. "John has done an excellent job

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preserving the property's natural charm while incorporating beautifully landscaped grounds, stone walls, and flower gardens to welcome visitors to the Mill. This year, he added an upper parking lot to accommodate the overflow. Our customers love the timeless atmosphere here."

Heather has great affection for the whole Medway Mills family. "The businesses here work well together, and it's a great place to work." Three beauty and wellness businesses located at the Mill have provided Heather with an enormous amount of support and inspiration - Chat Noir Nails, whose owner is Jillian Lustgarten Cohen, Molly's Apothecary, owned by Ann Fisher, and Drift and Oak Yoga, whose owner is Bianca Fantoni. "We share many of the same customers and work together to grow each other's clientele." She praises these businesses for helping women understand their worth and enhancing



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the community. "To me, they define Girl Power, and I'm so proud of that. I couldn't ask for better women to work alongside."

"The Local Town Pages" deserves a HUGE shoutout, too!" exclaims Heather. "We love our BEAUTY BEAT column, and without this community paper, we'd lose our direct line to our customers. "We've really enjoyed these conversations with existing and potential clients, especially those who've never visited our studio. It's been a friendly opportunity to introduce ourselves and connect with so many wonderful people."

Happy Thanksgiving from our family to yours.
The b.LUXE Team

Visit our website at **bLUXE.com** or scan the QR code to see our specially-priced, holiday gift card specials and our **BUY 3, GET 1 FREE Retail Sale!**

"I need a book to list how many people I'm grateful for!" says Heather. "But I guess it really just boils down to community. I'm really very, very grateful to this community for bringing b.LUXE into the fold and embracing it the way that they have. Thank you..."

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EXHIBIT

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the Proceedings of the Merchants, November 3, 1773, and the Edes family punch bowl, as well as immediate reactions to the event, among others. These items provide tangible connections to the past and allow visitors to immerse themselves in the historical context of the Boston Tea Party.

The exhibition is being held at the Massachusetts Historical Society, located at 1154 Boylston Street, Boston. Admission is free and open to the public during the following hours: Monday and Wednesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please note that the last ad-

mission for exhibition visitors is 45 minutes prior to closing.

For more information about the “The Dye is Cast: The Interest and Ideals That Motivated the Boston Tea Party” exhibition, please visit the Massachusetts Historical Society’s website at www.masshist.org.

About the Massachusetts Historical Society

Founded in 1791, the MHS is an independent research library and manuscript repository dedicated to collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of Massachusetts and the nation. The Society serves as a vital resource for scholars, educators, and the general public, offering a wide range of programs, exhibitions, and publications that illuminate the past and inform the present.

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Wrentham to be Recognized as a Purple Heart Community

Medal Recipients Asked to Contact Local Veterans Services Office

By ANGELA WEICHERDING-FITTON

Wrentham, home to 500 veterans, is becoming a Purple Heart community.

The designation means the town recognizes the sacrifice of people who have served their country, particularly those who are Purple Heart recipients and their families. As a Purple Heart community, there will be signs on all main roads leading into or out of Wrentham, including Route 140, Route 1A, and Route 152. The signs will serve as a visual reminder to drivers that others have paid a high price for their freedom.

Veterans Agent Stephen Travers handles veteran support services for North Attleboro, Plainville and Wrentham. He’s working with Wrentham Assistant Town Administrator Greg Enos on the effort to designate Wrentham as a Purple Heart community.

“I’m pleasantly surprised by the ways that Massachusetts honors its Purple Heart recipients,”

Travers said, while discussing the project. “Some towns have parking assigned specifically for Purple Heart recipients. There are Purple Heart specialty plates available at no cost through the DMV and those folks have no annual registration renewal costs.”

Travers said that Purple Heart recipients don’t look for recognition, noting he is a veteran who retired five years ago.

“In general, Massachusetts treats all its veterans great, but Purple Heart recipients are extra special,” he said. “We recognize Purple Heart recipients as the wounded that made it home. They are the heroes that walk among us, most without us even knowing.”

In 1782, George Washington issued the first ever Purple Heart. It was considered a Military Badge of Merit, which was a simple heart made from purple cloth. One hundred and sixty years later, in 1942, the Purple Heart, now a medal, became an award for military per-

sonnel who had been wounded in combat. However, the Purple Heart is not limited to members of the military any longer; civilians wounded in combat are also eligible for the medal.

Travers, who used to be a recruiter, also pointed out that 2023 marks 50 years since the military became an all-volunteer organization. This means that every member of the military now is a man or woman willing to put everything on the line for our freedoms. The last war to have draftees was the Vietnam War.

There is currently no database or way to perform an online query to determine who has received a Purple Heart. Wrentham veterans who are Purple Heart recipients are urged to contact Travers at (508) 699-0100 if they’d like to participate in upcoming events.

Any Wrentham veteran in need of support or services can also contact Travers.

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Living Healthy

DURYSTA - A Game-Changer in Glaucoma Treatment

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

Introduction

Imagine a world where a tiny implant can help prevent vision loss and improve the quality of life for millions of people suffering from glaucoma. This vision is becoming a reality with the introduction of DURYSTA, a groundbreaking treatment option that is changing the landscape of glaucoma management. In this article, we will delve into what DURYSTA is, how it works, and its potential impact on the lives of glaucoma patients.

Understanding Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that can lead to damage of the optic nerve, ultimately resulting in vision loss. It is often referred to as the "silent thief of sight" because it typically progresses slowly and

without noticeable symptoms until significant damage has occurred. The most common type of glaucoma is open-angle glaucoma, which accounts for around 90% of all glaucoma cases. In open-angle glaucoma, the drainage system within the eye becomes inefficient, leading to increased intraocular pressure (IOP). Elevated IOP is a major risk factor for optic nerve damage and vision loss.

Traditional Glaucoma Treatments

Traditionally, the primary approach to managing glaucoma has been to lower intraocular pressure. Several methods are used to achieve this, including eye drops, laser therapy, and surgical interventions. While these treatments can be effective, they often require frequent administration, leading to compliance issues. Additionally, surgical procedures carry certain risks



and may not be suitable for all patients.

Enter DURYSTA

DURYSTA (bimatoprost implant) is a revolutionary development in the field of glaucoma treatment. Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in March 2020, DURYSTA offers a novel and sustained approach to lowering intraocular pressure in glaucoma patients.

How DURYSTA Works

DURYSTA is a tiny implant that is placed directly into the anterior chamber of the eye through a minimally invasive procedure. This implant releases a medication called bimatoprost, which is a prostaglandin ana-

log. Prostaglandin analogs are known to be effective in reducing intraocular pressure by increasing the outflow of aqueous humor from the eye. What sets DURYSTA apart is its sustained release mechanism, providing consistent IOP reduction for an extended period.

Advantages of DURYSTA

Long-Lasting Efficacy: DURYSTA is designed to provide sustained IOP reduction for up to twelve months after a single implantation. This means fewer office visits and a reduced need for daily eye drops, improving patient compliance and quality of life.

Minimally Invasive: The procedure to implant DURYSTA is minimally invasive and typically takes a few seconds. Patients can usually return to their normal activities shortly after the procedure.

Efficacy Across Glaucoma Types: DURYSTA has shown efficacy in reducing IOP across various glaucoma types, including open-angle and angle-closure glaucoma, making it a versatile option for a wide range of patients.

Reduced Side Effects: Unlike eye drops, which can cause side effects such as stinging, redness, and allergies, DURYSTA is delivered directly to the eye's target site, minimizing systemic side effects.

Preservative-Free: Many eye drops contain preservatives that can irritate the eyes over time. DURYSTA is preservative-free, reducing the risk of irritation.

Improved Quality of Life: With fewer daily eye drop applications and sustained IOP reduction, DURYSTA can enhance the quality of life for glaucoma patients, allowing them to focus on their daily activities without the burden of frequent medication administration.

Clinical Trials and Results

The approval of DURYSTA was based on the results of clinical trials that demonstrated its safety and efficacy. In a pivotal Phase 3 clinical trial, DURYSTA was shown to significantly reduce intraocular pressure compared to a placebo, with the

effect lasting for an extended period. The trial also highlighted the low rate of adverse events associated with DURYSTA implantation.

Real-World Impact

Since its approval, DURYSTA has made a significant impact on glaucoma management in clinical practice. Patients who were previously struggling with the inconvenience of daily eye drops and the fear of surgical procedures now have a more convenient and effective option for managing their condition.

DURYSTA has particularly benefited individuals with poor adherence to medication regimens, as it eliminates the need for daily eye drop administration. This can be especially crucial in preventing vision loss in glaucoma patients, as consistent IOP control is essential to preserving vision.

Furthermore, DURYSTA has the potential to reduce the healthcare system's burden by decreasing the frequency of office visits and surgeries for glaucoma management. This can lead to cost savings and improved resource allocation in healthcare.

Challenges and Considerations

While DURYSTA presents a promising solution to many of the challenges associated with glaucoma management, it is not without its considerations:

Cost: The cost of DURYSTA may be a barrier for some patients, as it is a relatively new treatment and may not be covered by all insurance plans.

Implantation Procedure: While minimally invasive, the implantation procedure for DURYSTA still requires a skilled ophthalmologist. Access to specialized care may be limited in some areas.

Long-Term Data: As DURYSTA is a relatively new treatment, long-term data on its safety and efficacy beyond the three-year mark is still being



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EYES

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Living Healthy

It's More Than Just a Click or a Pop!

TMJ is a condition characterized by pain in the jaw joint and surrounding tissues accompanied by a decrease in the range of motion of the joint itself. There may be clicking or popping and a noticeable swing of the lower joint. Currently more than 12% of American's suffer from TMJ symptoms.

There are many causes of TMJ. These include dental procedures, autoimmune disease, biting into a large sandwich or bagel, injuries to the jaw area and infection. Once the biomechanics of the joint has been altered, the function becomes affected and the pain ensues. Traditional treatments include pain medication, muscle relaxers and dental appliances. These are effective resources for some but not for all, especially long term.

Stephanie B. suffered from TMJ pain for over two years



Dr. Rochelle Bien & Dr. Michael Goldstein

since the removal of her braces. Chewing certain foods would aggravate her jaw and intensify her pain. In the beginning, she felt she could handle the problem on her own by giving up chewing gum, eating oversized sandwiches, chewy meats and

certain fruits. However, she noticed that over time just yawning and even singing, could cause an exacerbation. She was becoming disillusioned with the idea that she could fix this on her own and decided to call The Holistic Center at Bristol Square and made an appointment to see the doctors.

Upon exam, the swing was noted in Stephanie's jaw as she both opened and closed her mouth, indicating a dysfunction in the biomechanics of her TMJ. After several weeks of treatment, the clicking and pop-

ping were gone and the swing in her jaw was stabilized. She no longer suffers from the TMJ pain and has noticed that the headaches she thought were unrelated had gone away as well.

If you are suffering from TMJ pain, do not hesitate to contact The Holistic Center at Bristol Square, located at 1426 Main Street, Walpole. Call (508)660-2722 and make your appointment today.

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EYES

continued from page 16

collected.

Conclusion

DURYSTA represents a significant advancement in the field of glaucoma treatment. Its sustained release mechanism, minimal invasiveness, and potential to improve patient adherence make it a game-changer for glaucoma patients. As further research and real-world experience accumulate, DURYSTA's role in preserving vision and enhancing the quality of life for those with glaucoma is likely to become even more pronounced. While challenges and considerations remain, DURYSTA offers new hope and a brighter future for individuals living with this sight-threatening condition. Our center and ophthalmologists have state of the art equipment to diagnose and treat many eye problems, including glaucoma. We offer DURYSTA in our state-of-the-art surgery center in Milford. 7 dedicated eye care providers here to help you in 3 facilities in Franklin, Milford and Millis. We are

available and have Saturday and after-hours appointments. From the basic eye exam to the high-tech surgeries performed locally in Milford, our center is now able to better recognize glaucoma and manage this disease with many interventions including DURYSTA. We continue to provide world class eye care for the entire family.

For more details, see our ad on this page 16.

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Dean College Brings AIDS Quilt to Campus in Conjunction with "RENT"

Display is Part of Thoughtful New Programming Around Theatre Shows

Dean College is proud to display a section of the AIDS Memorial Quilt on campus from November 14-15, 2023, leading up to the premiere of the School of the Arts production of "RENT" on November 15.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt is a living memorial to a generation lost to AIDS, an important HIV prevention education tool and the largest community arts project in history. Individuals and groups create Quilt panels to honor, remember and celebrate the stories and lives of those lost to HIV/AIDS. Displayed for the first time during the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 11, 1987, today the Quilt is an epic 54-ton tapestry that includes nearly 50,000 panels dedicated to more than 110,000 individuals.

The Quilt display will provide powerful context to the College's production of "RENT," Jonathan Larson's iconic musical that follows a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS.

"In moments of crisis, at times of great conflict and trauma, people turn to art as a way to share their love and their fear and their anger," said Patsy Collins Bandes, dean of the School of the Arts. "The AIDS Memorial Quilt was built out of one of these moments of protest and de-



mand for those lost to be remembered. We at Dean College are honored to display this work of art in parallel with our students lifting their own voices to create a story of survival, hope and love onstage in our production of "RENT."

The AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display to the public on Tuesday, November 14 and Wednesday, November 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the Dr. Paula M. Rooney Student Center Concourse. Dean students will also be tabling with interactive educational materials during the display. The School of the Arts at Dean will present "RENT" from November 15-19, 2023.

The display is part of the College's thoughtful new programming series to create more context around each of the theatre shows this season. Titled "Continuing the Conversation," the College will hold post-show discussions with the creative teams and experts in the field about the performance and the themes, context or history it explores. The series is co-sponsored by the Franklin Public Library and will offer library patrons a discount on tickets if they would

like to attend the show prior to the discussion.

The post-show discussion for "RENT" will take place on Saturday, November 18. Continuing the conversation from the Quilt display earlier in the week, this event will

discuss the legacy of the AIDS epidemic 40 years later and its influence on queer identity in the 21st century. Guests will include Dr. Kristin Holster, professor of sociology at Dean College, and Dr. Helen Lewis-Michelson, associate professor of theatre at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

"Continuing the Conversation allows us to deepen the exploration of the shows we are producing, and it is thrilling to be able to partner with the Franklin Public Library on this project," said Collins Bandes, who oversees the College's performing arts programs in arts and entertainment management, performance, production and design, theatre studies, and new BFA programs in acting and musical theatre. "It gives us an opportunity to explore with both our students and the community what impact our art has on the world, and how theatre is a powerful tool for cultural engagement."

For more information about the AIDS Memorial Quilt, visit www.aidsmemorial.org. For more information about "RENT" and the Continuing the Conversation series, visit www.dean.edu/box-office.

Annual Burn Awareness Video Contest Underway

Department of Fire Services Invites High Schools to Take Part

The Department of Fire Services' annual Burn Awareness Video Contest is underway, and schools with communications courses that focus on media design and production are encouraged to take part.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine said the annual contest is a way to raise awareness of the painful, lifelong consequences of misusing fire and to counteract dangerous stunts and challenges that young people may see on social media. The contest is sponsored by DFS, the Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriters Association, and Shriners Children's.

The winners will be announced during Burn Prevention Week, which runs from Feb. 4 to Feb. 10, 2024. This year's grand prize is a digital video camera for the winning students' school, courtesy of the Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriters Association. The second-place team will share \$100 in gift cards from Best Buy,

courtesy of Shriners Children's. The third-place team will share \$50 in gift cards from Best Buy courtesy of Shriners Children's.

The contest is open to students in grades 9-12 who are enrolled in Massachusetts schools. Submissions must be from school-sponsored communications courses or extra-curricular groups. Communications teachers or faculty sponsors are required to review and approve all storyboards before filming starts.

Videos should explore burn prevention topics in one to three minutes. They should be well researched, educational, and informative, and they must not demonstrate risky or unsafe behavior. Fire may only be depicted through royalty-free stock footage, and not through images recorded by students.

For the complete contest rules, scoring rubric, and submission form, visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/high-school-burn-awareness-video-contest>.

Sports

KP Girls Soccer Team Aiming for Long Playoff Run

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The King Philip girls soccer team was No. 10 in the MIAA power rankings at Local Town Pages deadline and it was No. 6 in the Boston Globe's statewide ratings. Those numbers suggest that coach Gary Pichel and his Warriors are well-positioned for what could be a lengthy run in the playoffs.

KP's overall record at the paper's deadline was 11-3, numbers that put the Warriors in a tie with Franklin for the Kelley Rex Division title. KP's three losses were to Hingham, the defending Division 1 state champion, Bishop Feehan and Franklin.

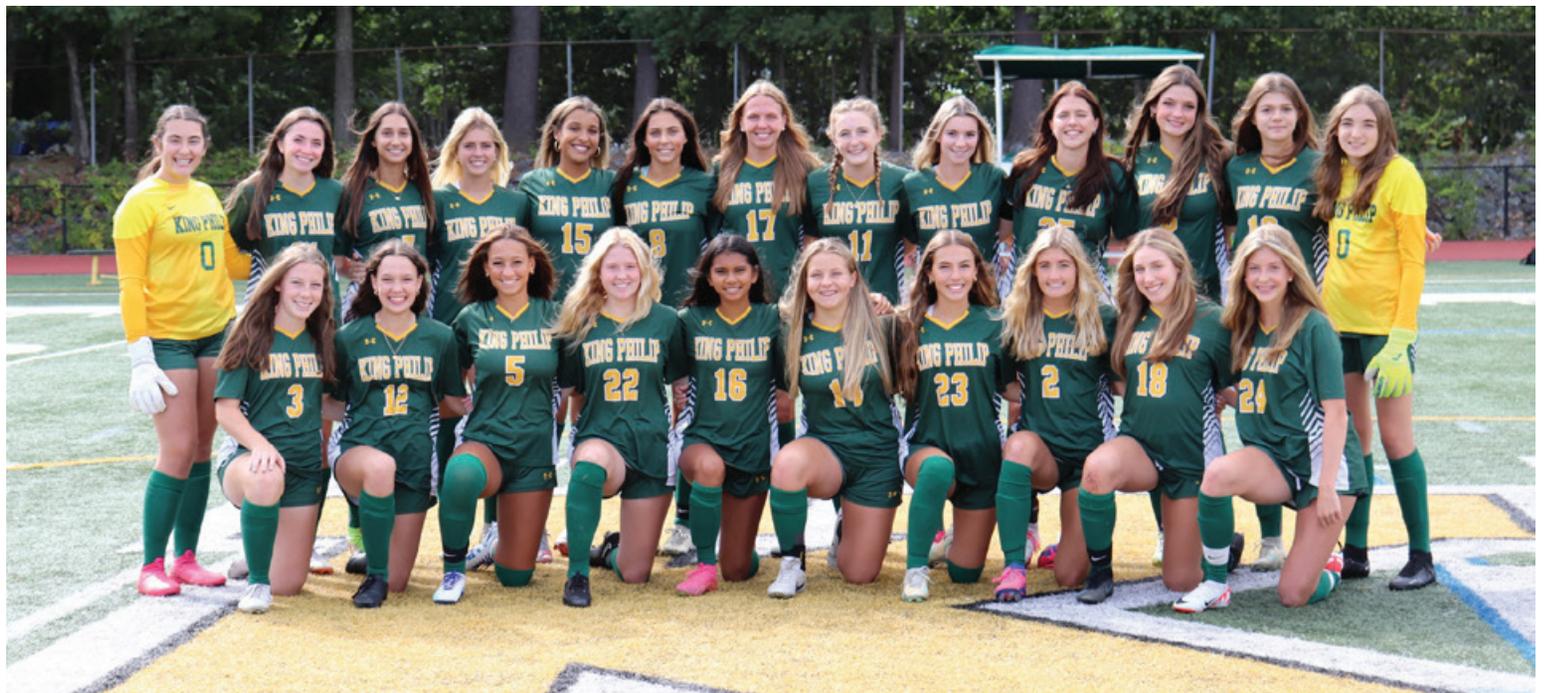
"Our goals at the start of the season were to develop impact players, win the division crown and aim for a state championship," said Pichel who's guided the Warriors into the playoffs in 10 of his 11 seasons at the helm.

The veteran coach, who earlier in his career led Nipmuc Regional to a pair of state championships in 2005 and 2006, admits his goals are lofty but realistic. "To win a state title a team needs to be skilled and have great team chemistry," Pichel noted. "And, a little luck also helps."

The Warriors, who have eight starters back from last year, are skilled and their team chemistry is terrific. But, they also possess other key strengths. "The girls have a high soccer IQ, they're fundamentally sound, their mental toughness helps them to be resilient, they're athletic and have a strong will to succeed," Pichel said.

KP's captains personify the team's attributes for success and Pichel says they all lead by example. They include seniors Heidi Lawrence (striker) and Rylie Wesley (defender) and juniors Addisyn Lamothe-Vaughn (defender) and Rhianna Mason (defender). "Besides leading by example, our captains all speak up, are supportive and set the tone for our younger players," Pichel said.

Lawrence is the team's leading scorer with 19 goals and 8 assists. "Heidi is one of our fastest players and she has a strong desire to keep improving," Pichel said. "She fires a well-developed



The 2023 King Philip girls soccer team hopes to go deep in the state tournament.



Coach Gary Pichel has set some lofty goals for the King Philip girls soccer team.

accurate shot with either foot."

Wesley, whose speed and skills made her a top-notch defender, suffered a season-ending injury in KP's third match of the season. "Unfortunately, we lost Rylie in our match against Oliver Ames," Pichel offered. "She was in a collision on defense and fractured her ankle."

Lamothe-Vaughn and Mason are not only leaders, but also prime-time defenders. "Addisyn has been recruited to play at Division 1 Iona," Pichel revealed. "An offensive outside back, she's got great endurance and is skilled in containing opposing players. She's also one of the best slide tacklers I've coached. Rhianna wears her heart on her sleeve. She's passionate about the sport and she's a motivating force in the defensive zone."

Two juniors — center forward Dani Lomuscio and forward/striker Mikayla Thompson — have been dynamic contributors. At Local Town Pages deadline, Lomuscio had 9 goals and 8 assists and Thompson had 10 goals and 7 assists.

"Dani is one of the greatest all-around players I've coached," Pichel said. "She can play defense, midfield and any offensive position. She's got a high soccer IQ and is one of the hardest workers on the team. Mikayla has played soccer most of her life and mostly as a defender. She's got great offensive skills, speed and strength, and she can finish a play."

Pichel labels junior Ally Pochay (center back) and senior Ally Smith (outside back) as "pleasant surprises."

"Ally Pochay can be one of the premier backs in the Hockomock League," he emphasized. "She's got outstanding quickness and tenacity. Ally Smith is consistent, hard-working and underrated. Starting with her sophomore season, she's improved every year."

Sophomore goalie Lauren O'Bara had a 0.71 goals-against average and 8 shutouts at Local Town Pages deadline. "Lauren was our backup keeper late last year," Pichel noted. "She got into a playoff game last year and played well. Her punting average is 50 yards. A natural athlete, she's got quick hands and is instinctive."

Three midfielders — seniors Eilish McGowan and Kylie Menendez and junior Bridget Scott — have played key roles and excelled in transition.

"Eilish is a feisty left-footed offensive weapon," Pichel said. "She's got a cannon for a shot. Kylie has good field vision and is a great play-maker. Bridget is aggressive and tenacious and has a long-ball shot."

The 65-year-old Pichel relies on an athletic philosophy that combines winning, reaching one's potential and having fun. "Those ingredients are all related," he said. "If a player enjoys competing and is having fun, then she'll reach her potential and that leads to winning."

Life lessons can be learned in sports and Pichel hopes soccer has taught his players some valuable tenets going forward. "Sports teach athletes how to overcome adversity, how to be good teammates and how to

solve problems," he offered. "Other good lessons are how to build relationships, how to manage time and how to sharpen one's work ethic."

Pichel, a native of Springfield who was raised in Milford, favors an up-tempo, aggressive style. "We'll be aggressive no matter what our opponents' strategy might be," he said.

Tourney time has arrived and Pichel knows that being flexible, adjusting on the fly and staying healthy are crucial to a deep playoff run. His best playoff advance came in 2017 when KP lost to Westford Academy in the state semifinals.

November is an important time of the year for KP girls soccer. Its coach and its players are aware there's been a 22-year drought since the Warriors last won a state title in 2001.

The 2023 season, however, could be very special and very memorable for the program.

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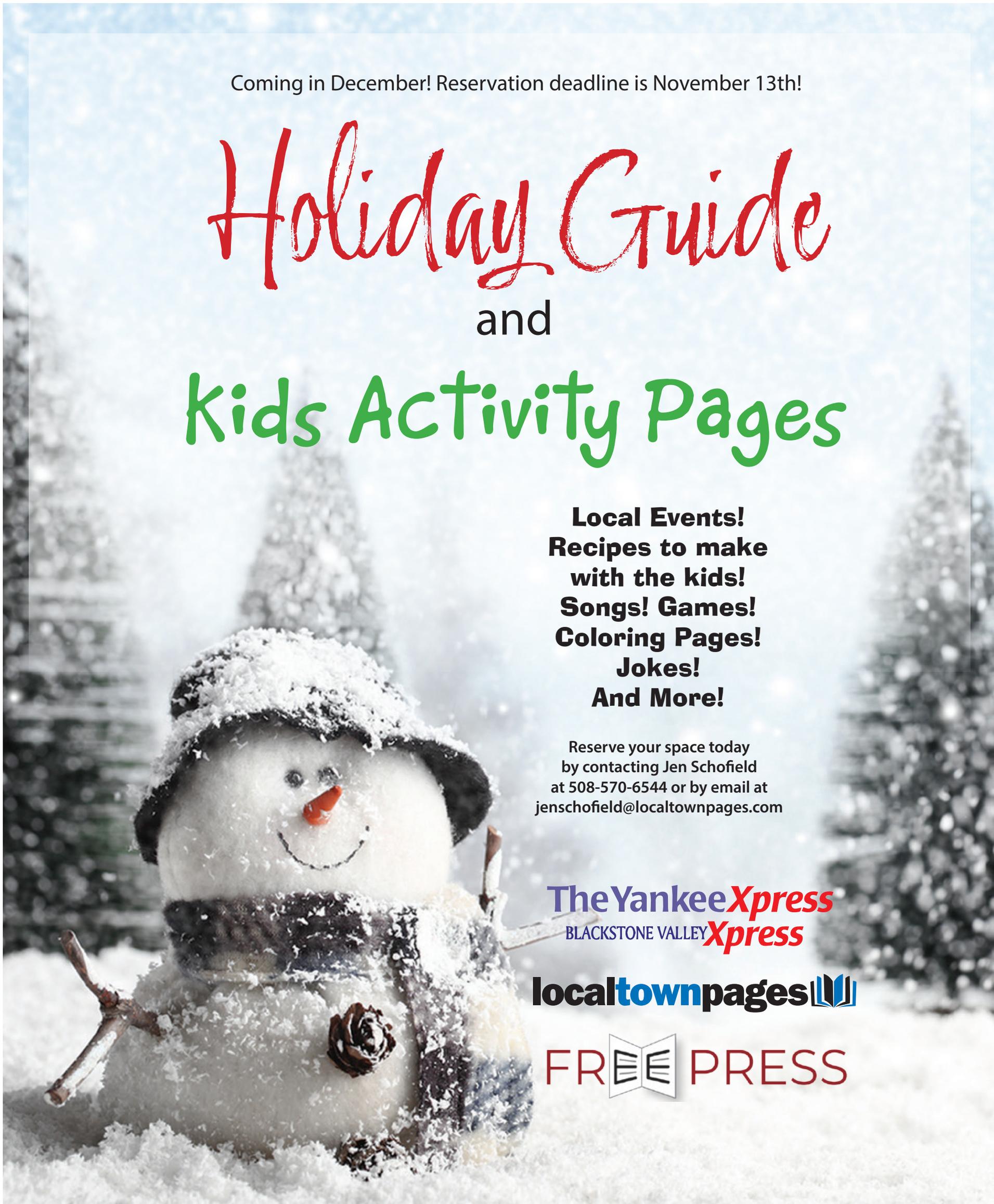
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Good Deeds: We Remember Our Veterans



BY WILLIAM P. O'DONNELL

Norfolk County Register of Deeds

Many Americans will never know what it is like to serve in the armed forces, risking lives for our country and facing the harsh realities of combat. The men and women who choose to join the military make incredible sacrifices, leaving behind their families and putting their own lives on the line to protect our freedom and way of life. This is something that we, as Americans, can sometimes take for granted. However, it is important to recognize and appreciate the immense courage and dedication that these individuals possess.

Having worked with the Veteran Affairs Boston Healthcare System in Brockton, West Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain through the "Suits for Success" program, I have seen first-hand how much it means to veterans when we do show our appreciation for their selflessness and commitment to

serving our nation and recognize the sacrifices they and their fellow veterans have made for our collective well-being. It is our duty as citizens to honor and support our military members in any way we can.

On Wednesday, November 8, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds will celebrate the veterans of Norfolk County with an open house and the release of our third volume of Notable Lands Records titled "We Remember Our Veterans." The open house will run from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Registry of Deeds in Dedham. Admission is free and each person attending will receive a copy of the booklet.

This edition of Notable Lands Records is a tribute to the brave men and women of Norfolk County, from the Revolutionary War to present-day peacekeepers. The booklet features detailed stories of veterans throughout the 28 communities that make up Norfolk County. These individuals have led remarkable lives:

several are Medal of Honor recipients; one was an experimental aircraft pilot; another served in three wars. The booklet outlines a history of the military branches as well as the four United States Presidents born in Norfolk County who served as commander-in-chief.

There will be much to celebrate that evening. Patriotic music will fill the air. Guests can stroll the Registry's Great Hall and view the fascinating storyboards detailing the history of the various branches of the armed services, the contributions of veterans, and the significant ways a grateful nation honors its veterans. There is also a storyboard that lists the Norfolk County Medal of Honor recipients.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Jonathan Thomas at (781) 234-3305 or by email at jthomas@norfolkdeeds.org. The Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham Center.

Diabetes on a Budget

Milford Regional Physician Group and Milford Regional Medical Center will present a class on diabetes management on Thursday, November 2 at 7:30 p.m. The class will be held at Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford.

This free class will discuss how expensive treating diabetes can be and how the cost of testing your sugars, eating

healthy and buying medications adds up quickly. However, well-controlled diabetes is less likely to have costly health complications.

This class will also discuss new technology covered by some insurance that makes caring for yourself easier. Registered dietician Christina Morrison and registered nurse Caron Gruposso will share

some tips and tricks to help you save money while taking care of your health.

Pre-registration is required as seating is limited. View milfordregional.org and select Classes and Events on the homepage or call 508-422-2827. Additional information will be provided to attendees via email prior to the date of the class.

Encore Students to Receive Regional Gold Medals in New York City

Encore Music Academy and Recording Studios, located in Franklin, MA, is proud to announce that two students have been awarded Regional Gold Medals of Excellence for academic year 2022-2023 from the Royal Conservatory of Music Certificate Program. To achieve this award, students must have attained the single highest score for their level on their instrument in the region which includes the following states: MA, RI, CT, ME, VT, NH, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, and WV.

Congratulations to the following students and their instructors for the talent, hard work, dedica-

tion, and perseverance it takes to achieve such a tremendous honor:

Amelia Piercy, 16, Franklin, student of Carl Scheinman, Level 4 saxophone

Sunehri Verma, 15, Franklin, student of Lisa Ostrow, Level 6 voice

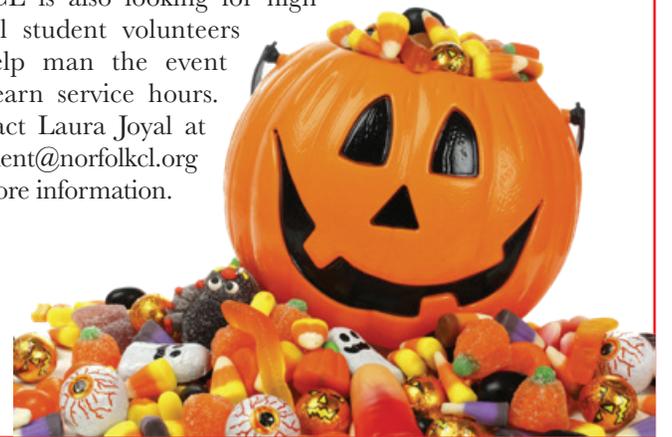
As a result of their tremendous achievement, these students have been invited to perform at the annual Celebration of Excellence in New York City on January, 28, 2024!

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Save the Date for Candy Give-Back

The Norfolk Community League (NCL) will hold its annual Halloween candy give-back event on Monday, November 6 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Freeman Kennedy School's loop road, 70 Boardman St. in Norfolk.

NCL is also looking for high school student volunteers to help man the event and earn service hours. Contact Laura Joyal at president@norfolkcl.org for more information.



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Dean College Football to Join MASCAC in 2025

The Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Council of Presidents and Commissioner Angela Baumann are excited to announce the addition of Dean College as a football affiliate beginning during the 2025 season.

Dean will join Anna Maria College, Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Plymouth State University, UMass Dartmouth, Vermont State University-Castleton, Western Connecticut, Westfield State University and Worcester State University as football programs in the MASCAC.

"The MASCAC and the Council of Presidents are delighted to welcome Dean College to the conference in football," MASCAC Council of Presidents Chair and Salem State University President John Keenan said. "It strengthens our conference footprint and the conference brand. We look

forward to enhancing student-athlete opportunities."

"This is a momentous time for the MASCAC as we further solidify our competing teams in the sport of football," Commissioner Baumann said. "We are excited to welcome a Massachusetts team like Dean to the MASCAC and look forward to the kickoff of a long-term football partnership with us beginning in 2025."

The Dean College football program is led by 2007 alumnus Andrae Murphy who is in his second year at the helm. The team last won a conference championship in 2019 and played in the New England Bowl. The program, along with the rest of Dean's athletic teams, officially joined the NCAA in the fall of 2020 as a full member.

"While we have cherished our time in the ECFC, join-

MASCAC

continued on page 23

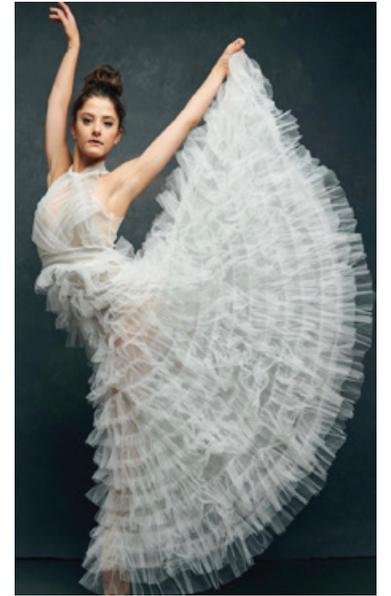
Celebrate the Holidays with FPAC Holiday Productions

FPAC Holiday Productions will present two shows as part of its annual holiday season. December kicks off with the holiday classic: *The Nutcracker*, presented December 2 and 3 at the Franklin High School Auditorium. Experience all the festive magic and colorful splendor of *The Nutcracker* as FPAC stages its cherished annual production of the holiday classic with live orchestra conducted by Austin Davy, special guest artists and more than 100 area dancers. *The Nutcracker* remains a highly anticipated and treasured part of the FPAC season - a popular holiday tradition for more than 20 years. The world-famous ballet, set to Tchaikovsky's beloved score, delights the imaginations of audiences young and old with a professional production at a reasonable price. The production is staged by Cheryl Madeux of American Ballet Theatre, Hartford Ballet, and Joffrey Ballet. Madeux is currently director of BalletFranklin- the ballet conservatory at the

Business spotlight

Franklin School for the Performing Arts.

Lucy Stewart of Complexions Contemporary Ballet will appear as The Sugar Plum Fairy. Stewart grew up in a suburb of Denver, Colorado, where she spent her early years dancing at a small studio in the mountains and then at Colorado Ballet. Originally training in all forms of dance, her primary areas of study included ballet, contem-



porary and jazz. She spent her summers training with American Ballet Theatre, The Joffrey Ballet, COMPLEXIONS, and Colorado Ballet. Lucy has studied the last two years at The Juilliard School in the dance division where she had the opportunity to study with various leading artists in the dance world, including Ohad Naharin, Tiler Peck, Rena Butler, and James Whiteside, as well as the opportunity to perform *Set and Reset* by Trisha Brown. For the last several years, Lucy studied regularly with John Gardner and Amanda McKerron from ABT.

Jacopo Calvo, also of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, will join Stewart as her Cavalier. Calvo was born in Asti, Italy. He began his dance training at the age of 11 at his hometown school, Ritmo Danza. At 18, he moved to NYC where he attended The

Ailey School on scholarship. He has worked with choreographers such as Marcus Jarrell Willis, Brice Mousset, Ray Mercer, Earl Mosley, Francesca Harper, and artist Nick Cave in *The Let Go* at the Park Avenue Armory. He has attended summer intensives with American Ballet Theater and Complexions Contemporary Ballet, and *RESET 2021* with Studio Wayne McGregor. Jacopo has performed with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for their 60th Anniversary Season in Memoria at New York City Center and for the Ailey Spirit Gala. This is his 2nd season with Complexions.

FPAC Holiday Productions are presented at the Franklin High School Auditorium. For tickets and more information, visit www.FPAConline.com or call the box office at 508-528-3370.

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Craft Fair Set for November 18

The 48th annual Franklin Newcomers & Friends Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, November 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, 147 Pond St., Franklin.

This popular and well-established event features hand-crafted items by artisans from throughout New England. Browse and shop a great selection of items for the home and gift-giving, including specialty foods and more.

The entry fee is \$3 for 12 years of age and older. Donations for the Franklin Food Pantry are welcome.

Questions? Email franklincraftfair@gmail.com. For more information about the Newcomers, visit the group on Facebook.

“Celebrate Wrentham 350” at the Franklin Historical Museum

The Franklin Historical Museum will host neighbors and friends from Wrentham for its Second Sunday Speaker Series on November 12. Doors open at 1 p.m. and the presentation starts at 1:15. Admission is always free.

Wrentham has had a yearlong celebration of the incorporation of the town in 1673. Ed Goddard, head of the Wrentham 350 Committee, will share information on the committee formation, fundraising, merchandising, and events over the past year.

Celebrations have included a brunch at the Senior Center, St. Patrick’s Day party, William Sweatt Day, the town’s birthday party on the common, a Grand Parade, a time capsule burial, and the upcoming Gala Ball in December at Lake Pearl Luciano’s.

Goddard will present photos of the various events, and share lessons learned as well as the ins and outs of planning the momentous year.

Historians know Franklin was once part of Wrentham, known as Wrentham’s Western Precinct, before breaking off and establishing Franklin in 1778. This event will be of interest to all who want to wish our Wrentham neighbors a Happy Birthday and specifically to any civic-minded folks from Franklin interested in learning more about Wrentham’s celebration as we look ahead to our 250th in five years’ time.

When attending a museum event, please consider donating a non-perishable food item to be collected at the museum and donated to the Franklin Food Pantry.

November Program Highlights at the Norfolk Senior Center

RSVP to 508-528-4430 or register at the Norfolk Senior Center, 28 Medway Branch Road, Norfolk. For a full list of activities, visit the Senior Center page on the town’s website: norfolk.ma.us.

Tuesday, November 7 from noon to 2 p.m. **Nicky’s Lunch Trip Meet** us for lunch at Nicky’s Family Dining, 460 Franklin Street in Wrentham. RSVP by November 3 so that we can reserve tables.

Tuesday, November 7 from 1 to 4 p.m. **Health and Wellness Vendor Fair** Over 20 local agencies and companies will present

information. Get flu shots and health screenings, as well as eye screenings with the Lions’ eye mobile. There will be free giveaways, complimentary massages, and numerous raffles. Hosted by Metacomet Public Health Nurses.

Wednesday, November 8 from noon to 2 p.m. **Veterans Appreciation Luncheon** Join us for a celebration to honor and recognize Norfolk veterans. Luncheon of roasted turkey dinner with fixings and sides as well as dessert is provided by the Friends. Resident Phil Salamone will sing and

lead us in patriotic songs. Special guest appearances by State Representative Marcus Vaughn and Legion member Lori Scholl. Masters of Ceremony are veteran residents Bill Crane and Duane Weiss. There will be raffle prizes including an American Flag blanket. Lunch free for Norfolk veterans. Cost: \$2 for Friends members and \$5 for non-members. RSVP required.

Monday, November 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Wrentham Outlet Holiday Shopping Trip** Get your holiday shopping in early before the rush. RSVP by

November 9 for a ride from the Senior Center.

Tuesday, November 14 at 10 a.m. **Town Clerk Meet & Greet** Besides administering elections, what does the Norfolk Town Clerk do? Meet Carol Greene and ask all your questions. RSVP required.

Thursday, November 16 at 2 p.m. **Before the Mayflower** Presented by Paolo DiGregorio. The Mayflower arrived in Plymouth 403 years ago and marked a collision of cultures, peoples, and worlds. But what happened before that fateful journey? This lecture will explore the world of native New England, Puritan

England, and the road to 1620. Presenter Paolo is a historian/archaeologist/educator with a passion for telling the stories of our past. RSVP required.

Tuesday, November 21 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. **Thanksgiving Cornucopia Arrangements** Norfolk Garden Club member Rick will lead us in making beautiful Thanksgiving cornucopias with a liner and oasis. We will use live greens, flowers, artificial decorations, and a holiday ribbon. Bring a pair of sharp scissors, rose bush type cutters, and a small bottle of water. Space limited. RSVP required.

MASCAC

continued from page 22

ing the MASCAC represents a great opportunity for the next phase of our football program,” said Dean College President Kenneth Elmore, J.D. “With its deep-rooted traditions, storied history, and competitive landscape, this is an ideal union for our student-athletes.”

“Dean College is thrilled to become an affiliate member in the MASCAC for the sport of Football,” said Dean College Director of Athletics George Martin. “We would like to thank the MASCAC President’s Council and Commissioner Baumann for the invitation to join this group of outstanding institutions, and we are honored to accept. Beginning in the fall of 2025, our student-athletes will benefit from this new partner-

ship, and we will look forward to joining in the spirited competition this conference has exhibited for many years.”

Dean College is a private, residential New England college grounded in a culture and tradition that all students deserve the opportunity for academic and personal success. A uniquely supportive community for more than 150 years, Dean has woven together extensive student support and engagement with exceptional teaching and innovative campus activities. Our graduates are lifetime learners who thrive in their careers, embrace social responsibility and demonstrate leadership. This is The Dean Difference.

The Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, the nation’s oldest Division III men’s and women’s playing conference, has a rich and storied tradition of competitive success

while celebrating excellence in the classroom. MASCAC member schools include Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, MCLA, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Salem State University, Westfield State University and Worcester State University. Two other institutions, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Plymouth State University, are affiliate members of the conference in the sports of football and men’s ice hockey, while Western Connecticut State University joined the conference as a football affiliate member in 2013 and Vermont State University-Castleton in 2024. Springfield College joined as a men’s golf affiliate in 2019. Anna Maria College will join the conference as the ninth core member in 2025.



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FPAC to Present Hilarious Comedy Buyer & Cellar Starring Paul Rescigno

The Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) will continue their 2023-24 season with the hilarious comedy *Buyer & Cellar* starring Paul Rescigno November 17-19 at THE BLACK BOX. Directed by Nick Paone.

Alex Moore has a story to tell. A struggling actor in L.A., he takes a job working in the Malibu basement of a beloved megastar. One day, the Lady Herself comes downstairs to play. It feels like real bonding in the basement, but will their relationship ever make it upstairs? *Buyer & Cellar* is an outrageous comedy about the price of fame, the cost of things, and the oddest of odd jobs. Winner of the 2014-2015 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Solo Show.

Paul Rescigno is a Los Angeles based actor who has previously performed on the FPAC stage in *Something Rotten!* (Nigel), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Gangster 2), and *Sweeney Todd* (Pirelli). He has written for *The Late Show with*



David Letterman and appeared on TV in *The Resident* (FOX), *The Other Two* (HBO Max), *Odd Mom Out* (Bravo), *Late Show with David Letterman* (CBS), *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* (Netflix), *Mozart in the Jungle* (Amazon), *Black Box* (ABC). His theater credits include *Boats And...*, *The Boys From Syracuse*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. Rescigno studied at Shake-

spare's Globe in London and holds a BFA in Acting from Syracuse University. Along with his twin brother Robbie, he writes and performs their award-winning comedy show *The Rescignos*.

FPAC is an Actors' Equity Small Professional Theater company based at THE BLACK BOX in downtown Franklin. Each season, FPAC produces musicals, plays, ballets, and more featuring Broadway stars, professional actors, local artists, and students of the arts. Later this season, FPAC will present *Bright Star*, an immersive *Tarzan* starring Broadway's original Tarzan Josh Strickland, and *August: Osage County*.

Content Warning: *Buyer & Cellar* contains some strong language. *Buyer & Cellar* runs November 17-19 at THE BLACK BOX. For tickets and more information, visit FPAConline.com or call the box office at 508-528-3370.

Nov. Event Highlights at the First Universalist Society in Franklin

Unexpected Changes: An Existentialist Perspective

Existentialism is the philosophy that life is what we make of it. Life, however, has a way of changing our plans when we least expect it. FUSF lay member Ann Parsley will talk about what it's like to be an existentialist atheist, how that philosophy can help when things go wrong, and why an existentialist atheist might choose to join a UU church. Program will be held on November 5 at 10 a.m.

The Chestnut Street Review Variety Show

The "Chestnut Street Review" is back after a two-year hiatus. The FUSF Community prides itself on its musical and artistic talent, and invites everyone to this jam-packed evening of music, singing, storytelling and more. There will be something for all families and the young at heart to enjoy. Program will be held on November 11 from 7 to 9 p.m. Desserts will be available. \$10/person and \$25/family.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. For more information, email info@fusf.org or call 508-528-5348. FUSF is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation.

Real Estate Corner

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Real Estate Corner

Norfolk County's Most Expensive Real Estate Sales 3rd Quarter of 2023

During the summer of 2023, ten properties, a mix of commercial and residential, sold for more than \$11,000,000, with an average price of \$34,887,000. These properties were sold during the period of July 31 through September 20.

The ten properties were:

10. 108 Bodwell Street, Avon, a 49,090-square-foot industrial warehouse built in 1970 on 6.33 acres of land, sold in August for \$11,250,000.
9. 85 John Road, Canton, a 435,600-square-foot research and development facility on 10 acres, sold in August for \$22,750,000.
8. 206 Grove Street, Franklin, a 150,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution facility, sold in July for \$28,000,000.
7. Wheeler Circle, Stoughton, the 280-unit, 809-room apartment complex, known as Stone Ends Apartments, sold in July for \$28,972,000.
6. 176 Grove Street, Franklin, a 171,000-square-foot freight transportation center and warehouse, was sold in May for \$29,500,000.
5. 25 & 40 Kenwood Circle, Franklin, A multi-building storage and distribution center with a combined 200,000 square feet of space was sold in July to Boston Infill LLC for \$37,500,000.
4. 57 Littlefield, Avon, the "Avon Business Center," a multi-building rental unit complex for industrial companies and small

businesses, in July for \$47,250,000.

3. Finnell Drive Industrial Park, the 5-building, 246,625-square-foot industrial park located in Weymouth, sold on the last day of August for \$51,000,000.
2. Walpole Mall, which sits on 31 acres of land along the Boston Providence Highway, sold in July for \$71,950,000 to LCR Walpole LLC.
1. 29, 39, & 51 Trotter Road, Weymouth, known as the MIO Apartments, an upscale residential studio apartment complex, sold in July for \$94,600,000.

The top sales appear to have been a combination of apartment complexes, retail, industrial and warehouse space, and distribution facilities.

"The industrial and commercial nature of these developments bodes well for the Norfolk County economy, both in terms of employment and revenue," said Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell. "This also indicates that Norfolk County is not only a desirable place to both live and work but is also a magnet for business, industry, and trade."

Excise taxes from these 10 sales totaled more than \$1,927,000 for the state and county.

"Despite the overall decline in activity throughout the county, there are still pockets of the market here in Norfolk County that are seeing growth and stability, particularly in commercial real estate and certain neighborhoods and property types," noted Register O'Donnell.

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Monthly Property Sales Slump in September

Norfolk County recordings in September 2023 show a significant decline in the total number of property sales compared to September 2022 recordings. This decline can be attributed to a limited inventory of new and existing property for sale and a

housing market that continues to struggle with higher interest rates relative to what they were in 2020 and 2021.

“The limited inventory of properties for sale has created a highly competitive market and fewer opportunities for buyers,”

said Register of Deeds William P. O’Donnell. “Moreover, the higher interest rates have made it more challenging for potential homeowners, especially first-time homebuyers, to secure affordable financing options, further dampening the demand for properties.”

The total number of deeds recorded for September 2023, which reflects both commercial and residential real estate sales and transfers, was 1251, down 12% from September 2022 and down 1% from August. However, this number also includes transfers of property within families and other non-market transactions. The total number of actual property sales for September was 668, down 21% from last year and down 5% from last month.

“Property prices dropped significantly in September compared to last year, and the number of property transactions was also down, which may suggest that the property price alone is

not the sole factor contributing to the decrease in the number of deeds recorded at the Registry,” said Register O’Donnell.

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties for September 2023 fell to \$864,251, a 20% decrease compared to September 2022 and a decrease of 29% from August 2023. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is down, decreasing 37% from last year and 44% from last month.

“Seasoned homebuyers are doubly affected by current market conditions, as they not only face higher borrowing costs but also have limited options to choose from. Additionally, with home loan interest rates exceeding 7%, these same homeowners are also less likely to refinance, leading to a decrease in the number of mortgages being recorded,” said O’Donnell.

For the month of August, lending activity overall continued to decline from last year. A

total of 1,174 mortgages were recorded, which is 31% less than last year and 5% less than last month.

“Those who took advantage of the lower interest rates in 2020 and 2021 are also less likely to refinance at current rates, and with property sales going down, this results in a more pronounced decline in the number of mortgages recorded,” said O’Donnell. “For individuals who are struggling to keep up with payments now, refinancing at a higher interest rate is not going to help, which is one factor contributing to the increase in notices to foreclose and foreclosure deeds. Also, many potential sellers who would need to borrow to purchase a new property have elected not to sell given the higher interest rates.”

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds continues to closely

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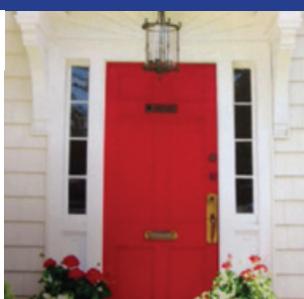
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Real Estate Corner

SALES

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monitor the foreclosure market. In September 2023, there were 5 foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, whereas in September 2023, there were 4 recorded. Additionally, there were 33 notices to foreclose, the first step in the foreclosure process, more than the 25 recorded this month last year.

For the past several years, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has partnered with Quincy Community Action Programs (617-479-8181 x376) and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (508-587-0950) to help anyone facing challenges

paying their mortgage. Another option for homeowners is to contact the Massachusetts Attorney General's Consumer Advocacy and Response Division (CARD) at 617-727-8400.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham. The Registry is a resource for homeowners, title examiners, mortgage lenders, municipalities and others with a need for secure, accurate, accessible land record information. All land record research information can be found on the Registry's website: www.norfolkdeeds.org. Residents in need of assistance can contact the Registry of Deeds Customer Service Center via telephone at (781) 461-6101 or email us at register-odonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

Norfolk Gets Road Safety Grant

The town of Norfolk is getting \$19,025 in federal grant money to support traffic safety enforcement and outreach programming. The Healy-Driscoll Administration announced Oct. 17 that 186 Massachusetts towns and cities would be receiving the federal awards.

A total of \$5,449,584.03 has been awarded through the FY24 Municipal Road Safety Grant Program. The program is administered by the Office of Grants and Research (OGR) and utilizes funds awarded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The annual program provides funding to municipal police departments who propose traffic safety projects in their community, including high visibility enforcement patrols, equipment to enhance road safety such as digital speed signs, pedestrian and bicyclist safety initiatives and public outreach campaigns intended to educate community members and youth about roadway safety.



"Whether by vehicle, bicycle or foot, everyone has the right to travel safely through our communities," said Governor Maura Healey in a statement. "Through this program, we were able to award grants to every community that requested funding. The education, enforcement and outreach initiatives supported through these grants will help ensure safer roads for all."

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