

Nursing students pinned

BVT holds pinning ceremony for 17 new nurses



The BVT Practical Nursing Class of 2024. Back (L-R): Megan Brosnahan, Tiffany Huth, Jadhahis Rosario, Diana Fiaklou, Elizabeth Siaw, and Olamide Sophia Alabi. Middle (L-R): Rachel Minney, Meaghan George, Meredith Mogren, Meghan Bolotin, and Cayleigh Harris. Front (L-R): Ikechukwu (Wilson) Asinobi, Cristiane Padilha, Elizabeth Lobo, Rachel Vachon, Wendy Harper, and Amanda Wright. Photo source Blackstone Valley Tech

UPTON – The Moonlight Program in Practical Nursing at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) is challenging and rewarding. Its graduates will tell you that pursuing life-changing training to become a nurse re-

quires a commitment to the coursework and clinicals. The adult evening program recently recognized the achievements of the Class of 2024 during a pinning ceremony held at the school. Seventeen proud graduates were pinned and received

their nursing certificates, marking the culmination of one and a half years and over 1,090 hours of instruction balanced with work and family obligations. Faculty,

NURSING

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The Mendon Hike Challenge continues indefinitely

The Mendon Hike Challenge continues indefinitely

Over the past several months, many people have enjoyed hiking the nine trails of the Mendon Hike Challenge. Not only have Mendon residents completed the challenge, but people from Upton, Millbury, Blackstone, Uxbridge, Whitinsville and as far away as Somerset and Harrisville, R.I., have also finished all the hikes. Also, people from Grafton, Milford, Bellingham, and Pawtucket, R.I. have registered to do the challenge.

To date, 26 people (and one dog) have completed the challenge and have received a patch and sticker to mark their achievement.

Originally, the challenge was set to end in May 2024, but because of the widespread interest, the challenge is now on-going with no ending date. This allows people to complete the challenge at their own rate. All the trails are marked with black and white arrows with the number of the trail written on them and are easy to follow.

Hikers between the ages of 3 and 80 have enjoyed these trails.



Elijah and Elizabeth Weeks on Hike 3 "Shirley's Trail". Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks

One participant explained, "The refreshing beauty of our local natural world was abundantly displayed on all the hikes, and I look forward to visiting these spots in the future to appreciate how they change in different seasons."

Another hiker wrote, "The Mendon Hike Challenge signage gave me the confidence to explore new trails that I wasn't familiar

HIKE

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Painted rocks - gifts to find around Upton



Rocks with uplifting sayings and colors can be found while walking around town, thanks to Kathy Pecci. Courtesy photos

By Linda Chuss

Walking past the library, post office, Firefighters Monument, and any number of places in town, people notice unique rocks on the ground. They are painted with uplifting sayings

like "Be Kind," and cheerful illustrations like a blue flower with a smiling face at the center. Because they aren't signed, few people know who creates and leaves them.

The mystery artist is Upton's

own Kathy Pecci, who said she has always had "a thing for rocks." Combining that with an interest in art, Pecci crafted a gratifying and compelling hobby two years ago.

"When I was in school, I took a lot of art classes," Pecci said. "Everything from oil painting to ceramics. I could spend six periods a day in the art room. After school, I entered the business world and stopped painting. Then my sister-in-law gave me a small, painted rock and I thought, 'I can do this.' In 2022, I retired and started

making them.

"At first, it was completely anonymous. I'd leave them for neighbors or where I took walks. Then, I started tailoring them for certain people and interests," said Pecci. She gave a "Gone Fishin'" rock to an employee in the supermarket's fish department, angels to other workers there, "Life is Good" rocks to postal workers, and some for different holidays. She also expanded to painting on ceramic tile magnets.

Pecci is not the only person with this hobby. She said, "It's

a worldwide phenomenon - my daughter even saw some at a fire hydrant in Italy. I follow Facebook groups for rock painters and get ideas there. People ask me to make designs for them, too, like a girl who wanted a Star Wars rock for her uncle.

"Seeing the reactions people have is very fulfilling. The rocks make people who are just doing something ordinary smile when they see one."

Pecci enjoys the pastime. "I paint almost every day," she said. "Half my dining room table has supplies on it, and the countertops and living room table are covered with rocks. It's hard to organize them. Flat, round rocks are easy to paint on. I also like rough rocks - I work with the shape to make a dragon head or a duck, for example."

Last year, Pecci started selling her rocks at local craft shows, and she takes orders from people who know about her work. "I just like to cover the expenses," she said.

To see more of Pecci's rocks, follow www.facebook.com/kathy.pecci on Facebook. To contact her, email kmpecci@verizon.net, or call 339-227-2202.

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Mendon Senior and Community Center Update, March 2024

After considering four site locations, the appointed building committee selected the town-owned property at North Avenue and Route 16, across from the Clough School parking lot, as the site for the new Mendon Senior and Community Center.

The architectural firm of Michael Petrovick Architects PLLC has designed a building based on current and future needs of the town. The expanded interior will include a large gathering room for events, meeting rooms for community group use, expanded space for the town's food pantry, a game room, plus a storage space for medical equipment and emergency supplies, such as cots, in case of a town-wide emergency. Sadly, space constraints at the current facility necessitate waiting lists for programs and events.

In their efforts to mitigate costs to the townspeople, the committee is partnering with our local Community Preservation Committee to utilize already approved funds to pro-

vide ADA recreational opportunities, such as walking trails. We are working with Parks and Recreation to add community use outdoor courts for bocce, shuffleboard and pickleball.

There will be informational sessions in March and in April so your suggestions and concerns can be heard. Those sessions will be held at the Mendon Senior Center, 62 Providence St., on

- Fri., March 22, at 1 p.m.
- Wed., April 24, at 6:30 p.m.

If you would like a member of the committee to speak with you or your group, please contact Phil Cieply (pcieply@mendonma.gov), Peg Nogueira (pegnog@verizon.net) or any other committee member. You can also find information at www.mendonma.gov/senior-community-center-building-committee.

The Committee will be seeking your support at the Annual Town Meeting on Friday, May 3rd. You can start now by enlisting your friends and neighbors



The town-owned land at North Avenue and Route 16, across from the Clough School parking lot, has been chosen as the site for the new Mendon Senior and Community Center. Photo credit Theresa Knapp

to support our efforts. We hope you will join us in approving this

much needed building. This article was submitted by the

Mendon Senior & Community Center Building Committee.

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Reduce the chances of flooding at your home

By Linda Chuss

Many basements in Mendon and Upton experienced flooding in December and January, due to intense rain and ground that was already saturated. According to Mendon Fire Chief Jason Bangma, "On December 18, we received about 30 flooding reports. In the previous four years, we had only one or two per year. Most of the flooded basements had sump pumps, but they didn't work due to power outages."

These incidents pose a safety hazard, can damage household items, floors, and walls, and sometimes lead to mold. Recovery is costly and time consuming. Even after making expensive repairs, residents worry flooding may recur.

Homeowners can take actions to help minimize flooding and damage. Among the most effective is having the property grading assessed. Bangma advised, "If needed, regrade so the pitch diverts water flow away from the home."

Maintaining effective drainage is another valuable preventive measure. Upton Fire and EMS Chief Michael Marchand said, "Make sure gutters are in place, clear of debris, and pointing water away from the house." Another measure is adding French drains around the house. Bangma added, "As for municipal storm drains and culverts, the highway department clears out leaves and debris, but if you see any that need clearing, let them know."

Shannon Hurley, a resident and realtor in Mendon, knows

how important it is for homeowners to prevent flooding. She shared her own flooding experience. "We had some flooding for a few years, but then in 2021, we came back from vacation to find a foot of water in the basement. Pressure behind the foundation caused leaks in the walls. We ended up installing a French drain system and double sump pumps and haven't had an issue since. Our best investment ever!"

"Sump pumps are helpful, with caveats," Marchand said. "Make sure your sump pump is properly cleaned and serviced. Plus, you need a plan if the power goes out. Battery backups usually don't provide enough power – you'll want a generator to use the pump during a power loss. And have a backup pump of equal size for the big storms."

Marchand advised anyone new to their home to prepare for potential flooding, adding, "Even if you've been in a home for years and never experienced flooding, pay attention to nearby construction projects, even a neighbor putting in a pool. Changes like that can result in flooding to your home."

While a flooded basement may become an emergency and require fire department assistance, those calls often come at a time when first responders are also addressing more critical issues, like downed wires and vehicle accidents. Taking steps to prevent flooding is better for public safety and significantly benefits homeowners.



Flooding, like that seen January 10 on Providence Street in Mendon, also damages basements. Photo courtesy of Nicholas Miller



Mendon resident Shannon Hurley's basement experienced severe flooding in 2021, but there have been no issues since installing French drains and sump pumps. Photo courtesy of Shannon Hurley

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Lab of All Trades tackles big and small projects for local homeowners

Business spotlight

“Since I was a kid, anytime I picked something up I wanted to take it apart, fix it and put it back together,” says Steve Labriola, the owner of Lab of All Trades. “My relatives began to hand me their broken toasters, microwaves and blenders and ask, ‘Can you look at this while you’re here?’” About two and a half years ago, Labriola finally decided to take this innate knack for repairs to a professional level by establishing a local handyman business.

Looking back, the career shift was practically inevitable. For 17 years, Labriola owned and operated a business that serviced large check processing machines for banks. He also has experi-

ence as a finish carpenter. In recent years he worked in property management. “I always found myself in the shop with the maintenance guys to see what they were working on. I was compelled to head down there and pick up tools,” Labriola says. “One day my supervisor said, ‘you know, you don’t have to spend so much time down in maintenance; you should be up in the office with your staff.’”

“I kept saying to my wife, ‘I don’t know if a desk job is really for me,’” Labriola recalls, “and she kept saying, ‘You really should do what you love.’” And so he did.

Lab of All Trades offers a wide range of handyman services, from smaller jobs like installing a light fixture, TV or appliance, to larger jobs like a kitchen remodel, deck installation or building a shed. People might be reluctant to call for minor work, Labriola notes, but his motto is, “There’s no job too



small.” He has a regular client, for example, who will hire Labriola to hang pictures. “If you’re uncomfortable doing it, just reach out,” he tells customers.

Lab of All Trades’ commitment to following up and following through distinguishes it from other companies. “I am surprised by the number of people who thank me for simply calling back,” he says.

For Labriola, it’s not just about customer service — he’s a bona fide people person. “I love people,” Labriola explains. “Meeting new customers in my town and surrounding towns is very exciting.” Paired with the satisfaction he gets from repair-



Steve Labriola’s lifelong love of repair work led him to launch a handyman business.

ing things, Labriola says “happy customers” make his work that much more enjoyable. “I love to see people happy.”

Having lived in Upton for 16 years Labriola is happy to grow his customer base in town. He does offer his services in the surrounding towns as well.

Labriola has completed many

jobs in town, including basement renovations, window and trim repair, door replacements & kitchen remodels.

To view past projects and learn more, visit labofalltrades.com, call 508-377-2137 or email steve@labofalltrades.com.

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Mendon Senior Center Programs for March & April

Deeds, Homesteads, Trusts and Estates

On Wednesday, March 13, at 1 p.m. the Mendon Senior Center will host Worcester Registry of Deeds Registrar, Kathryn A. Toomey and Registrar of Probate Courts Registrar, Stephanie Fattman. Listen as the nuts and bolts on how the Registry of Deeds and Probate Court work together for the residents of Massachusetts. Join us in a dialogue about land ownership and how probate issues can legally affect what happens to your property. Introductory information and an overview will be provided about Deeds, Homesteads, Trusts and Estates. Save the date for this informative program. Please stop by or call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to register.

Tornado & Storm Chasers

Tuesday, March 19 at 11 a.m.

You will not want to miss this

soon to be rare opportunity to meet Bill Kessler, recently retired Mendon Fire Chief, prior to his departure to chase storms this spring. Bill will share his passion for the chase with us on the first day of spring Tuesday, March 19 at 11 a.m. Come listen to his thrilling experiences. He has said, "I went on my first chase in 2005 as a bucket item check off. Little did I know I have so many buckets to check it off from! Since that first year, I just can't let it go. It's not just the thrill of the chase, the exploration of the Midwest is pretty cool too." Register at the Mendon Senior Center. Space is limited.

Orchestra of One

Thursday, March 19, 11 a.m.
We welcome back Susan McLeod and her Orchestra of One performance. You won't want to miss her St. Patrick's themed event sponsored by the Friends of Mendon Elders.

She will have sing-along songs as well as her orchestral pieces. Why not consider joining us for a delicious meal following the free performance.

History and Culture with Jim Buckley

History and art enthusiast Jim Buckley continues to share stories from Mendon's past with us. Join us on Tuesday, March 26 at 11 a.m. for this month's intriguing topic "Mendon's Bell is Silenced." On April 16, also at 11 a.m., Jim will be introducing us to another Massachusetts artist—American Painter James MacNeill Whistler. Please stop by or call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to register for these free programs. Walk-ins are also welcomed.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Education Programs

The Mendon Senior Center will be hosting the following two programs on Tuesday, April 9

from 10 - 11 a.m.: The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's and Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body. The first program will help you to recognize the common signs of the disease in yourself and others and includes the next steps to take including how to talk to your doctor. The second focuses on lifestyle choices and how they impact the aging process. Learn about important research into diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement. Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register for these informative programs.

The History of Baseball

Come test your baseball trivia on Thursday, April 18 at 11 a.m. when DAN DUNN offers us an interactive presentation about the evolution of "America's game" including the early beginnings of the Boston Pilgrims. Please call the center to register for this free program sponsored by the Friends of Mendon Elders. Consider joining us for lunch following the program. Please sign up for lunch separately.

Music Bingo & Pizza Luncheon

Join us for some fun and prizes on Tuesday, April 30 at 11 a.m. when the Friends of Mendon Elders will sponsor Music Bingo with Good Thomas. Join us for a pizza luncheon following bingo. The cost of lunch is \$5. Please register for one or both programs at the center. Call 508-478-6175

Learn How to Take Better Pictures

Join professional photographer, Steve McGrath, for a five-week photography class beginning Tuesday, April 30 at 1:30 p.m. Whether you want to perfect your Phone photography skills or are have a Digital camera of your own, our instructor Steve McGrathy, an accomplished, professional photographer with over thirty years experience, has something to offer. Learn how to create great images on your phone. Digital camera beginners, learn from an expert. Android and Apple Smart phones are welcome, and all models. Info about our instructor: <http://www.stevemcgrathphotography.com/classes>

The cost for this grant subsidized program is \$25 for five weeks. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register, Space is limited.

Mendon Senior Center Spring Day Trip ~ Friday May 24 Register Now. Space is limited.

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MENDON SENIOR CENTER

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How can women bridge the retirement gap?



Mark Freeman

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March 8 is International Women's Day, a day for celebrating all the accomplishments of women around the globe. But many women still need to make up ground in one key area: retirement security.

Women's challenges in achieving a secure retirement are due to several factors, including these:

- **Pay gap** – It's smaller than it once was, but a wage gap still exists between men and women. In fact, women earn, on average, about 82 cents for every dollar that men earn, according to the Census Bureau. And even though this gap narrows considerably at higher educational levels, it's still a source of concern. Women who earn less than men will likely contribute less to 401(k) plans and will ultimately see smaller Social Security checks.
- **Longer lives** – At age 65, women live, on average, about 20 more years, compared to almost 17 for men, according to the Social Security Administration. Those extra years mean extra expenses.
- **Caregiving responsibilities** – Traditionally, women have done much of the caregiving for young children and older parents. And while this caregiving is done with love, it also comes with financial sacrifice. Consider this: The average employment-related costs for mothers providing unpaid care is nearly \$300,000 over a lifetime, according to the

U.S. Department of Labor — which translates to a reduction of 15% of lifetime earnings. Furthermore, time away from the workforce results in fewer contributions to 401(k) and other employer-sponsored retirement plans.

Ultimately, these issues can leave women with a retirement security deficit. Here are some moves that can help close this gap:

- **Contribute as much as possible to retirement plans.** Try to contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. Your earnings can grow tax deferred and your contributions can lower your taxable income. (With a Roth 401(k), contributions aren't deductible, but earnings and withdrawals are tax free, provided you meet certain conditions.) At a minimum, contribute enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered, and try to boost your contri-

butions whenever your salary goes up. If you don't have access to a 401(k), but you have earned income, you can contribute to an IRA. Even if you don't have earned income, but you have a spouse who does, you might be eligible to contribute to a spousal IRA.

- **Maximize Social Security benefits.** You can start taking Social Security at 62, but your monthly checks will be much bigger if you can afford to wait until your full retirement age, which will be around 66½. If you are married, you may want to coordinate your benefits with those of your spouse — in some cases, it makes sense for the spouse with the lower benefits to claim first, based on their earnings record, and apply for spousal benefits later, when the spouse with higher benefits begins to collect.
- **Build an emergency fund.** Try to build an emergency fund containing up to six months' worth of living ex-

penses, with the money kept in a liquid account. Having this fund available will help protect you from having to dip into your retirement accounts for large, unexpected costs, such as a major home or car repair.

It's unfortunate, but women still must travel a more difficult road than men to reach retirement security. But making the right moves can help ease the journey.

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

Mark Freeman
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Brett Nasuti's bravery as a boy in 2009 may now help millions of people

By Linda Chuss

It isn't every day an 11-year-old does something that can help to dramatically improve the well-being of millions of people. Brett Nasuti of Upton did just that in 2009 by being the first U.S. subject in a drug trial. In February, that trial culminated in the FDA announcing approval of Xolair as a treatment for food allergies. The announcement also cited that nearly 6% of the U.S. population has a food allergy, and it can be fatal. Strict avoidance has been the only way to treat most food allergies, although some people outgrow them.

Nasuti recounts, "I was a miserable infant with constant rashes, and no one knew why. When I was 1, an allergist tested me: I had 16 food allergies, which is rare. It was hard to have a normal life. Sleepovers, parties, meals, everything was challenging for me and my family, who were amazingly

supportive. I had to wipe down seats and silverware, make sure no one touched an allergen and then touched a safe food. At some point, I decided to not let it hold me back from doing things and just be extremely cautious.

"By the time I was 11, I had outgrown all but six of my allergies. That's when the Xolair trial was starting. My doctors recommended me, and I joined it to desensitize me to my milk allergy. Every Friday, I went to the hospital for an injection and was given a little more milk each time, starting with the size of a sugar crystal. They kept me overnight for monitoring. I did it because I knew it could help people, and I trusted the doctors. Plus, I would have done anything to be able to drink milk and eat cheese – I really wanted pizza. That part of the trial lasted six months, and I built up to two ounces of milk. For the next two years, I had to drink a



Brett Nasuti with his brother and sister in 2009, enjoying pizza after being treated for a milk allergy as part of a clinical trial. Courtesy photo



Brett Nasuti of Upton, 15 years after starting the food allergy drug trial. Courtesy photo

little milk daily. I'm glad I did it, because I love cheese and eat it every day, now."

At 13, Nasuti also helped advance legislation to protect people with allergies when he joined others in Washington

D.C. to lobby senators and representatives. As a result of those and other advocacy efforts, there are now signs in restaurants about allergies, better food labeling, and other related laws.

Now, 15 years after starting the drug trial, Nasuti is happy about its success and that so many people with food allergies will have the chance to overcome them. "It seems crazy to be able to just order food with-

out thinking about the allergy issues," he said. "I might try it again for my peanut allergy."

Not everyone will be able to use the drug, though. He advises anyone with allergies: "Don't be embarrassed to speak up for what you need, like asking about food preparation in a restaurant. Exercise caution, but don't let it change who you are. And for everyone who has to accommodate those of us with food allergies, it's much appreciated."



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Start your spring cleaning early with Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe walking through your basement has gotten difficult or there is no more room in the attic? Perhaps you are planning to move, and you need to declutter before your open house?

Figuring out who to call can be challenging. 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 2005. 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 eight 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 overflow-

Business spotlight

ing with 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. 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!

Contact Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business take care of everything for you. Call Jay Schadler at 774-287-1133 or visit us online at www.affordablejunkremoval.com.

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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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

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

Upton Library is now at 9 Milford Street

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

Passport Services

Upton Town Library is now a passport acceptance agency.

We can help with providing forms and answering questions about getting or renewing a US passport. Call us 508-529-6272 or make appointment at uptonlibrary.org

eBooks and eAudio

Looking for digital format books to read or listen to on your phone or other device? Upton Library offers Hoopla and Libby, two sources for borrowing free eBooks and eAudio, as well as digital magazines. Come in and ask us.

Cultural Council Events

The following events held at the Community Center in March are supported in part by a grant from the Upton Cultural Council, a local agency which is

supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Generations of Jazz Thursday, March 22, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

An evening of music with musicians of several generations. Teachers and students coming together to share their love of music and especially Jazz and improvisation.

"The Beat Generation" Culture of the 1950s Monday, March 25, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

A multimedia presentation that highlights the cultural nuances of the 1950s. This presentation features live acoustic music and audience sing-alongs, coupled with audio and video clips highlighting the best (and sometimes the worst) of the 1950s. This hour-long presentation is suitable for all ages and it is family-friendly. The presenter is Fran Hart, founding member of the Beatles tribute band 4EverFab. Registration is required for each event.

Special Events

Tabletop Game Night for Adults Thursday, March 21, 5:15 - 7:30 p.m.

Join our new tabletop game series for adults. Come play new tabletop games every third Thursday of the month from

5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Experienced players and beginners both welcome. Pre-registration requested.

Author Reading & Discussion with Karen Michalson Saturday, April 6 2 - 3 p.m. (Community Event)

Meet local author Karen Michalson for a reading and discussion of her book, *The Maenad's God*. Selected by Independent Book Review as one of the best books of 2022; IAN Book of the Year Award Finalist for LGBTQ Fiction (2023). More information about the author available at her website: <https://karenmichalson.com/>.

Virtual Author Talk Series

View free online author talks, either live or recorded. Register and get more information at the library website, or at <https://library.org/uptontownlibrary>

Author Talk with Madeline Miller: On Retelling Greek Classics - Thursday, March 21, 7 - 8 p.m.

Author Talk with Smithsonian Curator Paula J. Johnson: The Foods, People, and Innovations That Feed Us - Tuesday, April 2, 2 - 3 p.m.

Author Talk with Diane Foley & Colum McCann: From Murder to Atonement - Confronting My Son's Killer - Tuesday, April 9, 2 - 3 p.m.

CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

Magazine Strip Silhouettes Wednesday, March 13 at 6 p.m.

Tweens and teens can join Mrs. Murphy to create artwork using recycled magazines and

cardboard. For ages 10 to 16. Pre-registration is required.

Whalemobile - Saturday, March 23

The Whalemobile is coming to Upton. The Upton Cultural Council is generously sponsoring our grant to bring this incredible inflatable whale to our Greatroom. On March 23, participants will go inside the whale and learn all about this amazing mammal. Spots for sessions are almost full, but feel free to stop by and say hello to Nile the whale and check out some books as well.

Monthly Library Events -

Register now. All programs and events require pre-registration at uptonlibrary.org or call 508-529-6272. Registrations open the month prior to events.

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

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins will take place March 4 and 18, as well as April 8 and 22, in the Greatroom. Join us for stories, songs, and fun. Best for ages 1-5. Partial funding for this program is through a grant from Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. Pre-registration is required.

Baby Storytime - Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

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

Preschool Storytime - Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

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

Saturday Storytime - March 9 and April 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Once a month we offer a 30-45-minute Saturday Storytime, blending Baby and Preschool storytimes featuring stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft. Can't join us for our weekday programs? This event is just for you. For ages 0-5. Pre-registration required.

Drop-In Storytime - *New* Monday, March 11 and April 29 at 9:30 a.m.

Beginning in March, our Children's Department will begin offering a new Drop-In Storytime session, once a month. No registration required. This will be a blend of our Baby and Preschool Storytimes; however, no craft will be provided. We will feature stories, songs, rhymes, and fun! This will be held in the Greatroom and will be a larger group size. For ages 0 to 5.

LEGO Club - March 6 and 20 at 4 p.m.

This group meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 4 - 5 p.m. This group is led by Library Director, Matthew Bachtold, and is for ages 5 to 12. We provide the LEGO

UPTON LIBRARY

continued on page 13

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iStent Inject and Microgoniomy for Glaucoma

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

What is glaucoma and how is it treated?

Glaucoma is a chronic disease defined by characteristic optic nerve damage. It is a multi-factorial disease with over 300 different anatomic variations and affects over 40,000,000 people worldwide. Glaucoma is a slowly progressive and irreversible disease and, in most cases, causes a painless loss of eyesight. It is, in short, “the silent sneak thief of sight”. The damage to the optic nerve is commonly caused by a fluid imbalance, or pressure, in the eye, as well as possible alterations in the blood flow to the optic nerve. It is well established that lowering the intraocular pressure can slow the process of optic nerve damage. The degree of pressure lowering necessary to prevent optic nerve damage is individualized for each person and each optic nerve. The greater the optic nerve damage, the lower the intraocular pressure is needed to achieve stability and prevent further optic nerve damage and further visual field loss.

If glaucoma is left untreated you may experience vision loss and eventual blindness. Treatment strategies for glaucoma are individualized to achieve the greatest lowering of the intraocular pressure with the least amount of risk to the individual’s eyesight and well-being. Commonly, in the United States, topical medications are used as a first line of treatment. In many situations, multiple medications are tried to achieve the desired pressure level. Unfortunately, there can be difficulties with compliance, cost and side effects with many of these medications and laser therapy is commonly substi-

tuted as a first line of therapy.

What is the iStent® trabecular micro-bypass stent?

Minimally invasive glaucoma surgical procedures, so-called MIGS involve alterations of the drainage area that are performed inside the eye. The iStent® trabecular micro-bypass stent is a surgical therapy for patients who have mild to moderate open angle glaucoma and have been tried possibly on topical medications or laser therapy. It is designed to improve the aqueous outflow to better lower the intraocular pressure and reduce the need for medications. The iStent® is the smallest medical device approved by the FDA to date. It is placed in the eye into the drainage area, so-called Schlemm’s Canal through the trabecular meshwork. The iStent® is an elective procedure. The iStent® is potentially beneficial in helping to reduce the number of glaucoma medications and drops needed to control this condition.

What is microgoniomy surgery?

Microgoniomy surgery (using the iAccess trabecular trephine device from Glaukos) is another type of MIGS. This procedure provides control of the eye pressure at lower risk than more traditional glaucoma surgeries. It alters the eye’s drainage system to lower the eye pressure and reduce the need for medications. Microgoniomy can be done standalone or combined with iStents during cataract surgery in a tissue sparing fashion to improve resistance to outflow in glaucoma. This tissue-sparing procedure can help lower the pressure even more compared to implanting iStent alone. During this procedure and ophthalmologist

(Eye MD/ surgeon) will make 3 trephination cuts in a part of the eye’s drainage system called the trabecular meshwork. This will allow fluid to leave the eye much easier.

Benefits (how the surgery can help)

The goal of the iStent and microgoniomy surgery is to lower your eye pressure and help preserve vision. It will not bring back vision already lost from glaucoma. After implantation, many patients are able to better control their eye pressure with fewer medications.

Risks

As with any surgery, there are risks with the iStent and microgoniomy procedure. The surgery may not lower the eye pressure or control the glaucoma even when it is properly performed. In addition, sometimes there can be complications that do not appear in the early post operative period but may develop days, months or



years later. Further treatment or surgery to treat those complications may be needed. As with any intraocular surgery, there may be loss of vision, blindness, loss of the eye, as well as bleeding, infection and injury to the eye or nearby body parts.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we use state-of-the-art technology and lasers to diagnose and treat a variety of eye problems, including glaucoma. We offer high-definition optic coherence tomography testing (OCT) that can predict glaucoma before it even happens. We also offer laser treatment when medications alone are not enough. All our offices are

equipped with OCT and state-of-the-art computerized visual field testing. We operate in a state-of-the-art surgery center close to home, here at the Cataract and Laser Surgery Center of Milford. All our surgeries are performed with an anesthesiologist in the room and an IV lane, in case of an emergency. No office-based surgery! We were among the first surgeons in New England to introduce this new technology and we offer stellar outcomes closer to home. With 22 years of established experience and tens of thousands of procedures performed, we are happy to offer state-of-the-art medical and surgical eye care and now the iStent inject /microgoniomy for treatment of glaucoma closer to home than ever before.

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OBITUARY

Kaarlo A. Rintala Sr.

Kaarlo A. Rintala Sr., 86, of Upton, passed away on Sunday, February 4, 2024, at home with his family by his side. He was the beloved husband of the late Lucille B. Rintala who recently passed away on Jan. 18, 2024. Married for 66 years, inseparable in life and now in death, theirs was a love story for the ages.



Formerly of Grafton, he was an Upton resident for 52 years.

Kaarlo was the son of the late Arvo and Aune (Matson) Rintala and was raised and educated in Worcester. He attended Clark University and Suomi College in Michigan. He was employed at General Motors in Framingham for 35 years prior to his retirement.

Kaarlo was a proud Finnish American who loved ice cream, music, his pool and his many pets. His favorite pastimes included fishing with his son, chopping wood for his stove and going to the track. He was a longtime harness racing enthusiast, owner and was still caring for horses well into his 80s.

He is survived by three chil-

dren, Kaarlo Rintala, Jr., and his wife, Cheryl, of Bellingham, Cheryl Rayner and her husband, Russ, of Worcester and Karla Barrows and her husband, Glenn, of Upton; one sister, Millie Crandall, of Boylston; five grandchildren, Christina, Sara, Stacy, Elina and Suzie and five great-grandchildren, Elizabeth, Julia, Aeva, Chase and Cody.

Calling hours were held on Saturday, February 17, in the Pickering & Son Upton Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association at act.alz.org

To leave online condolences, please visit www.UptonFunerals.com

Mendon flags flew at half-staff in memory of David Lowell (1941-2024)



The American flag at Memorial Square flew at half-staff in memory of David B. Lowell from Feb. 27 to Feb. 29 to coincide with his wake and funeral.

Photo credit Theresa Knapp



The American flag at Mendon Town Hall flew at half-staff from Feb. 27 to Feb. 29 in memory of David B. Lowell who passed away on Feb. 21, 2024.

Photo credit Theresa Knapp

In recognition of the passing of life-long resident David B. Lowell, who passed away on Feb. 21, 2024, and in accordance with the town's recently-enacted Town of Mendon Flag

Policy, the U.S. flag above Harrison Hall-Mendon Town Hall was flown at half-staff from Feb. 27 to Feb. 29 to coincide with his wake and funeral services. In this special circumstance,

mourning Mr. Lowell in this way is a fitting tribute the Town of Mendon can bestow.

Source: www.mendonma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/in-memory-of-david-lowell

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Upton Police Log

The Upton Police Department provided a wide range of services between Jan. 25 and Feb. 25 related to motor vehicle violations, disabled motor vehicles, traffic enforcement, radar services, parking complaints, road hazards, building checks, various alarms, odor investigation, abandoned 911 calls, and lost/missing property. UPD often provided mutual aid to Hopedale police, fire and EMS. Other entries of note include:



harassment prevention order

- Jan. 25** at 9:15 a.m., Farm St., vandalism
- Jan. 25** at 12:04 p.m., Laurelwood Dr. in Hopedale, mutual assistance
- Jan. 25** at 1 p.m., station, walk-in assistance
- Jan. 25** at 5:37 p.m., Prospect St., larceny
- Jan. 26** at 2:20 p.m., Milford St., well-being check
- Jan. 27** at 8:44 p.m., Main St., suspicious motor vehicle
- Jan. 28** at 1:10 a.m., Glen Ave., suspicious person
- Jan. 28** at 8:11 a.m., North St., disturbance, peace restored
- Jan. 28** at 3:50 p.m., Glen Ave and Hartford Ave. South, vandalism
- Jan. 29** at 10:29 a.m., Cider Mill Ln., suspicious person
- Jan. 29** at 1:37 p.m., Pleasant St., arrest
- Jan. 30** at 1:11 p.m., Milford St., suspicious person, returned to family
- Jan. 30** at 4:09 p.m., Glen Ave. and Pleasant St., motor vehicle collision with personal injury
- Jan. 30** at 4:40 p.m., Main St. and Hartford Ave. North, wires down
- Jan. 31** at 2:51 p.m., Main St. and Centennial Ct., low-hanging wires
- Jan. 31** at 7:32 p.m., Glen Ave., well-being check
- Feb. 1** at 6:35 p.m., Pleasant St., ha-

- ssment prevention order
- Feb. 2** at 7:14 a.m., Main St., family disturbance
- Feb. 2** at 10:17 a.m., School St., car seat installation
- Feb. 2** at 2:56 p.m., Main St., well-being check
- Feb. 2** at 4:24 p.m., Miscoc Hill Rd., suspicious person
- Feb. 3** at 9:43 a.m., East St., animal injured, gone on arrival
- Feb. 4** at 11:14 a.m., South St., well-being check
- Feb. 5** at 1:52 p.m., School St., community policing
- Feb. 5** at 8:21 p.m., Christian Hill Rd., suspicious package/material
- Feb. 6** at 3:07 p.m., Railroad Ave., animal complaint
- Feb. 7** at 10:48 a.m., Milford & Prospect Sts., animal injured
- Feb. 7** at 3:40 p.m., School St., attempt to serve summons
- Feb. 7** at 4:50 p.m., Mendon St., well-being check
- Feb. 7** at 7:58 p.m., Cider Mill Ln., suspicious person
- Feb. 8** at 9:39 a.m., High St., well-being check
- Feb. 8** at 12:22 p.m., Westboro Rd., harassment prevention order
- Feb. 8** at 8:14 p.m., Cider Mill Ln., suspicious person
- Feb. 8** at 8:39 p.m., Mendon St., animal injured
- Feb. 10** at 12:23 p.m., Russell Ave., water/sewer issue
- Feb. 10** at 6:14 p.m., Crockett Rd., hunter complaint/inquiry
- Feb. 12** at 12:06 p.m., School St., harassment prevention order
- Feb. 12** at 3:36 p.m., Fiske Ave. and Whitney Ln., animal complaint
- Feb. 13** at 10:13 a.m., Milford St., open door
- Feb. 13** at 6:34 p.m., W. River St., well-being check
- Feb. 14** at 1:55 a.m., Main St., suspicious motor vehicle
- Feb. 14** at 1:21 p.m., walk-in, house check

- Feb. 14** at 3:39 p.m., Hartford Ave. North, hit and run
- Feb. 16** at 9:16 a.m., School St., cell inspection
- Feb. 16** at 11:40 a.m., Milford St., threats, investigation
- Feb. 16** at 3 p.m., Main St., lost animal
- Feb. 17** at 4:18 p.m., Milford St., threats, peace restored
- Feb. 18** at 2:10 a.m., Centennial Ct., preventative patrol
- Feb. 20** at 12:30 p.m., Milford St., community policing
- Feb. 21** at 3:03 p.m., Milford St., well-being check
- Feb. 22** at 2:55 p.m., Westboro Rd., harassment prevention order
- Feb. 24** at 11:05 a.m., Main St., suspicious person
- Feb. 24** at 12:25 p.m., Fiske Mill Rd., well-being check
- Feb. 24** at 12:55 p.m., School St., car seat installation
- Feb. 24** at 1:56 p.m., Main St., disturbance/noise complaint
- Feb. 25** at 2:51 a.m., Main St., preventive patrol
- Feb. 25** at 3:45 a.m., Westboro Rd., preventive patrol
- Feb. 25** at 12:17 p.m., Pleasant St., structure fire
- Feb. 25** at 3:57 p.m., School St., harassing phone calls

Source: Upton Police Department
 PHOTO - Source: facebook.com/uptonpolice/

UPTON LIBRARY

continued from page 10

while you have fun building and making new friends. Pre-registration is required.

Kids' Book Club – March 6 and April 3 at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile and preteen titles on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m. Our March graphic novel title is *Allergic* by Megan Wagner Lloyd. Our April nonfiction title is *Weird But True! Birthdays* by National Geographic Kids. Copies are available at the circulation desk. This group is for ages 8-12 and reads mostly middle grade titles. We welcome new members all year round. Pre-registration required.

Teen Group – Tuesdays 3 p.m.

This group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 3 - 4 p.m. and focuses on a new theme each month, sharing books, crafts, games, and more. For March, our theme will be paper. This group is for tweens and teens

ages 10-16. This is always a drop-in program led by Adult Librarian Micaela.

Upton Reads Book Group

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

Tuesday, April 9 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, April 11 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Paris Library*, by Janet Skeslien Charles.

Fic or No Fic Book Group

An adult book group led by Librarian Micaela that alternates fiction and non-fiction selections. Meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 6:45 p.m.

March 27 at 6:45 p.m.: nonfiction title, *Mother-Daughter Murder Night* by Nina Simon.

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

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Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

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

ADULT PROGRAMS MARCH 2024

Upcoming Events:

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

Slow Flow Saturday Yoga with Katie Aissis of Sprouting Tree Yoga

Join Katie Aissis from Sprouting Tree Yoga for Slow Flow Saturday Yoga on Saturday, March 16 at 7:30 a.m. Her Vinyasa style yoga class links breath to movement in a dynamic sequence of postures. Participants will build strength while also finding moments throughout the practice to quiet the mind and rest the body. The class is appropriate for all levels and no previous yoga experience is necessary. Participants should bring their own yoga mat. Registration is required as space is limited. Visit our website to register.

Painted Wild Dogs, Cheetah, and Elephants, Oh My!: A South African Pre-

sentation with Jennifer Carlino

On Thursday, March 21 at 7 p.m. join Jennifer Carlino, Mendon resident and Land Use and Environmental Planner for the Town of Easton, for stories and photos from her volunteer work with Wildlife ACT in South Africa. In the hour-long program Carlino recounts her two-week volunteer vacation and relates stories from the trip in which she tracked cheetah, wild dogs, elephants, hyenas, vultures, lions, and other endangered species. Registration required. To register and for further information visit our website (www.taftpubliclibrary.org).

The Social Impact of Tea in Our History with Danielle Beaudette of The Cozy Tea Cart

Join Danielle Beaudette, tea specialist and owner of The Cozy Tea Cart in Brookline, NH, on Tuesday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m. for a talk about the history of tea and its social impact. Beginning with the discovery of tea and its spread into Europe, Ms. Beaudette discusses

the tea trade with China and the Opium Wars, tea's impact in the First World War, and the status of tea today. Throughout the presentation, participants can enjoy sipping tea from the major tea producing countries. Registration is required as space is limited. Visit our website to sign up.

Adult Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join us on Wednesday, March 6 and Wednesday, March 20 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on. Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. Crafts are NOT supplied.

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club will meet on Monday, March 11 at 7 p.m. to discuss *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton. Adult Book Clubs are typically held on the second Monday of the month. For upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259 to request copies of the books or log in to your account from our website to re-

quest them through interlibrary loan. The upcoming Adult Book Club book discussion schedule is as follows:

April: *Find Her* by Lisa Gardner
May: *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir* by Natasha Trethewey and the *poetry of Amanda Lovelace*
June: *The Bonesetter's Daughter* by Amy Tan

German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun. Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. Mark your calendars for Monday, March 25 at 6 p.m. for the next session. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

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

Upcoming books in the Footnotes series:

The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams by Stacy Schiff. Discussion on Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m.

Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library will meet next on Tuesday, March 26 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the library's Art Holmes Community Room for their monthly board meeting. Board meetings are typically held on

the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend. If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library web site.

TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS-MARCH 2024

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

Itty Bitty Story Time

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

Story & Craft Time

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

Alphabet Storytime

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

TAFT LIBRARY

continued on page 15



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TAFT LIBRARY

continued from page 14

Coffee and Conversations & Puppet Storytime

Dates: Wednesdays; March 6, April 3, May 1 and June 5

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

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

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

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

Preschool Kidding Around Yoga

We will learn yoga poses, dance, sing, and meditate. This class is all about fun- all abilities are welcome. Mats are available, or feel free to bring your own. Wednesday, March 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Tutors with Tails

Meet Sprite! Sprite is a therapy dog who loves children and love books. Sprite and her owner Janet will visit the Taft on the last Tuesday of each month. Register today for the opportunity to read to Sprite! Spots are limited.

Book Clubs

Graphic Novel Book Club: This month we will be reading: *Cat on the Run in Cat of Death* by Aaron Blabey. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, March 5 at 5 p.m.

8-12 Book Club: This month we will be reading: *The Unteachables* by Gordon Korman. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, March 19 at 5 p.m.

6-9 Novel Book Club: This month we will be reading: *Dragon Masters: Rise of the Earth Dragon* by Tracey West. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, March 26 at 5 p.m.

Upton and Mendon fire departments receive grant for safety equipment

In February, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced \$5 million in awards to 321 Massachusetts fire departments through the state's Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program.

"Every single day, firefighters across Massachusetts put themselves in harm's way to protect their communities," said Governor Maura Healey. "They deserve our thanks and our support. The Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program is just one way we can express our appreciation for that selfless dedication."

As part of the reimbursement grant program, Upton

received \$15,499.47 and Mendon received \$11,503.17.

Fire departments across Massachusetts were invited to apply to the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program, which provides reimbursement on purchases of 135 different types of eligible equipment. Eligible items include hoses and nozzles, turnout gear, ballistic protective equipment, gear washers and dryers, thermal imaging cameras, hand tools and extrication equipment, communications resources, hazardous gas meters, and more. In many cases, the purchase of this equipment will help depart-

ments attain compliance with Occupational Safety & Health Administration or National Fire Protection Association safety standards. This is the fourth year that funding has been awarded through the program.

"The Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants are an investment in the health and safety of Massachusetts firefighters," said State Fire Marshal Jon Davine. "The flexibility of the program is especially valuable because it allows each department to make purchases based on their specific needs and resources. It has become a vital part of

the way the Massachusetts fire service prepares for the constantly evolving threats in the world around us."

"Firefighters who have the proper protective gear and contemporary rescue tools are much better able to protect themselves and the residents they serve," said Hyannis Fire Chief Peter Burke, President of the Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts. "These grant awards will have immeasurable impacts on public safety in Massachusetts for years to come."

For a full list of recipients, visit bit.ly/FirefighterSafetyEquipGrants2024

Friends of Mendon Elders offering two scholarships in 2024

The Friends of Mendon Elders is excited to offer two \$1,000 scholarships this year to any Mendon resident high school senior who will be furthering their education. Every high school senior graduating from any area school who resides in Mendon will be eligible upon completion of the

application and a 300-word essay titled "Why I Respect My Elders and What I Have Done For My Community This Year."

In addition, eligible candidates must commit to, and finish, 20 hours of community service during your senior year and provide written

confirmation.

Applications are available at Mendon Town Clerk's Office and Mendon Senior Center. Completed applications and additional documentation

should be dropped off or mailed to the Scholarship Committee at The Friends of Mendon Elders, Inc., Mendon Senior Center, 62 Providence Road, Mendon, MA 01756.

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Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
No recorded sales since 01/17/2024		
Date	Upton	Amount
02/09/2024	129 South St.	\$898,000
02/09/2024	0 Stoddard St. (5,227 sf lot)	\$10,000
02/08/2024	25 Shoemaker Ln. #11	\$793,756
02/05/2024	6 Cross St.	\$510,000

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



The 4-bed, 4-bath, 3,120 sf house at 129 South Street in Upton recently sold for \$898,000. Photo credit www.zillow.com

Matching grant received to purchase permanent conservation restriction at Vandersluis property

MENDON - The Metacomet Land Trust received a Conservation Partnership Grant from the Commonwealth in the amount of \$175,000. It represents the match for funds designated at Mendon's November Town Meeting (\$175,000) for the purchase of a permanent conservation restriction for the property on North Avenue owned by Jim and Cheri Vandersluis.

The Trust is currently having the property surveyed and we are completing other due diligence to satisfy the terms of the grant. The purchase must be completed and the permanent restriction recorded at the Registry of Deeds by the end of June.

The 116 acres will be known as the Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve and will stretch from North Avenue on the west side to the Hopedale boundary on

the east side. Muddy Brook runs through the property north to south. There is also a permanently protected conservation property on the north side of the property and conservation properties abutting the property to the east. Combined, the area provides terrific wildlife habitat for the area and the potential for environmental classrooms for nearby schools.

The land trust will work with its partners including the Mendon and Hopedale Conservation Commissions and the property owners to develop and maintain trails with potential connections to other protected properties.

To steward the property, Metacomet Land Trust plans to form a "Friends of Maple Farm" volunteer group to help with care, protection, and ongoing trail maintenance of this



Image of the Vandersluis Farm. Source: 2007 Mendon Reconnaissance Report, Blackstone Valley/Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory

special property. We will be kicking off a fundraising drive to support these efforts and we look forward to a celebration this summer when the purchase is concluded.

For more information, please visit www.MetacometLandTrust.org or email ailinfo@metacometlandtrust.org.

Submitted by Lisa Moczynski of the Metacomet Land Trust

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NURSING

continued from page 1

staff, and guests joined the students, as well as a guest speaker from the healthcare industry, to share words of inspiration.

The ceremony began with a welcome from Practical Nursing Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA, who spoke highly of the successful program, its faculty, and graduates. Monks said, "This class is ready to test for the National Council Licensure Examination-Practical Nurses exam. We're proud of all you have accomplished in our time together."

"Well-trained, you are a valuable resource for the Blackstone

Valley residents, hospitals, health care providers, and others," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, who spoke about the increasing need for professionally trained nurses. He also recognized one student who chose to attend BVT not once but twice, Rachel Vachon, a graduate of BVT's Health Services program (Class of 2019).

Class President Wilson Asinobi gave a Class Address. The guest speaker, Melissa Ferguson, BSN, RN, director of nursing at Knollwood Nursing Center, congratulated the graduates on becoming nurses and utilizing their education and training to employ the fundamentals of nursing to make a difference. In addition to the

certificates and pins presented, faculty and legislative awards (the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Senators Ryan Fattman and Rebecca Rausch) provided certificates and Meredith Mogren received the Faculty Recognition Award. Wendy Harper, Cayleigh Harris, Rachel Minney, Meredith Mogren, and Rachel Vachon received an Outstanding Academic Achievement award.

If you're ready to take that next step toward a new and exciting career, one of the Moonlight Programs might be for you. The Practical Nursing program accepts in-district, out-of-district, and out-of-state applicants. For more information, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/practical-nursing.

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Pet of the Month: River



At only two years old, River found herself without a family.

This beautiful grey girl with brilliant white trim on both ears took a while to acclimate to life at the shelter. Now she is eager for attention but waits patiently for you to notice her. She loves to be brushed

and petted, and she will roll over for belly rubs. River doesn't seem interested in the other cats in the room and doesn't yet venture out of her space.

Based solely on her behavior at the shelter, we feel she would be happy to be the only pet in a quiet home, but she may

also enjoy a home with other pets that allow her to have her space.

Beautiful River is waiting patiently for a home of her own.

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



The Upton Mendon Free Press is currently seeking freelance writers who live in the area and are interested in writing for our publication. If interested, please send a résumé and writing sample to

editor@UptonMendonfreepress.com

Alzheimer's Association Educational Programs

Join us for Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body program on Tuesday, April 9 from 10 - 11 a.m.

The Mendon Senior Center will be hosting the following two programs lead by the Alzheimer's Association MA/NH: Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body and The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's.

The first workshop focuses on lifestyle choices and how they impact the aging process.

The second will help you to recognize the common signs of the disease in yourself and others and includes the next steps to take including how to talk to your doctor.

Learn about important research into diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement.

Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register for these informative programs open to the public.



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- Active enrollment in e-statements – you must sign into your online banking account at least once every 12 months to keep enrollment active.

HIKE

continued from page 1

with without the fear of getting too lost in the woods.” Still another hiker commented, “My family and I love the outdoors and all that nature has to offer. The streams and little waterfalls in the woods were like the icing on the cake. Just so wonderful!”

To participate in the challenge, sign up online at mendonma.gov/hike-challenge or pick up a packet at the Mendon Town Clerk’s office at 20 Main St., Mendon. Sign a Release Form through registering at the website or dropping one off to the Mendon Town Clerk’s office. All trail maps and trail descriptions are available online or at the Town Clerk’s office. Each hiker should fill out the MHC log as you enjoy the trails.

When completed, write a short paragraph about your favorite hike (on the back of the log). Once all the trails are completed, submit your MHC log to the website or drop it off at the Town Clerk’s office. Once your application is reviewed, a patch and/or sticker will be mailed to you.

Anne Mazar, chairperson of the Mendon Land Use Committee, is enthused about the interest in the Hike Challenge. She commented, “I think it is a wonderful way to get people on



Mendon Hike Challenge patch hikers receive when they complete the challenge.

Source: www.mendonma.gov

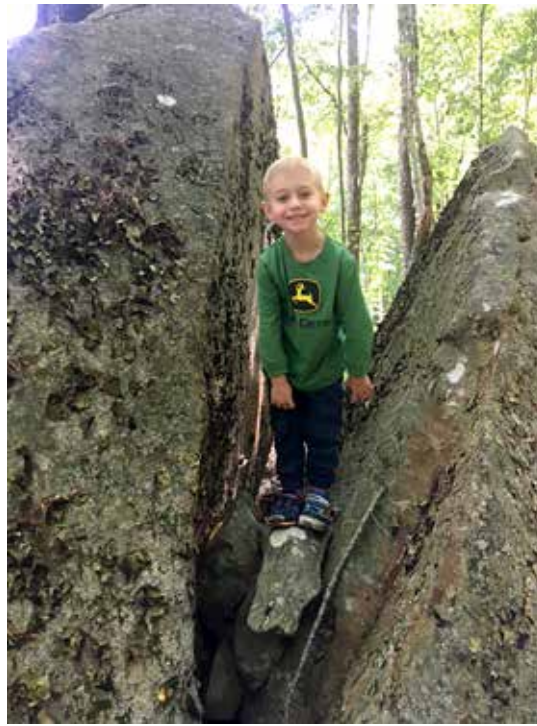


Mendon Hike Challenge sign.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks

the trails and hopefully want to conserve land and understand the value of open space.”

If you have any comments or suggestions about the trails as you are hiking, please email them to the Land Use Committee at landusecomm@mendonma.gov.



Elijah Weeks on the Split Rock on Hike 1 “The Zoo Loop” in the Mendon Town Forest.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks



Elizabeth and Douglas Weeks and Xander at the trailhead of Hike 1 “The Zoo Loop.”

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks



Four-year-old Elijah Weeks of Uxbridge on Hike 4 “Cormier Woods Red and Blue Trails.”

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks



Trailhead of Hike 7 “Meadow Brook Uplands.”

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Weeks

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Upton burning season now through May 1, permit required

Written burning permits are issued Sunday through Saturday by the fire personnel on duty at the Upton Fire and EMS Headquarters.

Written permits must be obtained in person at the Fire and EMS Headquarters prior to any burning. The seasonal cost of a burning permit is \$10.

Permits issued in prior years are not valid. A new permit must be obtained in person each year.

You will be issued one burning permit number that will be valid for the season. This permit will remain in effect for the season. Permits may be revoked for violations of rules and regulations.

Open air burning is allowed from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

Once a permit is issued, you will be entitled to burn brush only. No brush can exceed three inches (3 inches) in diameter. The burning of leaves, stumps, grass, logs exceeding the three-inch (3 inches) diameter, hay, and building materials is prohibited by Open Burning Regulations 310 CMR.

Each day that you wish to burn, you must call Fire and EMS Headquarters at 508-529-3421 and give your permit number and address. At that time, you will be informed if burning is being allowed on that particular day. Burning is allowed at the discretion of the Fire Chief or his designee in his absence. When you call to request to burn, you must speak to a firefighter who will tell you if burning is allowed. Please do not leave a message on the answering machine.

You may call after 9 a.m. to request to burn. Permits will not be issued before that time. Please do not call the police department dispatcher for information regarding burning permits, as they will not be issuing any permits.

Should your fire become out of control, you should call 911 immediately.

For additional information on Open Air Burning tune to Local Cable Channel 11.

Source: <https://uptonma.gov/248/Open-Burning-Information>


Nasuti earns place on Dean's List at Nichols College

Nicholas Nasuti of Upton has been named to the Dean's List for Fall 2023 at Nichols College in Dudley, Mass.

To be considered for Dean's List, a student must attain a semester average between 3.50 and

3.84, and no grade below B-

Nichols College is a small business school and college in Dudley, MA with innovative approaches to earning bachelors and graduate degrees. www.nichols.edu



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Upton garden plots available for 2024 growing season

Do you want the joy of raising your own local food, but don't have space for a garden of your own? Then join us at the Upton Community Garden.

Most plots are 4 feet by 16 feet raised beds for growing organic vegetables, flowers and herbs. Plots are available to Upton residents and Upton-based community groups.


Elevated beds may be available for gardeners who have difficulty accessing the standard height beds. There is a \$10 participation fee to defray costs.

To sign up for the 2024 season, send a note to: CommunityGarden@uptonma.gov by April 1.


Available plots will be assigned by lottery. A number of plots are reserved for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and community groups. Please indicate if you fit into one of these categories.


For more information, visit uptonma.gov/410/Community-Garden









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Mendon Police Log

Between Jan. 25 and Feb. 24, the Mendon Police Department responded to hundreds of calls, many related to suspicious and disabled motor vehicles, motor vehicle violations and accidents, fire and carbon monoxide alarms, road hazards, parking complaints and violations, suspicious activity, house and vehicle lockouts, and medical emergencies. They also conducted more than 200 motor vehicle stops during that time. Other entries of note during the month include:

Jan. 25 at 12:27 p.m., Uxbridge Rd., brush fire
Jan. 25 at 6:43 p.m., Springbrook Ct., fraud

Jan. 26 at 8:10 p.m., Main St., disturbance
Jan. 26 at 8:41 p.m., Lovell St., medical emergency
Jan. 26 at 9:44 p.m., Main St., disturbance
Jan. 27 at 4:32 p.m., Cemetery St., harassment
Jan. 27 at 6:26 p.m., Cape Rd., medical emergency
Jan. 28 at 1:03 p.m., Washington St., animal
Jan. 29 at 12:06 p.m., Russell Ct., fraud
Jan. 30 at 9:51 a.m., Providence St., assist citizen
Jan. 30 at 2:22 p.m., Milford St., erratic operator
Feb. 1 at 6:15 p.m., Cape Rd., erratic operator

Feb. 2 at 4:39 p.m., Powers Rd., document service
Feb. 4 at 12:38 p.m., Crestview Dr., medical emergency
Feb. 5 at 9:56 a.m., Colonial Dr., well-being check
Feb. 5 at 12:05 p.m., Main St., hit and run motor vehicle collision
Feb. 6 at 8:18 a.m., Main St., noise complaint
Feb. 6 at 8:51 a.m., Main St., noise complaint
Feb. 6 at 1:27 p.m., Main St., harassment
Feb. 6 at 3:36 p.m., Puddingstone Ln., found property
Feb. 9 at 12:01 p.m., Millville St., well-being check
Feb. 11 at 10:47 a.m., Main St.,

found property
Feb. 12 at 4:10 p.m., Hastings St., well-being check
Feb. 14 at 10:37 p.m., Old Taft Ave., well-being check
Feb. 15 at 12:04 p.m., Neck Hill Rd., message delivery
Feb. 16 at 11:09 a.m., Taft Ave., animal
Feb. 17 at 4:04 p.m., Cape Rd., hit and run motor vehicle collision
Feb. 17 at 10:23 p.m., Asylum St., medical emergency
Feb. 20 at 9:35 a.m., Bates St., hit and run motor vehicle collision
Feb. 20 at 4:06 p.m., Hastings St., hit and run motor vehicle collision



Feb. 21 at 12:46 p.m., Blackstone St., fraud
Feb. 21 at 4:06 p.m., Uxbridge Rd., stolen vehicle
Feb. 23 at 11:31 a.m., Uxbridge Rd., animal
Feb. 24 at 12:15 p.m., Main St., well-being check
Source: www.mendonpolice.com/
PHOTO - Source: Facebook @mendonpolice

EASTER EGG HUNT

SPONSORED BY: UPTON MEN'S CLUB,
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Saturday, March 23, 2024
Memorial School Fields, Upton, MA

11:00AM - 1:00PM
 Face painting, kids games, crafts, food, & more!
 Upton Bloomer Girls Bake Sale
 Touch a Police Cruiser
 Touch a Fire Truck

11:30AM
 Easter Bunny arrives!

1:00PM
 Easter Egg Hunt!!

Donations are greatly appreciated.
 Proceeds will go to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

PLEASE BRING A NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM TO DONATE TO THE UPTON FOOD BANKS.

Free for ages 1-10

MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 6

lunch, and admission to Isabella Gardner museum and gratuities)

Payment is due May 1. Checks should be made out to Friends of Mendon Elders (please add 'trip account' in memo line)

Call Trip Coordinator Beverly Fior, 508-473-8382 for more information.

Health Insurance Counseling

Certified SHINE health insurance counselors are available to assist individuals turning 65 or who are already on Medicare. The SHINE program (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) offers free and unbiased services: counselors are available to discuss all options related to Medicare and additional coverage, and they do not sell any plans. To make an appointment; call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 or call the Regional SHINE Office at 508-422-9931.

SHINE is funded through

the federal agency, Administration for Community Living and administered through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Circuit Breaker Credit—When filling out your 2023 State Income Tax Forms

The Taxation Aid Committee would like to remind Mendon's seniors to see if you qualify for the Circuit Breaker credit when filling out your 2023 Massachusetts personal income tax returns. The form to do that is called "Schedule CB".

Residents who receive this tax credit will be eligible for the new means-tested property tax exemption to lower your Fiscal Year 2025 property taxes. If you've already filed your 2023 state income tax return and find out now that you qualify for the Circuit Breaker credit, you can file an amended tax return to obtain the credit. More information about the Circuit Breaker tax credit can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit>

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Claffin Hill Symphony explodes into New Year with triumphant concerts – Announces season finale program change

The Claffin Hill Symphony Orchestra – the Central Massachusetts region's fully professional, world-class resident orchestra – resumed concertizing in January and February after the Holiday break – with several amazing and epic concerts!

The CHSO produces an entire season of professional symphony concerts at its beautiful and acoustically perfect Milford Town Hall Grand Ballroom, a Jazz Series at the Sorrento in Milford, and a chamber music series at Apple Tree Arts in Grafton. All three series resumed with truly outstanding performances and record audience attendances, and the orchestra is poised to continue the concert season into the end of April with five more concerts scheduled at the three CHSO venues.

The Homefield CHSO Jazz Series continues on Saturday, Feb. 24, at 7:30 p.m. at the Sorrento Restaurant, 143 Central Street in Milford. The resident "Homegrown Jazz Trio," consisting of Stephen Chaplin, Piano; Greg Chaplin, Bass; and Bob Tamagni, Drums, will be joined by Jazz Guitarist Mark White.

Wayne Sermon, Guitarist for Imagine Dragons touted White's talent when he wrote, "As a student of Mark's for many years, I found his knowledge of the instrument unparalleled."

All the musicians have taught

and/or studied at the Berklee School of Music in Boston and have performed with many of the greatest names in Jazz nationwide. The series continues the tradition of excellent jazz performance in Milford that has its roots in the 1950s when Milford Native Henry "Boots" Mussulli starred as the lead alto saxophonist with the Stan Kenton Orchestra and brought numerous jazz greats back to his hometown to perform with him. The series will conclude on Saturday, March 23. Tickets are available at www.claffinhill.org

The Claffin Hill Symphony season continues on Saturday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the Milford Town Hall Grand Ballroom, 52 Main Street in Milford.

This concert – entitled "Latin Salsa Buffet" – features guest classical guitarist David McClelland in a program inspired by music and flavors of Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and Italy in works by Gershwin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Copland, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Marqués.

"The Claffin Hill Symphony was founded in 2000 with a mission to create a musical, cultural venue for the region's finest professional musicians – many of whom came to our country from all over the world to study in the great music schools in Boston, became citizens, now make their homes in our region and teach in our public and private

schools," said Paul Surapine, Founding Executive and Artistic Director. "We seek to build a NEW audience for the greatest musical heritage of the past 300-plus years by creating programming that is "familiar" and expands the audience's musical "palate." Centered in Milford, CHSO has an exponentially growing audience base from communities throughout the Central Massachusetts region – many of whom never experienced the power and sublime beauty of great music being created right before their eyes!"

The Claffin Hill Chamber Music Series at Apple Tree Arts in Grafton will conclude on Saturday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. in

the Apple Tree Arts Great Hall at 1 Grafton Common. This concert will feature musicians of the CHSO's impressive string section in "Glorious String Serenade Night."

The CHSO Season Finale will be on Saturday, April 27. The orchestra has just announced a program change for that concert. Originally scheduled to present "Concert Opera Heritage" – a performance of two famous Italian operas – the orchestra will instead perform a "Symphony Movie Pops Night" with music of many of the greatest and most popular movie film scores – including music of John Williams and many of the other great film composers of

the past 50 years.

All tickets to all CHSO concerts can be purchased online at www.claffinhill.org. Patrons can call the CHSO office at 508-478-5924 with any questions.

The Claffin Hill Symphony Orchestra, located in Milford, MA, is a powerful regional musical force. Through passionate performances presented by masterful musicians, the CHSO plays a leading role in the cultural enrichment and vitality of Central Massachusetts and MetroWest communities. The CHSO sponsors a remarkable outreach program that helps youth perfect their musical talents and build long-lasting appreciation for music.

Bishop Feehan Announces Second Quarter Honor Roll 2023-2024

ATTLEBORO - Bishop Feehan Vice Principal for Academics Charlotte Lourenco is proud to announce the Honor Roll students for the second quarter. Those students include the following Upton and Mendon residents:

Upton: Casey Kayrouz, grade 9, First Honors

Mendon: Rachelle Rousseau, grade 9, First Honors

Honor Roll is a recognition of high-performing students based on the student's overall average

in any given quarter, regardless of the levels of their classes. Bishop Feehan has three levels of Honor Roll.

First Honors is awarded to students whose overall average in that quarter is grade 93.00 or higher, Second Honors is grade 90.00 or higher, and Third Honors is 85.00 or higher, with no individual grade below 80.

For the entire honor roll, visit www.bishopfeehan.com/apps/news/article/1885477



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SPORTS

BVT's Landry Fitzgerald captures state title

Upton senior is first BVT wrestler to win States

By Chris Villani

Just moments before wrestling for the Division II state championship, Landry Fitzgerald hummed “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay,” the hit by soul singer Otis Redding recorded nearly four decades before Landry was born.

“I like that kind of music, and I was bored before the match,” Fitzgerald said. “I was just humming it, dancing a little bit, warming up.”

It’s not a typical pump-up song, but that’s how relaxed the Blackstone Valley Tech senior was before winning the first state championship in the history of his program.

“The final match, I went into it with no nerves at all,” he said. “I thought ‘I worked hard for this. I know what I am going to do. I am going to go in there and get what I need to do done.’”

Wrestling in the 285lb division, Fitzgerald won more than 30 matches in his final season against only three defeats, two of them coming in the all-state championships where he placed seventh. Fitzgerald said he did not start the state meet as relaxed as he finished.

“At the beginning of the tournament, I was super nervous,” he said. “I am always nervous, but my first match came up, and



Landry Fitzgerald atop the podium at states. The BVT senior always wears a costume at meets, a tradition that began last season. Courtesy photo

the guy was a lot stronger than I thought he would be. I thought this was going to be a battle, but it got easier over the two days.”

Fitzgerald comes from a wrestling background. His oldest brother, Damien, was a wrestler in high school and Fitzgerald said Damien would come home from practice and wrestle with Landry and their other brother

Shane.

“I always wanted to beat him growing up, I knew I wanted to wrestle,” Fitzgerald said. “My dad told me that BVT had a co-op with Bellingham for wrestling and I said ‘We are signing up, we are doing that.’”

Fitzgerald bounced back from an injury early in his career. He spent this past offseason in the

gym, lifting weights, tracking his calories and protein intake, and conditioning himself to have a great final high school season.

Fitzgerald is hoping to continue his wrestling career next year at the collegiate level. He is weighing an offer from Coker University, a Division II school in Hartsville, S.C.

Heading into the New Eng-

land Championships, held the first weekend in March, Fitzgerald said he was looking forward to testing his skills against the best wrestlers in the region. But there is one wrestler he thinks he might be able to beat.

Fitzgerald joked, “My brother Shane was very proud of me, but I think he is a little bit worried now.”

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SPORTS

Costa shines in state wrestling meet

BVT junior from Milford is state finalist in 2024



Ella Costa (left) on the podium after her runner up performance at the Division II state wrestling championship. Courtesy photo

By Chris Villani

Ella Costa got into wrestling when she was in middle school, watching her older brother compete in the sport.

“I thought it was cool, and I wanted to be like him,” Costa said. “So, I joined the wrestling team in middle school as well.”

The Milford resident and Blackstone Valley Tech junior

put together a strong postseason that included advancing to the Division II state finals and a top-10 finish in the all-state meet.

“I felt like I improved a lot compared to last year’s season,” Costa said. “I definitely exceeded my own expectations. I didn’t expect to do as well as I did in the girls’ state and all-

state tournaments.” Costa, 17, wrestled against boys throughout the regular season. She said she struggled at times, but the competition helped her improve a great deal by the end of the year.

“I got more comfortable and more in-depth with my knowledge and skills,” Costa said, adding that she was pleased to peak at the right time of the year.

“I felt pretty good about the way I performed, though I wish I did better at all states,” she said. “The second day was a lot more difficult, because I had wrestled a lot more by that day.”

While Costa was pleased with the second-place finish, it did leave her hungry to try to take the top spot next winter.

“I would love to get a banner at my high school, and at Bellingham where we co-op,” she said.

Costa said the fact that she is a wrestler catches some people by surprise.

“It’s definitely a big shock factor,” she said. “People don’t think of it as a main sport that people play in general, and on top of that, a girl wrestling, it’s a surprise, but my friends are all supportive.”

Costa said some of her

friends were “a little confused at first, but they come to my meets and they always cheer me on.”

In addition to wrestling, Costa also competes in cross country and track and field at Valley Tech, sports she hopes will help her improve her cardio fitness. She also plans to

join a wrestling club, practicing a few days per week over the summer. Costa has hopes to wrestle in college, and said she will spend the next year looking at potential women’s programs in the area.

“I really love to wrestle,” Costa said, “and I would love to wrestle in college.”

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