

'Person of the Year' Honored at Gala

By GRACE ALLEN

A Norfolk woman was honored last month as the 2024 Person of the Year by the Norfolk Community League. Maureen Rose Kirby-Cappuccino was recognized during NCL's gala celebration, held on Saturday, March 9 at Lake Pearl Luciano's in Wrentham.

Cappuccino was feted for her extensive volunteer work not only in Norfolk, but also in numerous communities around the state.

Locals might know Cappuccino as the house administrator of Gilly's House, a residential sober home for young men transitioning back to society after treatment. She's a relentless advocate for the Wrentham non-profit, inspiring people to provide meals, donations, and other sundries to keep the house running smoothly.

But she's also been a volunteer in many other organizations, including King Philip Music, Norfolk Baseball, Norfolk Soccer, and the Norfolk Teacher Parent Association. In addition, you'll find Cappuccino



Maureen Rose Kirby-Cappuccino is Norfolk's 2024 Person of the Year.

collecting donations for shelters and churches, like Bethany House Ministries in Millis, St. Basil's in Methuen, and Lazarus House Ministries in Lawrence. She's active in St. Jude Catholic Church in Norfolk, too.

As if that wasn't enough, Cappuccino is part of a group dubbed the "God Squad," friends that organize and distribute thrice-weekly donations from Wegman's, Costco, and the Walpole Food Pantry to people in need. The group came together in 2022,

when Maureen was battling breast cancer and needed help handing out the donations.

When asked what motivates her, Cappuccino answered, "JOY--Jesus, others, yourself. It's all about God, not me. We're supposed to answer the call to help others. We are supposed to come last."

The consensus among the many people who nominated Cappuccino for the award was

GALA

continued on page 2

Annual Arbor Day Tree Seedling Giveaway Slated for April 26

By GRACE ALLEN

Norfolk's DPW will be offering free tree seedlings to residents in celebration of Arbor Day later this month. This is the third year for the popular event.

Two-hundred shagbark hickory seedlings will be available on a first-come, first-served basis starting at noon on April 26 in the front office of the Department of Public Works, 33 Medway Branch.

You'd better get in line early. Blair Crane, Norfolk's director of public works and the town's tree warden, anticipates the seedlings will go quickly.

"Last year, we gave out 100 seedlings in 20 minutes," Crane said. "With the growing popularity of the program, I doubled the order this year."

The seedlings will be about two years old and prepackaged in bags with some topsoil to start them off. Instructions will be included. They are grown in nurseries across the country.

Crane chose the shagbark hickory for this year's giveaway



Shagbark hickory tree seedlings will be given out free to residents on April 26. The tree is one of the most distinctive of all hickory trees.

because it is a less common but hearty and long-living tree. It was introduced into cultivation in 1629, and while its average lifespan is 200 years old, some trees can continue to produce seeds until they reach age 300.

"As we do our best to diversify our trees here in town, it is less common than maples and oaks," noted Crane.

ARBOR DAY

continued on page 5

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GALA

continued from page 1

summed up by one person's statement: "She is always thinking of how to help others. There is no one more deserving of this award than Maureen."

Cappuccino credits her parents for exemplifying a life of service to others. Bob and Dot Kirby ran the Clonmel Arms Restaurant on Dedham St. (Rt. 1A) in Norfolk (now the location of Printmaster). Among the patrons were corrections officers from the area's prisons. In 1972, two of the officers were slain during a violent night at the state prison in Norfolk, so Bob and Dot organized a fundraiser for the officers' widows. Maureen says that's when she first became cognizant of her parents' good works in the community and was inspired to start a fundraiser herself for the widows, with the help of friends.

"My parents were faith-filled and showed me what it was like to reach out to others," said Cappuccino. "It starts at home."

Cappuccino acknowledges her discomfort with being nominated for and eventually winning the award, believing in



Maureen Cappuccino with sons (l to r) Vinny, Anthony, and Nick at the March 9 gala. On right is Nick's girlfriend Michelle Paquette.

the Christian injunction delivered by Christ during the Sermon on the Mount: "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

"This award, the gala, was very overwhelming for me and I was quite anxious about it," admitted Cappuccino. "I don't want recognition. But then I realized maybe God was using this as a way to inspire others and I decided I was going to use it for His glory. If I could get one other person in the audience to say, 'Wow, what am I doing? I've got all the clothes I need in the closet, I have two cars in my garage, I have 2.5 kids...' then maybe this is what the award can do."

She also says social media is both a blessing and a curse but

she uses it to promote her causes and ask for donations. It enables her to reach out to many more people than would otherwise be possible.

At the NCL gala, Cappuccino concluded her acceptance speech by appealing to the attendees to become "cheerful givers," as noted in one of her favorite biblical scriptures.

"Remember, it's not the quantity of your service to others, but the quality," she said. "One simple act of kindness has the same ripple effect as an unkind one. We all have been given the gift of free will. We can look the other way when we see others struggling, or we can do something about it."

This is the fifth time the Norfolk Community League



NCL 'Person of the Year' nominees, from left, Karen Reilly, Kendra Bixby, and Maureen Cappuccino. The organization says this year it received a record number of votes for the women, a testament to their impact and in appreciation for their volunteer efforts.

has selected a Person of the Year. The person of the year is nominated by residents and then the NCL board chooses 3 or 4 candidates for residents to vote on. This year's candidates were Cappuccino, Karen Reilly, and Kendra Bixby.

The Norfolk Community League was formed in 1974 as NOVA (Norfolk Organization for Various Activities). The organization's goal is to enhance the quality of life for Norfolk

residents while supporting charitable activities and strengthening community spirit. All monies raised through NCL activities and fundraisers are dispersed to various area groups through its grant program. One of its biggest fundraisers is the NCL gala, held once every 18 months, which honors a Person of the Year.

For more information about NCL, visit norfolkcl.org.

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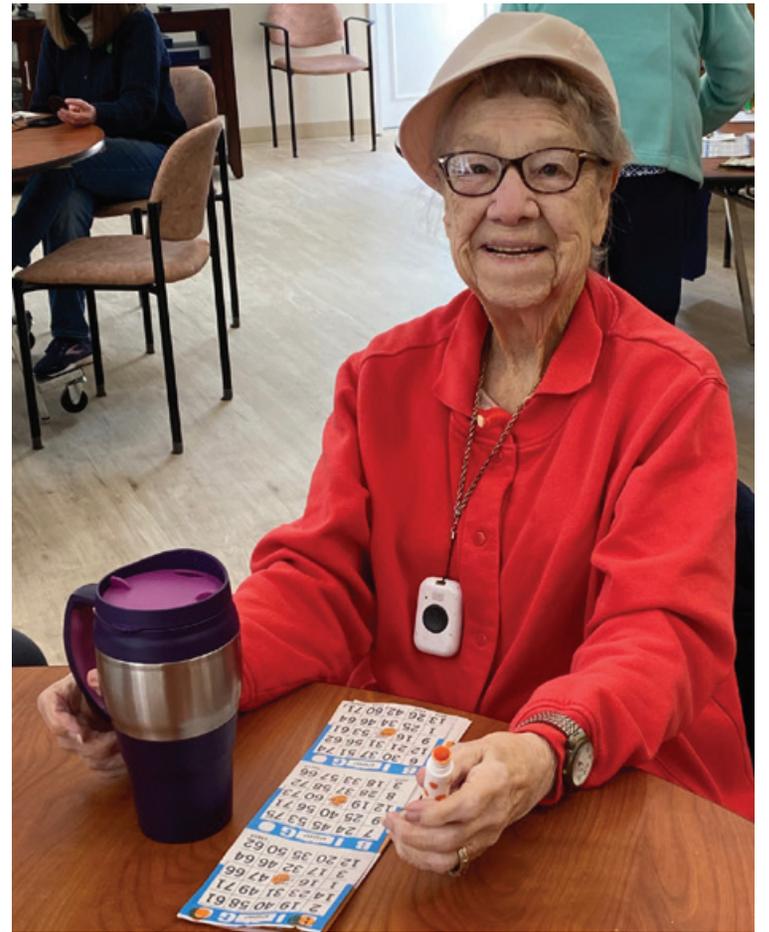
Norfolk Resident Turns 100 This Month

Life-long Norfolk resident Evelyn “Deby” Preston will turn 100 on April 12!

Deby grew up in the large white house across from the Norfolk Grange Hall, along with her six brothers and sisters, and now lives right next door at Norfolk’s Hillcrest Village. She raised a son and two daughters in Norfolk, and for 21 years while her kids were growing up, she worked at King Philip High School and King Philip Middle School as a cook and a baker in the school cafeterias.

One of Deby’s secrets to living life to the fullest has been to keep active. She has loved being a grandmother, a great-grandmother, and a great-great grandmother to many. She enjoyed gardening for many years and was always busy with other hobbies as well. Deby especially enjoyed traveling with her husband, Harold, on many adventures near and far. She has been crocheting and knitting since she was a young woman, and still knits hats and blankets for several charitable organizations – which is keeping her very busy still.

One of her favorite activities each week is to go to the Norfolk Senior Center on Mondays and play Bingo. The best Bingo days are the days she wins of course! If you ask Deby if she has any regrets, she will tell you her only regret is “not seeing Alaska.” She is one special lady. If you see Deby, please remember to wish her a very Happy Birthday.



Deby Preston, playing Bingo at the Norfolk Senior Center, will celebrate her 100th birthday on April 12. Contributed photo.

Guest Column

Grass Roots Democracy in Action

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

Some may accuse your writer of overly focusing on local politics in recent months but if ever a subject deserved such attention, it is now.

Wrentham and other Massachusetts towns will hold their local elections soon and the candidates are busily immersed in their campaigns. Previously, this column decried the pitiful voter turnout in local elections. At first, this trend was attributed to electorate apathy but after digging into the subject your writer concluded it was due to lack of voter knowledge and information.

Wrentham is fortunate to have been gifted with a local community activist in the person of Julie Garland. During the last few years, Julie and her collaborators have been busily crafting an internet-based candidate information vehicle as well as promoting events designed to get critical information to potential voters. In a previous column, your writer described how the Wrentham Voters’ Guide works, providing at keyboard touch statements by the candidates as well as their qualifications and photographs. Now every potential voter may access this important information, no matter what their mobility limitations might be.

Supplementing the Guide, events in which candidates actively participate are being held. For the first time, on March 12, King Philip Regional High School hosted Wrentham Engagement, a candidates’ forum during which every candidate seeking local office had the opportunity to be heard and seen on Cable 8 TV or in person. Your writer attended this event and was very impressed. When the event concluded, all candidates gathered on the KPRHS stage for a group photograph, arms locked in a crescent of bipartisan harmony, each respecting the sometimes-divergent views of their opponents.

At a time when certain office seekers are cavalierly courting camaraderie with those in favor of autocracy over democracy, what is happening in Wrentham is sorely needed in every community in America. We are facing serious challenges in Wrentham requiring significant capital outlay, focusing on housing, education and infrastructure improvement. Workable solutions require mature deliberation, steeped in pragmatism, not partisan bickering.

In Wrentham, we have taken a giant step forward toward achieving that goal.

Opinions expressed in the Guest Column do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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Byrne specializes in retirement and college planning; the firm's primary goal is to help clients feel secure in their financial future. Their approach is hands-on, with advisors taking the time to understand each client's unique financial situation, risk tolerance, and long-term objectives. Partnering with LPL Financial, the largest independent broker-dealer in the nation, ensures clients have access to unbiased investment options tailored to their needs.

Education is a cornerstone of their service. Whether through informative seminars, user-

friendly website tools, or personalized meetings, the team strives to simplify complex financial topics and keep clients informed every step of the way. Check out the Byrne Financial Freedom Facebook page for updates on their annual educational events at Franklin Country Club.

The objective of this family-run company is to assist individuals across all phases of life. Whether you're in your 20s or 30s embarking on your career journey, nearing retirement, or anywhere in between, Byrne Financial offers tailored services to address your needs. Brian Byrne highlights, "Many individuals are stumped when they receive their first job and are tasked with setting up their 401k; they're unsure about how much to contribute and where to begin selecting investments." To support newcomers to the workforce, Byrne Financial has curated a webpage dedicated to the next generation of young investors. Visit byrnefinancialfreedom.com.

Joe Byrne takes pride in his active involvement within the local community. Having raised his three sons in Norfolk, he values the importance of networking,

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Business spotlight

Throughout the years, Joe has served on the board of directors for Dean College, the Home for Little Wanderers, and has been a member of St. Mary's Church in Franklin. Additionally, he has contributed his time to the board of the Franklin Country Club.

Byrne Financial is a pivotal resource for a diverse range of clients, offering comprehensive financial solutions tailored to their unique needs and circumstances. For those approaching retirement, families saving for future educational purposes, or those undertaking estate planning, and tax strategies, we have a network of experts to guide our clients.

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As a part of their family-run business model, Brian explains how they are always available for their clients: "We always answer the phones, and we are always available. Ensuring exceptional customer service is our highest priority."

The first step to clarity in your financial future is to pick up the phone and ask questions. As a fiduciary firm, Byrne Financial is required to always put the needs of the clients first. Whether it's a question of what type of investment account is right for you OR what to do with excess cash in your bank account, Byrne Financial is here to help. Call 508-528-9366 or stop in the office in downtown Franklin at 11 East Street.

April 2024 marks the two-year anniversary of their second office, located in the Gulf Coast Town Center, Fort Myers, Florida.

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Wrentham's Destination Imagination Team Secures Second Place in Competition

BY GRACE ALLEN

On March 2, a group of Wrentham schoolchildren showcased their creativity at the 2024 Massachusetts Destination Imagination Tournament in Beverly, earning 2nd place.

Destination Imagination (DI) is a project-based, kid-driven program that teaches kids to be innovative problem solvers by using creativity, critical-thinking, and teamwork in open-ended challenges.

Wrentham's winning team, called the Diplomats, was comprised of fourth graders Heidi Almeida, Lukas Signes, and Emily Wallace. They were led by team leader Grey Almeida.

Two other Wrentham teams, second and third graders, also competed. A first-grade team participated in the non-competitive category.



The students were tasked with presenting a story about a character's discovery and investigation of an artifact, leading to a significant finding. The challenge emphasized creativity in storytelling, the integration of scientific or technological methods in the investigation, and the design and manipulation of a puppet to represent a character from the past.

The Diplomats' project centered on a Swiss UN delegate discovering an artifact in a bank safe in Zurich, leading to an intriguing narrative that involved a trip to Area 51, time travel, and meeting a historical figure from NASA, Mary Jackson, who ultimately offered a solution to climate change.

The Wrentham team's solution not only adhered to the

challenge's guidelines by incorporating a creative story, an archaeological investigation, and the effective use of a puppet but also highlighted the students' talents through DI's "Team Choice Elements"—creations that show off a team's interest, skills, and areas of strength.

The Diplomats also showcased their linguistic skills by incorporating multiple languages into their presentation (French, Italian, and Swedish), and their musical talent by composing and performing a piece on the recorder.

By securing second place in the competition, the Wrentham Diplomats qualified for the Destination Imagination Global Finals, to be held in Kansas City in May.



Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization with over 100,000 students in more than 30 countries participating annually. Students in kindergarten through college can participate.

For more information, visit www.destinationimagination.org. Anyone interested in forming a team can register through their school's administration.

ARBOR DAY

continued from page 1

The shagbark hickory is part of the walnut family and its fruit is highly prized by both humans and wildlife, explained Crane.

The fruit is a nut with a hard outer husk that splits open when ripe. The nut is often referred to as the "black truffle" of the nut world and is considered a delicacy. Black bears, foxes, mice, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, and a number of birds enjoy the nuts every fall, too.

Shagbark flowers emerge in mid-spring, according to Crane. The male, pollen-producing flowers are gathered together in green hanging clusters known as "catkins." Female flowers, which produce the fruit, form in spikes.



The shagbark hickory tree is named for its bark, which peels away in large, flat curving plates, giving the tree a shaggy appearance.

The annual Arbor Day seedling giveaway is a way to help restore the trees that have been cut down in town during the last few years due to disease and overgrowth.

Last year, eastern redbud seedlings were given out, and the year before, white oak seedlings.

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Which way to Apricot Lane? This charming boutique is ready for Spring!

By JENNIFER RUSSO

A boutique with a flair for both fashion and building community? Yes please!

With spring springing up, it's time to pack away those dark sweaters, leggings and boots and refresh your wardrobe with some new, lighter, and brighter styles. This season's trends are bringing forth bright whites, cobalt blues and Kelly greens, bold fuchsias, and "Girlcore" – a modernized feminine look that includes open crochet, florals, shades of pink, a little ruffle action, and can be as bold or as subtle as you want it to be.

The great news is that we don't need to haul ourselves into the city to get our hands on these latest styles, since there is a new boutique right in our own backyard that sources from the best designers. Stroll down to Apricot Lane and walk into a world pulled straight from the pages of your favorite fashion magazines. The spring stock is breathtaking, with something for everyone – dresses, tops, bottoms, accessories, and even biodegradable paraben-free face masks and body wash infused sponges (perfect for your gym bag or travel).

After receiving her Business and Marketing degree in her native Poland, working in the United States as a visual merchandiser for well-known shops like H&M and Bloomingdales,

and expanding her creativity during the "retail break" that Covid brought about – Marta McNulty thought it was time to venture out on her own fashion retail journey. Opening Apricot Lane was a great way to marry her love of fashion with creating something truly special for the community.

Marta attends a number of trade shows throughout the year to check out the latest fashions and vendors that come from across the globe. She selects styles she believes would be a great fit for women who live in our neighboring communities.

"Getting to know my customers and understanding their different fashion needs and preferences is one of the best parts of what I do," shares Marta. "I am always looking for trendy, quality items that can be versatile – with the small details that make it really unique," she says. "Sustainability is also very important to me, so I offer brands that are not only fashionable, but are also eco-friendly."

Marta's philosophy is the idea of wearing what you want, what you feel good in, and what speaks to who you are as an individual. She and her super-friendly staff are ready to help you find just what you're looking for.

"I believe in choosing what you wear because YOU love it and feel good in it. You aren't like

Business spotlight

anyone else, and that's a beautiful thing. So, dress to reflect that. We each have distinctive styles, different things that make us happy, and accepting who we are is so important."

Balancing business ownership and family, Marta knows what it means to want to feel good about yourself while juggling multiple responsibilities. Striving to provide what our families need – like getting dinner on the table and helping our kids with their homework AND working long hours to ensure a successful venture – are all things she understands firsthand. The great thing is that we can still have our individual style and look amazing while doing it. The perfect top or accessory can sometimes boost our confidence and outlook as we tackle everything that we need to accomplish.

Apricot Lane is truly a hidden gem. It's an eye for fashion and a heart for the community, that provides a wonderful opportunity for shoppers to support a local, growing business. And not only this one, but others too. Marta loves to collaborate with local artisans and small businesses, independent wellness product owners



and more, with popups and sip & shop events to enable people to get to know each other and network with others.

From brands like Good American Jeans, GILLI, Wanakome, Molly Bracken, French Connection and Skies are Blue, Apricot Lane brings to Franklin domestic and international brands that can't usually be found in other stores, so clients will always be at the forefront of today's hottest looks, whether they are looking for something casual-chic for a trip, something to wear to a special event, a "notice me" top, or a unique gift.

Visit Apricot Lane and check out their newest fashions for spring! They are located at 342 East Central Street in Franklin, just behind Starbucks and next to The SHED. Check them out online at <https://apricotlaneboutique.com/store/franklin> and give them a follow on Facebook and Instagram at @ApricotLaneFranklin

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Wrentham Cooperative Bank Opens New Branch

Community Banking Comes to Norfolk

By JANE LEBAK

On February 9th, Norfolk’s community saw the ribbon-cutting on its newest business: Wrentham Cooperative Bank.

Wrentham Cooperative has been a staple of the King Philip communities since 1901. A second branch opened in Wrentham in the 1990s, and the new Norfolk branch is the third.

Scott Terrien, President and CEO of Wrentham Cooperative Bank, says, “We are the quintessential cooperative bank—a community bank—and our focus is on our customers.”

Not everyone is familiar with what it means to be a “cooperative” bank. Terrien explains, “A cooperative bank is a state chartered mutual bank. We are not a publicly traded bank. We’re here for the benefit of the depositors, not any shareholders. Every depositor is a voting member of the bank.”

A state charter also means that in addition to FDIC insurance, the bank carries DIF insur-

ance to secure all deposits in full.

From a products and services perspective, Wrentham Cooperative offers everything a commercial bank does. From savings and checking accounts, to small business accounts, to credit cards, to CDs and money market accounts, it’s all there.

As far as homes are concerned, they offer mortgages, home equity lines of credit, and Mass Save® HEAT Loans. Wrentham Cooperative is especially skilled at working with first-time homebuyers.

“We can turn around loan decisions very quickly,” says Terrien. “All the decisions are made locally, and keeping everything in-house means we can stay incredibly competitive with our rates. Our loan officers are responsive. If you have a question, you’re dialing a local phone number, not a call center. After you close, we don’t sell our loans to other institutions, so you’ll probably be speaking with the same person who approved your loan.”



The new location is convenient to center Norfolk, right on the traffic circle near the commuter rail station and across from the library.

Wrentham Cooperative has seventeen employees. “We don’t just talk about understanding small businesses,” says Terrien, “We are a small business, so we understand what small businesses need.”

In the same way, Wrentham Cooperative doesn’t just talk about community—they understand the communities of Norfolk and Wrentham. Amy Linehan, Norfolk’s Branch Manager, says, “Pretty much every employee of the bank lives in Wrentham, Norfolk or the surrounding towns. I live locally, and all my kids went to KP. I see our



Andrea DiLorenzo; Universal Banker, Amy Linehan; Branch Manager Jennifer Silva; Assistant Branch Manager, Leslie Fitzpatrick; Universal Banker

customers around town, giving everyone a more personal banking experience rather than a corporate feel.”

The bank’s size makes it more nimble to handle the community’s needs. “When something happens, we can pivot faster,” says Terrien. “It’s not like turning a cruise ship.”

Also, boots on the ground means the bank can anticipate problems. Linehan says, “One of the great things about being in the KP community, especially with our employees being local,

BRANCH

continued on page 8

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Member

Spring & Summer Advice for High School Sophomores

Junior and senior year of high school is commonly thought of as “the” time to prepare for college; however, sophomore year is equally important. Initiating the process earlier provides students with a head start, enabling them to tackle some tasks before the busy fall of junior year. Here are a few suggestions that students can focus on during the spring of their sophomore year:

- **Focus on Academics:** Prioritize studies, finish the year with determination, and remember, every grade point counts! If a course poses a challenge, reach out to the instructor or an advisor for help. Ultimately, the academic transcript is the most important factor in college admissions.
- **Demonstrate Academic Rigor:** Encourage students to develop a strong academic transcript through thoughtful course selection. Colleges value a trajectory of growth, where students exhibit academic strength, embrace challenges, and

explore interests. For example, consider a student who enjoys the humanities and begins high school with College Prep English-9, earning a B+; sophomore year they advance to Honors English-10 achieving an A. The following two years, the student further challenges themselves by enrolling in AP Language and Composition and AP Literature. This progression showcases the student's proactive approach to better develop their strengths and interests.

- **Plan for Standardized Tests:** Standardized testing can be valuable, and students are encouraged to prepare for either the ACT or SAT exam by following a planned test prep schedule. The summer before junior year is often the ideal time to begin test prep. Summer tends to be less hectic and allows the student to focus attention on the upcoming tests scheduled in the fall of

junior year. Understanding the difference between the SAT and ACT exam, determining which test may be a better fit, and knowing the free or affordable test prep options are important—email tracy@mycollege101.com for a FREE resource.

- **Engage in Extracurricular Involvement:** Participation in activities and demonstrating impact is a key element in developing a meaningful activity resume. When students engage in activities that they genuinely enjoy, commitment tends to deepen organically. As an example, consider a student with a passion for writing, sports, who also subscribes to a monthly online magazine to keep up on the news. The student may choose to join the high school newspaper as a general member and contribute short articles about sports. Their enthusiasm and talent shine through, leading the student to be appointed as the feature editor for the high school sports the following year. As they embrace the additional responsibilities, their commitment, skills, and leadership flourish. By senior year they are offered the editor -in-chief - a testament to their dedication and growth.
- **Hit the Road:** Schedule a local college road tour during spring break to visit campuses. An ideal trip consists of various sizes and



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

school settings- like rural, suburban, and city campuses. There is no need to travel far, since at this stage it is about identifying what college criteria matters most to the student - and not where the student will ultimately apply.

- **Cultivate Relationships with Teachers and Counselors:** Start to develop genuine connections with teachers and counselors. These relationships will prove invaluable when college recommendation letters need to be requested during junior year. Prioritizing teachers who have significantly influenced the student's academic and personal development will be excellent choices for writing impactful letters.
- **Embrace Summer:** While students absolutely need time to recharge, there are

plenty of fun ways to keep learning during the summer heading into junior year. Explore activities like reading (magazines are fine too), journaling, drawing, learning a new water sport, working at the local ice cream shop with your friends, exploring various volunteer opportunities, interning at a local business, and/or attending an interesting 2-week college camp. Email tracy@mycollege101.com for a FREE volunteer resource.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

College 101 Admissions Consultants LLC.
Website: www.mycollege101.com.
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BRANCH

continued from page 7

is we may know about events or situations before the wider public, so we know how to prepare or react.”

“Community” doesn't only mean approving a first-time homebuyer for a mortgage. When the Lions Club held their “Holiday on the Hill,” Wrentham Cooperative was there, decorating a tree even though the branch wasn't open yet.

The Wrentham Cooperative app keeps customers in touch

with their accounts 24/7, from anywhere in the world. Terrien says, “With online banking and mobile check deposit, our customers don't need to stay local. If someone wants to use an ATM in another state, for example, we don't charge a fee to use that ATM. It's our way of making you feel close to home even when you're far.”

Amy Linehan says, “With the small bank experience, you're a person. We care about which products suit your needs rather than whatever corporate requires us to sell. Our only ‘quota’ is how many customers

we've helped, not what looks good on a report tomorrow.”

Terrien agrees. “Being a community-oriented bank is not just about the financial support. It's about being in the community and part of the community. We can only be successful if our community is successful.”

To learn more about cooperative banking, visit <https://www.wrenthamcoop.com> or stop by your local Wrentham Cooperative branch today.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Ready Homebuyers? Things Are About To Change

It's been a perfect storm the last 3+ years against first and second-time homebuyers.

But a change is coming, starting with anticipation of mortgage rates falling from 7%.

Morningstar, echoing other analysts, in March shared current Fed Funds rate of 5.25-5.50% will be 4.00 to 4.25% at end of 2024. Furthermore, expect the Fed to continue to "cut through end of 2025, ultimately bringing the federal funds rate down by over 300 points."

Talk to realtors and lenders, they're seeing activity pick up.

Why? Wait until mortgage rates fall to 5%, then homes in certain price points will have inversely increased in value. Whereas, if one can purchase now with expectation to lower ongoing expenses via refinancing later, you've capped initial co2006sts and participated in appreciation.

Thus, first time buyers and those looking to move up, it's time to plan.

This means prioritizing your needs, wants, locations and bud-



Glenn Brown, CFP

get for after you've moved into your new home. This last one is critical as lenders base your pre-approval on this moment in time, not the fact you plan to do X a year from now which requires more money in your budget.

Due diligence should also include:

Zillow, RedFin, Realtor - Scroll beyond pictures and into details of when built, sq. ft., interior features, acreage, adjacent home values and price/tax history. With price history, see when last sold, amount, then account for

pictures or better yet when you visit, to see what's been done since to determine value.

Tax Assessments and Property Taxes - Regardless of Realtor views on tax assessments relative to asking price, know a \$890K listing with town tax assessment of \$620K for \$9,300 property taxes, will get reassessed the following year. If bought for \$900K, town likely comes in at \$820K (or higher) for \$12,300 property taxes or \$250 extra a month on your budget.

Financing Options - Explore beyond 30-year fixed rates. Understand directional interest rate landscape and how long you expect to stay in your home. Does a 7-year adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) make sense if the plan is to move in 5-7 years or refinance as rates come down 50-75bps?

Mortgage and Cash Flow Calculations - The more variables, the better. Same with ability compare refinancing scenarios and contrast amortization tables. With clients, I'll share calculator.net, use links to save scenarios and then run these inside

eMoney cash flow analysis. Together, we see impact on their future budget, cash flow 1-3 years out as well as long-term impact.

For example, say one refinanced \$600K in Sept 2020 at 2.75% on 30-year for \$2,449 a month.

In April 2024, decides to move with current mortgage balance ~\$550K, using equity and additional savings, to add \$150K to a new \$700K mortgage at 7%. New monthly payment is \$4,657, or \$2,208 more. In 5 years (April 2029), outstanding balance is ~\$658K without refinancing.

Conversely, if able to pay \$4,657 a month, decide to stay put with Sept 2020 mortgage and make \$2,208 additional payments starting April 2024, the balance is \$322K by 2029. Beyond the \$336K spread after 5 years to move and borrow \$150K, the Sept 2020 is now paid off in August 2035 and not 2050.

But wait, there's more to consider.

What if the 7% mortgage is refinanced down to 5% by April

2026? New monthly is \$3,634, or \$1,023 less. Add this as extra payment starting 2026, what do you have?

Understand money is a tool, not the only consideration.

There is great value in doing what's best for your family, educational or work opportunities and/or your personal choice of belonging to a community.

You should know this value going into a decision, not after it.

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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Special Lay-Led Service at FUSF on April 14

'Reflections on Our Shared Past'

On Sunday, April 14 at 10 a.m., Dr. Rob A. Lawson, a history professor and director of the honors program at Dean College, will lead the service at the First Universalist Society in Franklin.

April is a meaningful month in American history—it marks the season of the year when the American Civil War both began and ended, and Lincoln was slain. Those were the years when the First Universalist Society in Franklin was in its infancy and its leading light, Dr. Oliver Dean, founded Dean Academy (now Dean College). It was a divided and wounded country then, and the backdrop of the Civil War provides us with the opportunity to reflect on our shared past of struggle, and to pray for and imagine a hopeful future.

Dr. Rob A. Lawson is a cultural historian who has written on musical, visual, and theatrical arts and now works in documentary filmmaking, co-producing two series: "The Boatbuilders" and "History in Your Backyard." His signature work, "Jim Crow's Counterculture: The Blues and Black Southerners, 1890-1945" (LSU Press), won the Thomason Prize for book of the year in 2011. He is the managing editor of the New England Journal of History.



Dean College Professor Dr. Rob A. Lawson.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. For more information, please contact us at info@fusf.org or call (50) 528-5348.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

b.LUXE Gives Back

BY GINA WOELFEL

It's officially spring, a busy time for many businesses, particularly those deeply connected to their communities and who believe in giving back. As a responsible local business, we focus on our own goals while also considering the needs and aspirations of our neighbors.

b.LUXE is fortunate to be surrounded by like-minded businesses that believe in their community and actively promote and sustain each other.

Though neighbors are typically thought of as the people who live next door or down the street, at b.LUXE, our bonds extend beyond physical proximity. Since 2016, our studio has maintained a special connection with our "neighbors" from The Martello Instituto de Belleza, our sister school in Cancun, Mexico.

The Martello Institute, led by Cinthia Martello, is a hub of creativity and talent where students who share our love and dedication to beauty come to learn and grow. Our team travels to Cancun yearly to award scholarships to two deserving and hardworking students. We also provide educational resources and the necessary supplies to support the students' studies.

This year, we gave a handheld microscope to the school. The microscope provides a magnified view of the scalp. It's an essential device for beauty professionals that helps detect scalp and hair follicle problems. Additionally, each student received all the tools and prod-

ucts required to offer a scalp spa treatment. Many of you have already enjoyed this service at b.LUXE. The treatment is incredibly relaxing and includes a scalp health diagnosis, an exfoliating scrub, a scalp massage, and a complete wash, condition, and blowout.

Our trips to Cancun are inspiring, and we owe those positive vibes to Cinthia. Following our class, she hosts a luncheon where we mingle with the students and catch up with how their year has been going. On our last trip, our wedding manager, Eva Mongie, expressed her love for tamales, and this year, Cinthia's students surprised us with a huge plate of homemade tamales, which we promptly devoured. This thoughtful and delicious gesture perfectly embodies who they are and why we're so close. At b.LUXE, we always try to act without expectation. In return, we've received a gift from the Martello family that feels like sisterhood.

April is an important month at b.LUXE, where we focus on giving back.

We look forward to working each year supporting the Franklin Food Pantry, Paws New England, the Hummingbird Walk, the Special Olympics, and the Medway Food Pantry.

This month, our salon is partnering with The Mahan Circle Medway Food Pantry, a division of The Medway Housing Authority, on a tampon drive.

b.LUXE
hair • makeup • skincare • editorial



SCAN TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Why specifically a tampon drive?

Millions of people across the United States are suffering the consequences of not being able to afford period products. SNAP & WIC programs that help provide healthy food to women and children do NOT cover access to hygiene items like period products, with many states still taxing menstrual hygiene products as luxury items. Access to these products should not be a privilege. The lack of access to menstrual health products, specifically tampons, for people in need can be devastating and a complex problem that many have to face each month.

But we can do something to help!

We're accepting tampon donations at b.LUXE for the month of April. Please bring a regular-sized, sealed package of tampons to b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio (variety packs are perfect.) Our team is also making a large donation and hopes we can support this cause together.



St. Josephs Parish Website



Medway Mahan Circle Food Pantry Venmo

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THE MEDWAY FOOD PANTRY AT MAHAN CIRCLE

(Note: regular-sized boxes are preferred as the food pantry can not open or break up large, bulk packaging) You can also drop off donations directly at the Mahan Circle Medway Food Pantry at the address below.

If you can't stop by the studio, please consider donating to the Medway Food Pantry. Any amount is appreciated. Donations can be made through the St. Joseph Parish website, the Mahan Food Pantry Venmo, or by mailing a check to the address below.

The Medway Food Pantry
600 Mahan Circle,
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Thank you for joining us in supporting the Medway Food Pantry. As always, we're so proud of our community's ability to help those in need.

The b.LUXE Beauty Team

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Norfolk Democratic Town Committee Announces April Meetings

The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee will hold two meetings this month: April 5 and April 25. Both meetings begin at 7 p.m. at the Norfolk Public Library, located at 2 Liberty Lane. The library is fully accessible, and all are welcome.

The April 5 meeting will be held in the Community Room of the library and will discuss monthly agenda items and reorganization of the Committee.

The April 25 meeting will be held in the library's lounge and will discuss monthly agenda items.

About the Norfolk Democratic Town Committee

The Democratic Town Committee is a group of Norfolk Democrats whose shared goal is to improve the lives and well-being of Massachusetts residents and all Americans by helping elect Democrats to local, state and national office. The Committee is active in creating shared awareness of issues important to Democrats, recruiting town Democrats to assist in the activities of the Committee, and working with other local Democratic Town Committees and the State Committee to advance Democratic interests locally, across the Commonwealth, and nationwide. For more information, visit the group's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NorfolkDemocrats>.

Norfolk Clean and Green Campaign Set for April 6

15th Annual Town-Wide Cleanup

The Norfolk Grange invites locals of all ages to celebrate Earth Day and participate in Norfolk's 15th annual "Clean and Green Town-wide Cleanup" on Saturday, April 6. Volunteers of all ages are encouraged to pick up unsightly litter along roadways and public places to help beautify the community.

Participants may collect litter any day(s) of the week prior to and including April 6. Participants are asked to attest that the trash is not from a household.

Drop off collected litter and recyclables at the Grange Hall at 28 Rockwood Road from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 6. Alternatively, participants may request their litter collection or large

items be picked up at the site of the cleanup. Contact Kevin Roche at 508-328-5604 if you would like a pickup on April 6 by Lions Club volunteers.

During this event, if applicable, please follow Massachusetts Covid Safety Guidelines. Also, participants may pick up volunteer certificates documenting their community service during drop off times at the Grange Hall.

For more important safety and general information pertaining to this event, please visit the Norfolk Grange Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Norfolk-Grange or contact Robin Biscaia at (508) 740-2777.

Norfolk Receives \$959,752 to Fund Wastewater Treatment System

The town of Norfolk has received a federal earmark to help fund the expansion of the Town center sewer system.

Norfolk received \$959,752, which was supported by U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss, as part of the federal FY24 Community Project Funding Program. These funds will be used for the design, engineering and permitting of a new wastewater treatment system with new sewer lines to serve areas of the town center not currently served by sewer.

"Clean water has been my priority for three funding cycles," said Rep. Auchincloss. "These projects take time – they're not quick and flashy – but the benefits will extend for a generation in Norfolk."

The FY2024 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies funding bill provides \$58.2 billion in new spending for energy and water development, including \$10 billion toward improving critically important water infrastructure.

"We are very pleased to have received these funds," said Select Board member Jim Lehan. "This will allow us to develop a detailed feasibility study that will hopefully enable us to fully utilize the full capacity of our treatment plant to further develop opportunities in our business district."

Select Board Chair Kevin Kalkut said: "For the last five years, Norfolk has been working toward a vision that would deliver on the 'vibrant, walkable town center' that so many within the community have expressed interest in seeing."

"Through strategic zoning proposals in 2021, investments in Master Plan updates on track to be completed this spring, and collaboration with area smart-growth experts, wastewater treatment options became a clear barrier to that future potential. Thanks to Congressman Auchincloss' efforts in securing these federal community project funds, we are one big step closer

to delivering on our commitment to current residents and future generations."

"A huge thank you to Congressman Auchincloss for his efforts to secure monies for the Norfolk Town Center Package Sewer Plant," said Select Board member Anita Mecklenburg. "This will help us move forward with important infrastructure for the future of Norfolk. We are most grateful."

"I sincerely thank Congressman Auchincloss and his team for their advocacy in helping to secure these federal community project funds," said Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis. "The entire process has been a collaborative effort with not only the Congressman's team, but by members of the Planning Department, Department of Public Works and the Select Board. This collective effort in securing these vital funds will assist the Town in achieving the community's vision for the town center."



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'Sound the Alarm' Provides Smoke and CO Detectors to Wrentham Residents

By ANGELA WEICHERDING-FITTON

Born and raised in the town of Wrentham, and raising a family here, Fire Captain Patrick McMorrow is dedicated to making sure the residents of his town are safe, especially when it comes to fires and carbon monoxide.

"The primary goal is to make townspeople safer," McMorrow states passionately as he describes the "Sound the Alarm" program.

In October of last year, McMorrow attended the annual Public Fire and Life Safety Education Conference and became excited at the prospect of coordinating with the American Red Cross to bring free smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to everyone in Wrentham. With the blessing of the Deputy Fire Chief, he moved forward with his plan, and the fire department has since installed alarms in the

homes of twenty-four families.

The "Sound the Alarm" program began as a way to provide smoke and CO detectors to the elderly and lower income families. Since partnering with the American Red Cross, the Wrentham FD is now able to provide alarms to all families in need, costing Wrentham nothing but manpower.

The Wrentham Fire Department's goal is to keep enough alarms on hand for twenty homes on any given day. They let the American Red Cross know what their needs are, and within 30 days, usually sooner, they've got the detectors and can install them.

"The American Red Cross is great to work with," McMorrow says.

The smoke and CO detectors are only for homes that have battery-operated alarms, not for those with their sys-

tems hardwired into the house. Though the Fire Department cannot change or adjust hardwired systems, they have done assessments on such homes and provided resources for the homeowners in the event they require assistance with their systems.

The number of alarms provided to each household varies, depending upon how large the home is, and the year it was built. Most homes have three smoke alarms and at least two carbon monoxide detectors. Carbon monoxide detectors must be within ten feet of every bedroom, and there must be a smoke and CO alarm on every floor.

You may be wondering how smoke and CO detectors work for those who are hearing impaired. I was impressed to learn that Wrentham offers bed shakers and strobe lights for these

residents. Since the inception of the program, Patrick has installed two bed shakers and two strobe light alarms.

Bed shakers do just as the name implies. There is a clock-faced instrument placed on the nightstand and a device similar to a hockey puck goes under the mattress. Bed shakers work in conjunction with standard smoke and CO alarms and when the clock-like instrument hears the standard alarm going off, it alerts the hockey-puck-like device under the mattress, which then shakes the bed, waking and alerting the homeowner that there's an issue.

Strobe light alarms are photoelectric smoke detectors that have a louder sound than standard alarms and a strobe light is triggered to get the attention of whomever is in the home.

If you find you need an assessment and think you may

require smoke and/or CO detectors, email fireedu@fire.wrentham.ma.us. You can also call the Fire Prevention line at (508) 384-3131 extension 1126, but email is your best bet says McMorrow. Also, if you already have the alarms but find you're in need of battery replacements, the Fire Department takes care of that as well. Residents receiving the free smoke and CO detectors will need to fill out a form at the time of installation, for tracking purposes.

McMorrow also wants to remind everyone, "When you change your clocks, change the batteries in your smoke and CO detectors!"

The Wrentham Fire Department visits the town's schools to educate kindergartens, third graders and sixth graders about fire and carbon monoxide safety.

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Norfolk Democratic Town Committee Announces 2024 Caucus Results

The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee announced on March 2 the results of the 2024 Caucus.

Christian Bowman-Colin, Glenn Hill, Kevin Kalkut, Sandra Kimball, Susan Savoy, and Lucy Bullock-Sieger were elected as Delegates. John Conti, Paula Green, Melissa Meo and David Rosenberg were elected as alternates.

The Democratic State Convention will be held on June 1 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

About the Norfolk Democratic Town Committee

The Democratic Town Committee is a group of Norfolk Democrats whose shared goal is to improve the lives and well-being of Massachusetts residents and all Americans by helping elect Democrats to local, state and national office. The Committee is active in creating shared awareness of issues important to Democrats, recruiting town Democrats to assist in the activities of the Committee, and working with other local Democratic Town Committees and the State Committee to advance Democratic interests locally, across the Commonwealth, and nationwide. For more information, see the group's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NorfolkDemocrats>.

Wrentham Firefighter Graduates from Firefighting Academy

Last month, 35 firefighters representing 20 Massachusetts fire departments graduated from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

Wrentham firefighter John Sturtevant was among the graduates.

“Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today’s graduates are needed now more than ever,” said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. “The hundreds of hours of foundational training they’ve received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

“Massachusetts Firefighting Academy instructors draw on decades of experience in the fire service to train new recruits,” said Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Director Eric Littmann. “Through consistent classroom instruction and practical exercises, today’s graduates have developed the tools they’ll need to work seamlessly with veteran firefighters in their home departments and in neighboring communities as mutual aid.”

The graduating firefighters of Class #318 represent the fire departments of Andover, Bellingham, Chelsea, Clinton, Dracut, Everett, Fitchburg, Foxborough, Framingham, Hopedale, Manchester, Milford, North Attleboro, Orange, Orleans, Sudbury, Uxbridge, Walpole, Wayland, and Wrentham.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires.

Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

Today’s Firefighters Do Much More than Fight Fires

Modern firefighters train for and respond to all types of hazards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to gas leaks to industrial chemical spills. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice, an office worker stuck in an elevator, or a motorist trapped in a crashed vehicle. They test and maintain their equipment, including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, recruits learn all these skills and more, including the latest science of fire behavior and suppression tactics, from certified fire instructors. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, and self-rescue techniques. The intensive, 10-week program involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

The MFA provides recruit and in-service training for career, call, and volunteer firefighters at every level of experience, from recruit to chief officer, at campuses in Stow, Springfield, and Bridgewater.



Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

Career Recruit Class #318 Graduation • February 26, 2024



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KPHS DECA Attends MA DECA Career Development Conference

Members of the King Philip Regional DECA chapter of Massachusetts DECA joined 3,800 high school business, finance, hospitality, and marketing students at the annual association career development conference held on Thursday, March 7 in Boston.

During the conference, more than 200 business professionals evaluated the members' performances in the format of role-plays, case studies, and prepared presentations.

The following students received recognition of individual ability and achievement at the association-level and will advance to international-level competition at the DECA International Career Development Conference:

- Kendall Noonan and Ryan Love - Business Services Operations Research BOR
- Jacob Schmier and Dylan Spak - Business Services Operations Research BOR

- Lindsey Field - Buying and Merchandising Operations Research BMOR
- Audrina Jaber, Aidan Shaughnessy, and Violet Berthiaume - Buying and Merchandising Operations Research BMOR
- Ryan Brown and Chris Delvecchio - Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research HTOR
- Thomas Lufty, Eric Miles, and Michael Flaherty - Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research HTOR
- James Dow and Owen Collins - Sports and Entertainment Operations Research SEOR
- Kate O'Neil, Marisa Hughes, and Caitlin Thompson - Community Giving PMCG
- Bethany Evans, Shelby Konosky, and Ugo Ezemma - Community Giving PMCG

- Louis Bourque and Nora Tobichuk - Career Development PMCD
- Halle Miller - Business Solutions PMBS
- Eve Rose and Lucia Harmon - Sales Project PMSP
- Gavin Hickey and Caitlin O'Brien - Financial Literacy PMFL
- Ty DeCarteret - Innovation Plan EIP
- Jett Tucker and Jack Haltom - Start-Up Business ESB
- Beckett James and Evan Allen - Start-Up Business ESB
- Bridget Swezey - Start-Up Business ESB
- Ananya Boominathan and Zunairah Syeda - Independent Business Plan EIB



From left, students Lindsey Field, Aidan Shaughnessy, Violet Berthiaume and Audrina Jaber celebrate a successful run during the Massachusetts DECA Career Development Conference. (Photo Courtesy King Philip Regional Public Schools)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Docket No. N024P0636EA

Norfolk Probate and Family Court
35 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA 02021

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested person, a petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Lynda Dragsbaek of Franklin MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that Lynda Dragsbaek of Franklin MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 4/17/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Patricia Gorman, First Justice of the Court
Date: March 12, 2024

Colleen McBrierley
Register of Probate

- Braedon Reilly, Ian Knott, and Anthony Fraone - Independent Business Plan EIB
- Greg Manley and Jason Lussier - International Business IBP
- James Hickey - International Business IBP
- Ethan Wolf, Hunter Wells, and Will Leclair - International Business IBP
- Luke Anderson, Ryan Taylor, and Steve Quartarone - Business Growth Plan EBG
- Keith Joseph - Franchise Business Plan EFB
- Liam McGrath, Brian Hitchen, and Cole Pitman - Franchise Business Plan EFB
- Luke Reagan, Brady Ricci, and Jake Van Hoesen - Integrated Marketing Campaign Service IMCS

- Madison Asprelli - Integrated Marketing Campaign Service IMCS
- Addie Townsend - Integrated Marketing Campaign Service IMCS
- Jack Curran and Trevor Clyde - School-Based Enterprise SBER

The DECA International Career Development Conference will be held April 27-30 in Anaheim, CA.

As an integral part of the classroom curriculum, DECA's industry-validated competitive events are aligned with the National Curriculum Standards in the career clusters of marketing, business management, administration, finance, hospitality, and tourism. DECA's competitive events directly contribute to every student being college and career-ready when they graduate from high school.

What's Your Story? An Evening of Storytelling at FUSF

The First Universalist Society in Franklin will host an evening of storytelling on Saturday, April 6 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Inspired by "The Moth Radio Hour," the theme of the night is "Surprises." Join us for a family-friendly evening of fun as amateur storytellers share their personal stories about surprises they have experienced. Snacks and beverages will be provided during intermission but feel to bring your own.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12-18. Tickets can be purchased in advance at FUSF.org/upcoming events. Cash or checks are also accepted.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (fusf.org) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. For more information about the Society please contact Interim Minister Beverly Waring at 508-528-5348 or minister@fusf.org

OCC to Hold Spring Yard Sale

The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham will hold a spring yard sale in the church vestry on Saturday, May 11 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Donations are welcome from church members and the entire community. Items may be dropped off in the vestry or on the bench outside the office. Of-

fice hours are Tuesday thru Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. No clothing, TVs, computers, large stereos, large furniture, baby furniture, car seats, or strollers will be accepted.

The church is located at 1 East St. For more information, email office@occhurch.net or call (508) 384-3110.

For rates and info on advertising your business, please call Jen at 508-570-6544 or email: jenschofield@localtownpages.com

Norfolk Resident Barry Zimmerman Named Five Star Wealth Manager



The Bullfinch Group announced that Barry Zimmerman of Norfolk has earned the designation of Five Star Wealth Manager, an award given annually to an elite group of financial managers who are identified through research conducted with peers and firms.

This is the eleventh consecutive year Zimmerman has received the award, as featured in Boston Magazine's March issue.

The program analyzes internal and external research data, including a survey to more than 3,000 registered financial services professionals and all local financial service companies registered with FINRA or the SEC, to select each year's winners. Nominated wealth managers who satisfied a total of ten objective eligibility and evaluation criteria are awarded this prestigious title.

Zimmerman attended the University of New Hampshire undergrad, earned his MBA from Boston University, and is a resident of Norfolk, Massachusetts.

MA Female Friends Giving Circle Now Accepting New Members

The MA Female Friends Giving Circle (MFFGC) recently announced the opening of its Spring 2024 Giving Circle in Massachusetts. Following a successful Inaugural Giving Circle in Fall 2023, MFFGC is poised to achieve its mission of making a sustainable impact in our Massachusetts communities.

Our Fall 2023 cycle brought together a group of 43 passionate and dedicated women from 27 communities across the state in support of under-served women and families in Massachusetts. Through a collaborative process, we awarded \$5,400 to The Children's Room, a nonprofit organization based in Arlington dedicated to providing support for grieving children, teens, and families.

MFFGC operates on a semi-annual schedule, making donations in the spring and fall of each year. Each member of the giving circle contributes \$100 per cycle, and through the power of collective giving, we aim to make a significant and meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.

"Our commitment to support women and families facing difficult times within our own community is at the heart of what we do. Together, we help to overcome challenges faced by so many of our neighbors," said Eileen Samels, Founding Member and Coordinator of the MFFGC. "Giving Circles are a great way to come together, learn

about community issues, and be a part of the solution in a tangible way."

MFFGC invites new members to join this philanthropic movement. The Spring 2024 giving cycle begins with new member registrations (sign up online at <https://bit.ly/MFFGCSign-Up>) and culminates with our Learn & Vote member gathering (in-person or virtual) where we learn about and discuss the nominated organizations, then cast our votes for the recipient of our collective donation. The Spring 2024 Learn & Vote gathering will be held on April 28. Open to women from all walks of life in Massachusetts, MFFGC members collectively make a positive difference in the lives of under-served women and families.

Visit <https://bit.ly/MFFGC-Info> for additional information about how the giving circle works, MFFGC FAQs, and the link to become a member.

Questions? Contact Eileen Samels, MA Female Friends Giving Circle Founding Member and Coordinator, at MFF-GivingCircle@gmail.com or call (508) 259-0135.

About the MA Female Friends Giving Circle

The MA Female Friends Giving Circle is a community of women in Massachusetts dedicated to making a positive impact through collective giving. Operating twice a year, members contribute \$100 each cycle to support under-served women and families in the Massachusetts. By pooling resources and expertise, MFFGC aims to address critical gaps in resources available to neighbors facing difficult times. Donations are made through the Grapevine platform, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting and servicing giving circles nationwide.

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KPHS to Compete in Duke Ellington Jazz Competition in New York City

The King Philip High School jazz ensemble has been named a top 15 finalist in the national Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

Over 100 bands applied for a spot in the festival, which will be held in New York City at Lincoln Center on May 9-11.

High school jazz musicians from across the country will spend three days in rehearsals, jam sessions, performances, and workshops at the Frederick P. Rose Hall at Lincoln Center. King Philip Regional High School was the only high school in New England to earn a spot in the festival.

The King Philip Regional High School jazz ensemble of 20 musicians is led by Band Director Michael Keough.

“We are so proud of Mr. Keough and our talented KPHS Jazz Ensemble group of musicians who were selected to take part in this prestigious competition,” King Philip Superintendent Rich Drolet said in a statement. “Their hard work has certainly paid off and we can’t wait to see how they do in New York against some of the best high school jazz musicians in the country.”

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SPECIMEN BALLOT



ABSENTEE OFFICIAL BALLOT
ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION
WRENTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
APRIL 1, 2024

Cynthia L. Thompson
TOWN CLERK

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name and address on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS For Three Years Vote for One THOMAS W. DIPLACIDO, JR. <input type="radio"/> 850 Franklin Street Candidate for Re-Election ELIZABETH BACZKOWSKI <input type="radio"/> 65 Summer Perry Drive (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	FISKE LIBRARY TRUSTEE For One Year Vote for One KRISTEN SMITH <input type="radio"/> 275 Dedham Street (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	WRENTHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE For Three Years Vote for Two ERIN GREANEY <input type="radio"/> 48 Cypress Road Candidate for Re-Election PHILIP GEORGE JORDAN <input type="radio"/> 50 Mill Pond Candidate for Re-Election (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
BOARD OF HEALTH For Three Years Vote for One (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	KING PHILIP REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE For Three Years Vote for One CAIT E. LANZA <input type="radio"/> 15 Julie Drive (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	WRENTHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY For Five Years Vote for One (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
BOARD OF SELECTMEN For Three Years Vote for Two JAMES E. ANDERSON <input type="radio"/> 20 Joshua Road Candidate for Re-Election CHRISTOPHER G. GALLO <input type="radio"/> 65 Summer Street Candidate for Re-Election CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH DOHERTY <input type="radio"/> 249 Forest Grove Avenue, #3 DONALD F. JORDAN <input type="radio"/> 445 Madison Street (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	MODERATOR For One Year Vote for One EDWARD J. GODDARD <input type="radio"/> 32 Peter Lane Candidate for Re-Election (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	WRENTHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY For Three Years Vote for One ANDREA LUCIA NARDINI MURPHY <input type="radio"/> 1680 West Street (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
FISKE LIBRARY TRUSTEE For Three Years Vote for Two JUDITH R. BROWN <input type="radio"/> 315 Bennett Street Candidate for Re-Election MARY ELIZABETH BERNARD <input type="radio"/> 40 Black Birch Circle (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	PLANNING BOARD For Three Years Vote for Three ALFRED G. BOU-ASSI <input type="radio"/> 145 Riverside Drive THOMAS F. MALONEY <input type="radio"/> 42 Weber Farm Road NORMAN FRANCIS ORBAN III <input type="radio"/> 46 Hancock Street (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	

BALLOT QUESTION

QUESTION 1: Shall the Town of Wrentham be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the Town's allocable share of the bonds issued by the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District (the "District") for the purpose of paying costs of designing, constructing, originally equipping and furnishing a new District high school and related athletic facilities, located at 147 Pond Street, Franklin, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto?

YES
NO

The ballot for Wrentham's Town Election, scheduled for Monday, April 1. Polling hours are from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Delaney Elementary School, 120 Taunton St.

RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Defying Physical Challenges and Uniting for Cancer Prevention

This June, three extraordinary girls will swim to raise money for breast cancer prevention at Against the Tide, an annual event hosted by Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC). Despite facing physical challenges, Jordan, Jasmine, and Chloe participate in Against the Tide not only with the hope that others will join their passionate support of cancer prevention, but to honor their loved ones who have been affected by breast cancer.

Every year participants from all over New England and beyond are drawn to Against the Tide and to MBCC's unique mission. These swimmers, runners, and walkers share the belief that there are environmental links to cancer and other ill-health. Against the Tide not only raises funds for MBCC's work to prevent exposures to environmental toxins, the event also raises spirits and empowers people to unite under a common cause.

Among the participants at this year's Against the Tide are three courageous girls whose determination and unwavering spirit embody the true essence of this event.

Jordan Marquis, a thirteen-year-old from Bedford with a below-knee amputation, is challenging herself to compete in the one-mile swim. Jordan shares, "I hate being underestimated. People with disabilities can do anything! Goal setting – the full mile is the next step for me." Jordan took on the half-mile swim last year and, in an effort to honor her grandmother who is a breast cancer survivor, she wants to swim even further this year.

Jasmine "Jazzy" Gillespie, an eleven-year-old girl from Bedford with minor spastic diplegia, is participating in solidarity of the daily challenges that are faced by those with health conditions like cancer. Jazzy says: "Sometimes I feel like people who don't have conditions that

affect their daily lives don't understand what it's like. So instead of having empathy for these people, they make fun of them or make them think that they can't do anything. Doing this breaks the person down and they start to believe that they can't do anything. I could imagine that this happens to people with breast cancer, too." Jazzy is swimming in Against the Tide to honor her two grandmothers as well as her aunt, all of whom were touched by breast cancer.

Like Jordan and Jazzy, Chloe Smagula, a fourteen-year-old girl from Westford with hemiplegia, is swimming in Against the Tide to pay tribute to her aunt and to help those touched by cancer through supporting MBCC's mission. Chloe, who participated in Against the Tide last year, said, "I did the open water swim because I've never done it before and I wanted to try something new."



2023 Hopkinton Against the Tide Event on June 17, 2023. From Left to Right: Jasmine Gillespie, Laura Diamond, Chloe Smagula, Megan Cohen, and Jordan Marquis

Against the Tide is a truly inviting event where all are welcome and everyone can get together in support of cancer prevention. It offers participants of any age or ability the chance to take part in one or more of the event's athletic components.

The special 25th Anniversary Cape Cod Against the Tide event will take place on June 8th at DCR's Nickerson State Park in Brewster, MA. The 32nd Annual Hopkinton Against the

Tide event will take place on June 15th at DCR's Hopkinton State Park in Hopkinton, MA. Against the Tide will also be held virtually from June 8th to June 15th.

To learn more about Against the Tide and all of the registration options, to join or create a team and to donate or fundraise, please visit the event website at mbcc.org/swim.

SOUTHWICK'S ZOO PHOTO CONTEST

ILLUSTRATION BY ROWAN KAPLAN MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN



In 2025, Southwick's Zoo will be celebrating 60 years of family fun! Share a photo of your favorite memories at Southwick's Zoo for a chance to win a family four-pack of general admission passes for the 2024 season and make some new memories! Contest begins April 1, 2024.



Scan to Enter

By entering this contest, you are providing consent for Southwick's Zoo and Our Town Publishing (the publishers of The Yankee Xpress/Blackstone Valley Xpress, Free Press and the newspapers of Local Town Pages) to use your photo(s) for print, digital and social media purposes, and allowing Southwick's Zoo and Our Town Publishing to contact you via email for this promotion or upcoming promotions. Only one winner per household. Cannot be an employee or family member of Southwick's Zoo or Our Town Publishing to win.



James Montgomery Returns to THE BLACK BOX Outdoors Under the Tent

THE BLACK BOX will welcome back The James Montgomery Band on Friday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m. with opening act The Daybreakers.

In 1970, while attending Boston University, Montgomery formed The James Montgomery Band. His inimitable harmonica playing combined with his incredibly energetic live shows led to the band's quick ascension on the New England music scene. Within two years, The James Montgomery band was among the hottest acts in Boston along with J. Geils and Aerosmith, and they were quickly signed to a multi-album deal with Capricorn Records.

Since that time, James has recorded six albums. His first, "First Time Out" has been remastered and re-released by MRG/Capricorn. Other include "James Montgomery Band" on Island Records which was number nine on Billboard's national playlist, "Duck Fever" with members of the David Letterman Band, "Live Trax," with the Uptown Horns (the Rolling Stones' horn section), and his release on Tone-Cool, "The Oven Is On."



Montgomery has toured with many major artists, including Aerosmith, Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Springsteen, the Allman Brothers, Steve Miller, and others. He has jammed on stage with B.B.King, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, Jr. Wells, James Cotton, Charlie Daniels, Bonnie Raitt, Greg Allman, Laverne Baker, Patti LaBelle, and Peter Wolf among others, including an impromptu session with Mick Jagger at New York's "Trax."

Over the years, Montgomery's band has been a springboard for many musicians. Members of his band have included Billy Squire, Wayne

Kramer (MC-5), Jeff Golub (Rod Stewart), Jim McCarty (Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels), Nunzio Signore (Bo Diddley), Jeff Pevar (Ray Charles Orchestra, Crosby, Stills & Nash), Bobby Chouinard (drummer with Ted Nugent, Squire and Robert Gordon), Jeff Levine (Joe Cocker), Aerosmith's Tom Gambel, and many others.

Tickets are available at www.THEBLACKBOXonline.com or by calling the box office at (508) 528-3370. Follow THE BLACK BOX on social media to stay updated on the venue's offerings.

Save the Date! Wrentham Lions Annual Golf Tournament Slated for June 3

The Wrentham Lions Club will hold its annual golf tournament on Monday, June 3 at Wentworth Hills Golf Club, 27 Bow Street, Plainville.

Registration begins at 7 a.m. and start time is 8:30 a.m.

The cost is \$150 per golfer and includes continental breakfast, full lunch, green fees and cart. There will be raffles and prizes.

Please email Wrenthamlions33k@gmail.com if interested in playing or sponsoring a hole. Deadline to register is May 28.

Proposition 2 1/2 Debt Exclusion Question on April 1 Town Election Ballot

The town of Wrentham, in the interest of updating the community in advance of the April Annual Town Election, has released information regarding a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion question on the ballot for the town's allocable share of the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District's \$183 million bonds.

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District received approval at a districtwide referendum on October 24, 2023, to construct a new \$286 million high school for students from its 11 sending districts, including Wrentham. After extensive study, Tri-County school leaders determined the current building, constructed in 1977, does not meet the needs for a 21st century technical education or current accessibility laws. Wrentham voters overwhelmingly approved the project with about 79 percent support.

Seventy-seven students from Wrentham presently attend Tri-County. Based on current enrollment, the town will be responsible for 8.17 percent of the debt, or \$26.8 million in total payments. A debt exclusion allows communities to temporarily exceed the tax levy cap under Proposition 2 1/2 for the length of the borrowing. Approval of the debt exclusion will allow the

town of Wrentham to absorb the increased debt without compromising municipal services and staffing in future operating budgets.

Based on current estimates for the Tri-County bond issuances, the project will increase tax bills by an average of \$155.65 for residential properties and \$194.35 for commercial properties. However, the town's only other debt exclusion, for King Philip Regional School District building projects, will be paid off in Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) reducing the impact of the Tri-County project on taxpayers.

The actual median tax impact after the King Philip Regional School District debt is retired is projected at an average of \$63.50 annually for residential properties and \$79.29 annually for commercial properties.

Town Election polls will be open on Monday, April 1, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., at Delaney Elementary School, 120 Taunton St. Early voting and mail-in voting options are not available.

For more information about the building project, visit <https://www.tri-countybuilding.com/> and https://www.wrentham.gov/news/important_information/tri-county_school_building_project_

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PorchFest Coming to Franklin on June 1

Registration Extended for Hosts and Performers

PorchFest, an outdoor music event, is coming to Franklin on Saturday, June 1 from noon to 6 p.m., with a rain date of June 2.

Held on front porches and patios throughout Franklin's designated Cultural District, the free music festival is a walkable event for all ages. Musicians and bands will play all genres while attendees stroll between venues. The public can check out local restaurants and shops while enjoying the event. Public bathrooms will be available.

Over 24 bands/musicians

have signed up to perform at PorchFest, and interest is still growing. To accommodate the many requests, registration has been extended through April 30 for both performers and hosts. Musicians interested in performing at PorchFest, and homeowners interested in hosting a band or performer on their porch, are invited to learn more and register at <https://franklin.porchfest.info>.

PorchFest is made possible with grants from the Mass Cultural Council through the Franklin Cultural District Committee. The Franklin PorchFest Committee is thankful for the support it has received from the Cultural Council, the Cultural District, and the town of Franklin.

Follow Franklin PorchFest on Facebook and Instagram to stay informed about the event.

Norfolk Public Library Book and Bake Sale

The Friends of the Norfolk Public Library will hold their annual book and bake sale on Friday, April 19 and Saturday, April 20 at the Freeman Kennedy School gymnasium, 70 Boardman St. in Norfolk.

Friends can shop at the Friends Only preview sale on Friday from 6 to 9 p.m. A current membership is required or may be purchased for \$25 at the door beginning at 5 p.m.

The general public is welcome on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The sale will include over 30,000 fiction and non-fiction books categorized and alphabetized, in good to excellent condition. Popular titles, classics, and an extensive collection of children's books will be available. Puzzles, games, CDs, DVDs, handmade greeting cards, and baked goods will be for sale. A handmade quilt will be raffled off.

For more information or to purchase a membership, visit norfolkmalibraryfriends.org.

April Program Highlights at the Norfolk Public Library

For a full list of programs and activities this month, or to register for the following programs, visit norfolkpl.org.

Wednesday, April 3 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. **Kitchen Swap** That Elmo birthday cake pan from five years ago, the icing set you swore you'd use, that perfectly good mixing bowl that just doesn't fit in the cupboard anymore... Why not give it a new home! Bring your gently-used, CLEAN kitchen supplies to the library to swap for new-to-you materials. Rule of thumb: If you wouldn't want to receive it, please don't bring it. No registration required.

Thursday, April 4 from 7 to 8 p.m. **Author Talk** Join author Virginia Rafferty for her talk on Eastern European immigration between 1882 and 1912. Rafferty will be integrating her family history and the research that culminated in her three published novels: "The House on Peace Street," "The Road to Lattimer," and "Family Secrets...Hidden in the Shadows of Time." Registration required.

Tuesday, April 9 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. **The Best Way to Declutter Your Home** Hosted by Susan McCarthy of ALessClutteredLife.com. Is there a best way to declutter and organize

your home? It all depends upon the time you can give to decluttering as well as your energy, attention level, and decision-making skills. We'll discuss the pros and cons of the most popular methods for decluttering and how to figure out what will work best for your situation. Susan McCarthy is a professional organizer, and after the stress of emptying her parents' home, she took a closer look at her own possessions and began decluttering. That process of discovery encouraged her to begin helping others to clear the clutter from their homes. Registration required.

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Living Healthy

The Vital Role of Anesthesiologists in Eye Surgery

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

In the realm of surgical procedures, eye surgeries stand out for their delicacy and precision. From cataract removals to glaucoma procedures, these surgeries require meticulous attention to detail and specialized care. Among the crucial team members in the operating room, anesthesiologists play a vital role in ensuring the safety and comfort of patients undergoing eye surgery.

During eye surgery, patients often need to remain still and relaxed, which can be challenging, especially when they are conscious. This is where the expertise of anesthesiologists becomes indispensable. Anesthesiologists are trained professionals who specialize in administering anesthesia and monitoring patients' vital signs throughout the surgical process. By carefully selecting and administering the appropriate type and dosage of



anesthesia, they ensure that patients are adequately sedated, pain-free, and stable during the procedure.

One of the primary concerns during eye surgery is maintaining optimal conditions for the surgeon to work effectively. Any sudden movement or reflex from the patient could compromise

the precision of the procedure and potentially lead to complications. Anesthesiologists play a crucial role in achieving and maintaining the desired level of sedation or anesthesia, keeping the patient still and comfortable throughout the surgery.

Moreover, certain eye surgeries, such as retinal detachment

repair or corneal transplantation, may require the patient to be completely still for an extended period. In such cases, the expertise of anesthesiologists in administering regional anesthesia techniques like retrobulbar or peribulbar blocks can be invaluable. These techniques involve injecting anesthetic agents around the eye to numb the surrounding area while keeping the patient awake but pain-free. By effectively blocking the sensation of pain and minimizing involuntary movements, anesthesiologists facilitate a smooth and successful surgical outcome.

Additionally, anesthesiologists play a crucial role in managing patients with pre-existing medical conditions or factors that may increase the risks associated with anesthesia, such as cardiovascular diseases, chronic pulmonary conditions, diabetes, or allergies. Through comprehensive pre-operative assessments and personalized anesthesia plans, they ensure that patients receive safe and optimal care tailored to their individual needs.

You can easily conclude that the presence of anesthesiologists in the operating room is essential for the success and safety of eye surgeries. Their expertise in administering anesthesia, monitoring patients' vital signs, and managing anesthesia-related complications is instrumental in ensuring a smooth and comfortable surgical experience. Unfortunately, some practices are advocating for performing cataract surgery in their office. Unapproved by Medicare and major ophthalmology professional societies, this office-based surgery is based on giving you the patient a sedative pill by mouth and then they want you to be going to surgery with just that. No IV line in case of an emergency, no anesthesia presence, and the surgeon who is overwhelmingly busy operating on your eye will be the only physician in the room. Furthermore, if the sedative pill is not enough to keep you sedated or comfortable, there is nothing else they

can do to relieve your anxiety and make you comfortable because you have no IV line. This raises significant concerns about patient safety and comfort. Furthermore, performing cataract surgery in an office setting may lack the rigorous standards, staff training and sterile environments maintained in dedicated surgical centers. The absence of dedicated anesthesia professionals and comprehensive medical support can compromise patient comfort and safety during surgery. Patients are advised to prioritize their well-being and consider established surgical centers with experienced medical teams and top-notch facilities to ensure optimal outcomes for cataract surgery. You should always ask "Will an anesthesiologist be present during my surgery?" and "What do you do to make me comfortable if the pill you gave me outside the surgery room is not enough?" At the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, a dedicated MD anesthesiologist is present full-time for all procedures, no exception, and your comfort and safety are titrated by using an IV line, which is lacking in the office-based surgery model.

As advancements in surgical techniques continue to evolve, the collaboration between surgeons and anesthesiologists remains paramount in achieving the best possible outcomes for patients undergoing eye surgery. At Milford Franklin Eye Center and The Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, our focus is on you, your vision, excellent surgical results without compromising your safety or comfort. You come first. We are available in your backyard and proud to offer world-class cataract surgery closer to home: Here in Milford! In an accredited and licensed surgery center facility, not in an office. Four decades serving our communities and going strong.

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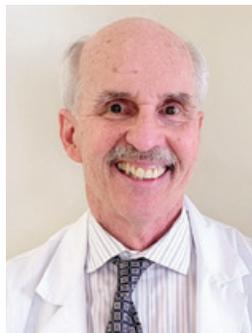
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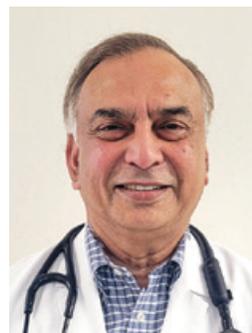


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Rep. Vaughn appointed to House Ways and Means Committee

SUBMITTED BY THE OFFICE OF
REP. MARCUS VAUGHN

State Representative Marcus S. Vaughn (R-Wrentham) has been appointed to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee by House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading).

The Ways and Means Committee plays a critical role in guiding the state's budgetary process. In addition to reviewing all legislation that could impact the Commonwealth's finances, the committee is also responsible for producing spending recommendations for the state's agencies and departments through the annual operating budget.

"The Commonwealth is facing uncertain economic times, with revenues having consistently fallen short of projections throughout the current fiscal year, leading to mid-year spending cuts by Governor Healey," said Representative Jones. "The Ways and Means Committee has

a difficult task ahead of it as it continues to hold public hearings across the state in preparation for the crafting of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. I am confident that Marcus will rise to the challenge and will do everything he can in his new committee role to ensure that the new budget is not only balanced and responsible, but also protects the interests of the state's taxpayers."

Vaughn is replacing Representative Joseph D. McKenna (R-Webster) on the Ways and Means Committee, after McKenna was named as the Ranking Minority Member of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary to fill the vacancy created by the recent Senate special election won by former Representative Peter J. Durant (R-Spencer).

"I am honored to be appointed to this committee by the Minority Leader and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to address the fiscal concerns in the Commonwealth," said Vaughn.

Vaughn currently serves as the Ranking Minority Member of both the House Committee on Operations, Facilities and Security and the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Businesses. He is also a member of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, and the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

In addition to his legislative committee assignments, Vaughn also serves on the state's Gaming Policy Advisory Committee (GPAC), which was created under the 2011 Expanded Gaming Act that legalized gaming in Massachusetts. The GPAC advises the Massachusetts Gaming Commission on gaming policy issues related to community mitigation funding, addiction services for compulsive gambling, and the public safety impacts associated with the state's gaming establishments.

Vaughn is currently serving his first term as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He represents the 9th Norfolk District, which consists of Precincts 3 and 4 in Medfield; Precinct 1 in Millis; Precinct 5 in Walpole; and the towns of Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham.

Wrentham Lions College Scholarship Applications Now Available

The Wrentham Lions Club is pleased to announce that it will be offering four scholarships to area graduating seniors, including one scholarship for qualified adult residents seeking to continue their education.

Applications are available now and will be accepted until April 2. Scholarship criteria, applications, and directions for submittal can be found on the Wrentham Lions website: www.wrenthamlions.org.

April Program Highlights at the Norfolk Senior Center

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

Mondays, April 8-May 20 at 1:30 p.m. Improve Posture and Balance A 6-week program designed to address posture in the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine. We will also work on balance using proprioception (body knowing where it is in space). Some students have also noticed a reduction or elimination of back and knee pain. Program is facilitated by Steve Avellino of Reverse the Aging Processes. No class on April 15th. Limited to 14 people. Cost: \$42 for the 6 weeks. RSVP required. Full payment due at reservation.

Tuesday, April 9 at 11 a.m. Reminiscence Program Steve Kiley of Home Instead uses vintage artifacts found while metal detecting as a show and tell/reminiscence program. RSVP required.

Tuesday, April 9 at 2 p.m. Red Sox Opening Day at Fenway Come watch Opening Day at Fenway on the Center's large TV. We will have popcorn, cracker jacks, and soda. Game starts at 2:10 p.m. Go Red Sox! RSVP required.

Friday, April 12 & 19 at 11 a.m. Introduction to Photography Norfolk resident Tom Klejna will teach an introduction to photography class. He will cover topics including the history of photography, camera basics, and how to make a photograph versus take a picture. Bring your cell phone or borrow an iPad from the Center (limited to 12 people to borrow). This class will continue in May and may have field trips. RSVP required.

Friday, April 12 at 1 p.m. Meet Frances Perkins: The Unsung Heroine Behind the New Deal Back by popular demand, Janet Parnes of Historical Por-

trays by Lady J. Millis continues the story of Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor. Perkins was the only person in FDR's administration that he said he could trust without reservation. Hear stories of her trials, trip ups, and triumphs. You will come to understand the reasons Frances Perkins is referred to as one of the most influential women of the first half of the 20th century. RSVP required. We will have a lunch of deli sandwiches and chips starting at 12:15 p.m. Cost: \$2 for lunch. RSVP required for lunch by Monday, April 8.

Thursday, April 25 at 1 p.m. The Sound of Music in Songs and Stories This presentation celebrates the most beloved songs from Rodgers' and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music." Enjoy your favorite songs and learn the real story about the Trapp Family, whose lives were much more interesting and inspirational than those of their fictional counterparts in the play and movie. Performance by singing star and Ms. Massachusetts, Ruth Harcovitz. This performance is made possible by the Norfolk Cultural Grant. RSVP required. We will have a lunch of deli sandwiches and chips starting at 12:15 p.m. Cost: \$2 for lunch. RSVP required for lunch by Friday April 19.

Tuesday, April 30 at 10 a.m. Take Back Your Garden! Eliminating Pests Has your garden turned into an all-you-can-eat buffet for critters? If so, it's time to reclaim your soil and your sanity! Join us for a workshop as entertaining as it is enlightening. Learn how to send pests packing, from the tiniest aphids to the most tenacious woodchucks. Discover the secret lives of garden villains and how to defeat them without turning your backyard into a chemical wasteland. Do not get pushed around by critters in your own garden any longer. It is time to fight back! Taught by Therapy Gardens. RSVP required.

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Franklin Husband and Wife Teach Dance for a Good Cause

Dance4Dreams Benefits Boston Children's Hospital

With spring in full bloom, Kevin and Anna Balcom are teaching dance to benefit Boston Children's Hospital. Dance4Dreams, an 8-week introductory West Coast Swing dance series, will be held on Tuesdays, beginning April 16 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. through June 4 at the Franklin Elks Lodge located at 1077 Pond Street, Franklin. One hundred percent of the proceeds will benefit Boston Children's Hospital.

Kevin and Anna Balcom, Franklin residents, have been dancing collectively for over 40 years. Anna dances Classical, Contemporary Ballet, Salsa, Latin Ballroom, Modern Jive, and West Coast Swing. Kevin started his dance journey in Country Line Dancing, and rapidly became exposed to many other styles, with a competitive and educational focus on West Coast Swing.

This event combines their passion for



DANCE4DREAMS benefiting Boston Children's Hospital

SWING DANCE LESSONS!

- Join us for our 8 week introductory West Coast Swing dance series!
- Learn to dance! Meet new people! Have fun! Support a great cause!
- 100% of all proceeds are donated to Boston Children's Hospital!

WHAT?

West Coast Swing dance lessons! \$15 per class. No advance registration required.

WHO?

Adults (16+) No previous dance experience required. No partner required.

WHEN?

Tuesday nights 7pm to 8:30pm April 16 through June 4, 2024

WHERE?

Franklin Elks Lodge 1077 Pond St. Franklin, MA 02038

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.DANCE4DREAMS.COM

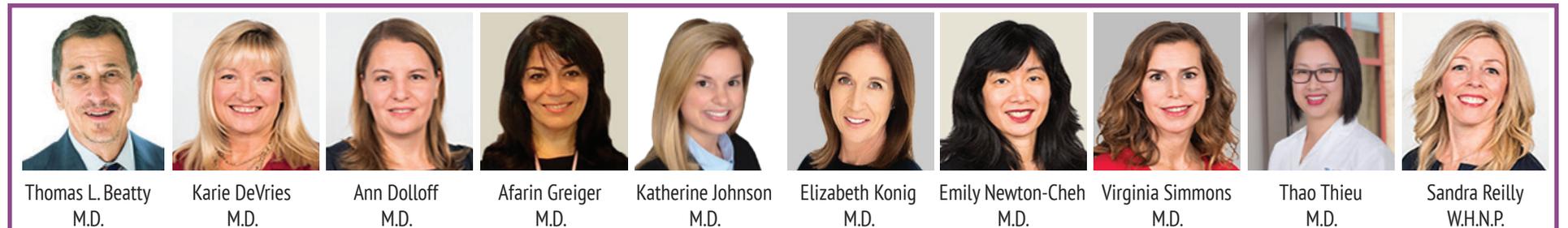
dance with their deep appreciation for Boston Children's Hospital.

For over 150 years, "Boston Children's Hospital has been dedicated to improving and advancing the health and well-being of children around the world through its life-changing work in clinical care, biomedical research, medical education, and community engagement. Boston Children's is ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. It is home to the world's largest pediatric research enterprise, and it is the leading recipient of pediatric research funding from the National Institutes of Health. It is the primary pediatric teaching hos-

pital for Harvard Medical School. Boston Children's treats more children with rare diseases and complex conditions than any other hospital." - Boston Children's Hospital

Anna encourages all to join, "whether you are a beginner or an expert, swing on over for a good cause!" Ages 16+ are welcome. No prior dance experience or partner required. \$15/person per class. Cash preferred. No advance registration required.

Contact Anna Balcom at 508-808-4675 or visit www.dance4dreams.com for more information.



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Walpole

2000 Washington Street
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9 Hope Avenue
Waltham

Sports

EMASS Senior Softball League Opens Player Registration for 2024 Season

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is opening its annual registration campaign for slow-pitch softball players aged 50 and older.

With almost 500 members, the league attracts players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts with games played primarily in Wayland, Medfield, and Framingham. The EMASS season runs from late April through late September, including play-offs. Interested players can register for the EMASS 2024 season at <https://e-mass.org/current-programs>.

EMASS has six divisions that accommodate a range of skill levels, two that play on Saturday mornings and four on weekday mornings. EMASS has many seniors in their fifties and sixties who can still hit a ball over a 300-foot fence, run down a deep drive in the outfield or turn a double-play in the infield. There are other divisions in which players whose talents may have diminished over time can enjoy playing with similarly skilled friends.

“We are a community of folks who recognize how lucky we are

to be able to play a game we love at the age we have attained and at a level that matches our abilities – in a community of like-minded players who become friends,” said Steve Bober, new Commissioner of EMASS.

EMASS adds about 60 new players each year. “We shuffle up team rosters every year in all divisions to enhance connections across our large softball-loving community,” said Rich Goldberg, a Division Coordinator. “Our members enjoy competing with and against their friends.”



About EMASS Senior Softball League

EMASS was founded in 1995 and offers active seniors of all skill levels a safe, well-organized opportunity to play competitive softball. Players can sign up for a division featuring players with similar abilities. With two Satur-

day divisions and four weekday divisions, players can play at a level that is most comfortable for them. All divisions play a double-header each week and many members play on different teams in multiple divisions.

For more information about EMASS Senior Softball League, visit www.e-mass.org.

Norfolk and Wrentham Residents Running in the 2024 Boston Marathon

On Monday, April 15, nineteen area residents will join thousands of others setting off from Hopkinton to run the 26.2 miles to Boston in the 128th Boston Marathon. Runners get a bib by entering with a qualifying time or by running for a charity.

Wish these folks luck if you see them around town.

Norfolk entrants: Ray Angelone, 56; Michael Dunlop, 54; Jonathan Gavin, 39; Taylor Jenkinson, 33; Kevin Keleher, 44; Beth Lefleur, 45; Kara Lightowler, 33; Michael Marino, 43; Timothy McDonagh, 45; Caitlin McNulty, 23; and Shahrzad Slater, 42.

Wrentham entrants: Kevin Bassett, 34; Mark Conley, 58; Julie Etter, 41; Sara Fabri, 28; Nathan Kim, 31; Johanna Lamoureux, 44; Cailin Lawlor, 20; and Jamie Snead, 53.

Lions Polar Plunge Set for April 6

Wrentham, Norfolk, and Plainville Lions Club members are asking the public to join them in the 6th annual Polar Plunge at Lake Pearl in Wrentham, scheduled for Saturday, April 6 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Attendees can expect a fun, social event with food, drink, and music. Plungers are encouraged to come in costume for the jump into the cold lake water.

All money raised benefits Mass Lions Eye Research Foundation, which provides funding to Boston-area medical institutions with the hope to someday eradicate preventable blindness.

To register as a plunger, or sponsor a plunger, visit www.lionspolarplunge.org. Questions? Email wrenthamlions33k@gmail.com.



Calling all strong, brave, and kind people to take the plunge or sponsor one of these courageous plungers!

Saturday, April 6th
9:00-11:00AM
Lake Pearl, Wrentham

Event sponsored by the Wrentham, Norfolk and Plainville Lions
To benefit eye research for Mass Lions Eye Research Foundation

Register or sponsor at www.lionspolarplunge.org

Questions? Email wrenthamlions33k@gmail.com

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Sports

KP Nine Has the Talent to Compete in Division 1

Warriors Aiming for Another Playoff Run

BY KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The King Philip baseball team would like its 2024 season to be one of redemption.

For the last two years, the Warriors have mapped out a smooth journey to the final game of the Division 2 state tournament. Unfortunately, coach Jeff Plympton Jr. and his forces were unable to defeat Milton on both trips.

Plympton no doubt would like to get the new campaign, which begins on April 1 against Stoughton, off and running to another appearance in the state final. If that were to occur, there would be a new twist — the Warriors are now in Division 1 and that increases the degree of difficulty.

But, KP and Plympton aren't strangers when it comes to facing off against Division 1 opponents. Last year, the Warriors encountered four Hockomock League foes and three non-league teams from Division 1. They included Franklin, Milford, Taunton and Attleboro in the conference and Walpole, Braintree and Bishop Feehan in non-league play. KP, which finished last year with an overall 17-8 record, was 6-5 against the seven Division 1 squads.

"The upgrade will be a challenge," Plympton said. "We'll be competing against large public schools and private Catholic schools. Division 1 teams seem to have a larger pool of pitchers to choose from. There's more pitching depth and that's what we'll be dealing with."

The Warriors, nevertheless, enter the season with a contingent that has a variety of strengths. Only five seniors graduated and there'll be 16 returnees with experience.

"We've got experience and depth," Plympton said. "We've also got a high baseball IQ, speed and athleticism. Our pitching is dependable with two starters back, our hitting is strong and our defense is our best attribute. We emphasize defense in practice and we aim for error-free games."

Plympton's goals this season are to win the league's Kelley-

Rex Division, qualify and go deep in the tourney, and continue to build a positive culture. "Our goals are realistic," he said. "We've got quality talent and many of our players have continually been around baseball. What I like about our depth is that the players who don't start provide competition and that leads to success."

Senior captains Max Robison (pitcher/first base) and Tommy McLeish (shortstop/pitcher) personify so many of KP's assets.

"Both Max and Tommy lead by example and keep things fun," Plympton offered. "They also are multiple-sport athletes who are supportive of their teammates."

The coach also likes what the tandem achieves on the field.

"Max hit .300 last year and I'd rate him the best defensive first baseman in the league," Plympton offered. "He also handles all the balls hit low. He's our lead-off hitter who can hit for power. Probably our third starter, he's a lefty with a good fastball, curve and change-up and his control is a plus. Tommy has good hands at shortstop and is a solid hitter. He's a reliable closer because of his velocity."

Plympton will use senior pitcher TJ Ahearn as the squad's No. 1 reliever. "He grew into that role last year," Plympton said. "He didn't allow an earned run in 12 innings. He isn't overpowering but he's accurate, relying on a curve, fastball and slider."

Senior Travis Crawford provides versatility, able to play either the outfield or catcher. "As an outfielder, Travis is athletic, has good range and a strong arm," Plympton noted. "Our No. 2 hitter in the lineup, his top strengths are speed and power on his line drives."

Junior Drew Herlin is a left-handed D-H who's got a "smooth swing." He can also fill in at first base. "Drew hit .300 last year and he aims for the gaps," Plympton said. "A hard-worker, he could be a starter at first base next year."

Junior Aidan Astorino has speed and that's why Plympton plans to start him in centerfield. "Aidan has a strong arm and he

covers lots of ground," Plympton noted. "His hitting should improve as he adjusts to varsity pitching."

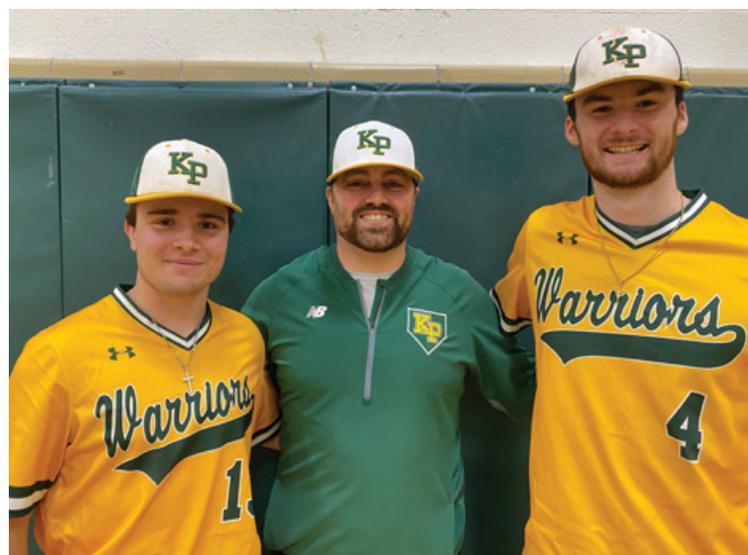
Two junior hurlers who excelled as sophomores are righthanders Cam Hasenfus and Nate Pennini. Hasenfus was 3-0 last year and had an earned-run average of 2.15. Pennini was 5-1 and had an E.R.A. of 2.80.

"Cam can also play the infield," Plympton said. "One of our starters last year, he throws a fastball, change-up and a knuckle curve. He gets good movement and velocity on his fastball. His control also is dependable. Nate has very good control and knows how to manage a game. A competitor with a high baseball IQ, he throws a fastball, curve and slider and his change-up keeps hitters off balance. He can also play second base."

Junior Tom Gately can play either the outfield or third base. "Tom is a left-handed line-drive hitter," Plympton offered. "He was one of our best hitters on the jayvees and joined the varsity for the playoffs. A quality fielder with good range, I like the talent he displays."

Two sophomores—catcher Leo Dowling and outfielder Johnny Prater—will be prime contributors.

"Leo is a tremendous catcher," Plympton said. "I'm excited to have him behind the plate. A starter as a freshman, he gets in front of every ball, checks the runners at first and third, and his arm strength is improving. He knows the game and knows how to calm down



King Philip coach Jeff Plympton is flanked by his captains — Max Robison (left) and Tommy McLeish.

a pitcher. Our upper-classmen pitchers are all comfortable working with him.

"Johnny is a hard worker who's become a reliable outfielder. I expect him to take the next step."

Plympton has a formidable staff of assistants who no doubt will be valuable in the transition to Division 1 baseball.

Jim Danielson and Nolan Bradley are varsity assistants; Jason Connelly is the jayvee head coach and his assistants are Dan Close and Peter Ingraham; Mike Roche is the freshman head coach, and Wayne Simarian is a freshman assistant. "We're fortunate to have such a quality staff," Plympton said.

A native of Wrentham who played two varsity seasons of baseball at KP, the 30-year-old Plympton relies on a competitive philosophy that stresses reaching one's potential and having fun.

"When those things occur, winning will be the by-product," he emphasized. "And valuable life lessons can be learned in athletics, like being prepared, working hard and overcoming adversity. Leadership and setting goals can also be learned and I want our players to respect others, respect the game and be role models."

The Warriors have qualified for tourney play in all of Plympton's first three years at the helm. His fourth season will likely be successful again.

"We'll rely on different styles and approaches," he emphasized. "Depending on each game, we can either use power or play small ball. We'll be versatile and we'll be quick to adapt."

KP's baseball players are a resilient bunch and their ascent to Division 1 just might be the motivating factor for continued success.

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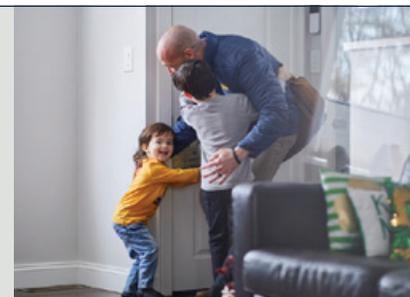


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The Culinary and Performing Arts Come Together for "Culinary Cabaret"

Friday, April 5 at 7 p.m., the Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) will unite the culinary and performing arts for an inspired evening of fabulous food, drink, and entertainment. The all-inclusive ticket delivers a delicious and entertaining evening at THE BLACK BOX, Franklin's premier entertainment venue.

The 12th annual Culinary Cabaret spotlights this region's outstanding culinary talent, showcasing fine wines, craft beer, delectable spirits, flavorful dishes, and mouth-watering desserts by culinary partners. This special evening has been a celebrated part of FPAC's yearly performance calendar for over a decade.

This year's growing list of partners includes Parker's Pub, 3, The Shed, Curry House, JK Catering, Carribean Press, Si-



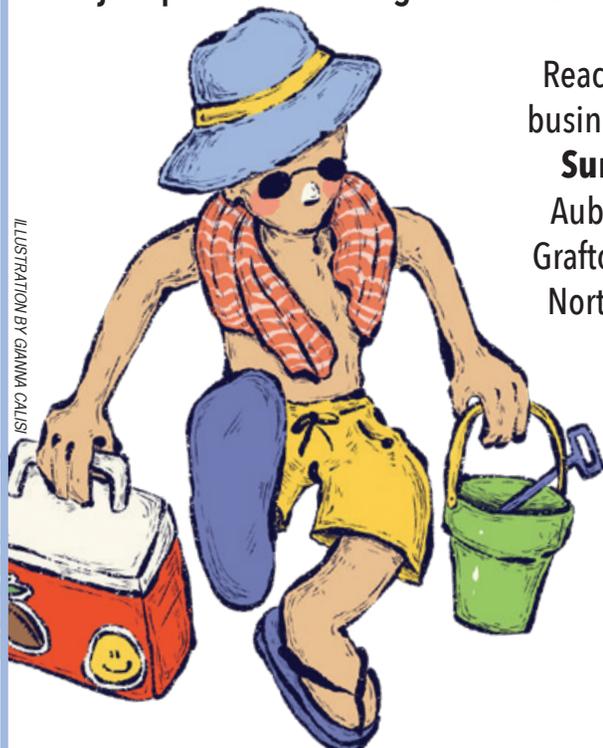
erra's, Applause, Pour Richard's and more.

Featuring entertainment by Electric Youth and special guest artists of the Franklin Performing Arts Company, Culinary Cabaret supports Electric Youth's 2024 European tour. Franklin Performing Arts Company and THE BLACK BOX is Franklin's own professional theater company.

THE BLACK BOX is located at 15 W. Central St. in downtown Franklin, MA. For tickets and more information on Culinary Cabaret, visit FPAConline.com or call the box office at (508) 528-3370. Follow Franklin Performing Arts Company and THE BLACK BOX on Facebook and Instagram for updates on programming.

SUMMER GUIDE!

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Upcoming Trips with the Wrentham Senior Center

Mark your calendars for these upcoming trips with the Wrentham Senior Center. For more information or to sign up, call 508-384-5425 or drop by in person at 400 Taunton St. For a full list of the Center's activities and programs, visit the Council on Aging page on www.wrentham.gov.

Ricky Nelson Remembered Wednesday, May 22. This tribute to Ricky Nelson will be performed by his identical twin sons, Matthew and Gunner Nelson, and will include never-before-seen big screen video footage of the Nelson family. This is a "drive-on-your-own" to Lake Pearl Wrentham, arriving no earlier than 11 a.m. Select lunch entrée of either chicken piccata or vegetarian lasagna. Cost is \$89. Pay in full by April 18.

Rolling Stones Tribute Show Wednesday, June 19. Considered to be the #1 international touring Rolling Stones tribute show. This is a "drive-on-your-own" to Lake Pearl Wrentham, arriving no earlier than 11 a.m. Select

lunch entrée of either chicken parmesan or pasta primavera at sign up. Cost is \$89, payable in full by May 16. No refunds after May 19.

Jimmy Buffett Tribute Show Monday, July 15. This show is the most requested Jimmy Buffett tribute show in the country. Grab your virtual beach chair and tanning oil and join us as we travel to Foster's Clambake Restaurant in York, Maine. Meal selection is either a traditional Maine lobster bake or a half-chicken BBQ. Departure time TBA. Sign up now and pay in full by June 26. Cost is \$137. No refund after June 11.

The following trips are overnight trips. Details/cost/itineraries available at the Senior Center.

Nova Scotia with TattooFest June 29-July 3.

Boothbay Harbor/Cabbage Island Lobster Bake July 30-July 31.

Mt. Rushmore, Big Sky Montana, and Yellowstone August 19-26.

Volunteers Needed for Vacancies on Wrentham Boards & Committees

The Zoning Board of Appeals and the Commission on Disability have vacant positions. Residents interested in filling one of the positions should visit the town's website at Wrentham.gov and fill out the Boards/Committee Application Form and then submit it via email to bos@wrentham.gov.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals currently has 3 (three) vacancies, 1 (one) full member and 2 (two) associate members. The Zoning Board of Appeals is the permit granting authority in Wrentham. They have the

authority to hear and decide petitions for appeals of zoning orders and decisions made by the Building Commissioner, variances with respect to land or structures, Special Permits for certain projects as allowed for in the Zoning By-laws, and Comprehensive Permits under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Commission on Disability

There are 2 (two) vacancies on the Wrentham Commission on Disability. Members serve a 2-year staggered term, and the Commission has a total of 5 members.

Franklin to Celebrate 2nd Annual Ladybug Trail Spring Walk April 20

Come to Downtown Franklin on Saturday, April 20 when the town kicks off its 2nd Annual Ladybug Trail Spring Walk. The town will also celebrate 50 years of the ladybug as the State's official insect.

Walk the Ladybug Cultural and Historical Trail any time throughout the day. Best place to start: 9 a.m. at Franklin Historical Museum at 80 West Central Street (Route 140) to get your free trail map to start exploring. While you're at the museum, and before you walk, stay for the ladybug presentation and activities.

State Representative Jeff Roy will speak about ladybugs and lawmaking at 11 a.m. at the museum. Franklin's ladybug story was covered on the news show Chronicle a few years ago. This short news video will be shown throughout the day. Fun ladybug items will be sold at the Historical Museum. Other activities include a short slide show detailing the ladybug story, and the

release of native live ladybugs around 3 p.m.

Why celebrate the 7-spotted ladybug?

This year marks the 50th anniversary since the ladybug was adopted as the official insect of Massachusetts. And the town of Franklin is where it started.

How did this happen? In 1974, a group of second-grade students and their teacher, Palma Johnson, at Franklin's Kennedy School, petitioned a bill to name the ladybug the state's official insect. The students learned about the law-making process in class and at the State House. In April 1974 then-governor Francis Sargent signed the bill making the ladybug the official state insect of Mass.

The town celebrated this special designation with its Ladybug project on the 40th anniversary of the accomplishment. The Franklin Cultural Council and the Rotary Club initiated the public art project to honor

Mrs. Johnson, her students, and the ladybug. The project invited artists and businesses to create and paint 2-foot-tall fiberglass ladybugs.

By 2022 the ladybug sculptures were installed throughout downtown Franklin's Cultural District – when it officially became known as the Ladybug Cultural and Historical Trail.

The trail uses the ladybug sculptures to tie together approximately 25 historical, cultural and business sites in downtown. Plus the walk is an opportunity to view more than 10 art murals painted by members of the Franklin Art Association located in the alleys and the daffodils that pop up along the trail in spring.

“The fact that this year is the 50th anniversary of a Franklin educator and her students making history with their ladybug legislation makes this year's walk extra special. We are happy to be the starting point for the walk, and for families picking

up a map,” said Alan Earls, chair of the Franklin Historical Commission. “We are keeping longer hours, too, from 9 to 3, and hope families and individu-

als will stop in,” he added. For more details, visit the Historical Museum website at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.com>

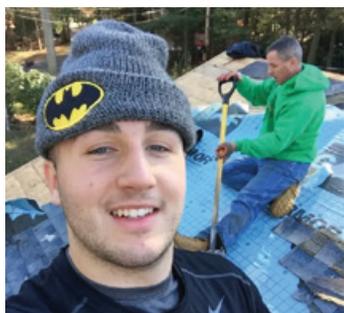
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Norfolk County Monthly Property Sales Increase for 2nd Month

Norfolk County recordings in February 2024 show a slight increase in the total number of documents recorded, which includes an increase in property sales and mortgage recordings compared to February 2023. According to Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell, this marks the second month in a row that year-over-year property sales have increased.

The Registry of Deeds recorded 6,787 documents in February 2024. This was 1% more than in February 2023 and a 10% decrease compared to January 2024.

Norfolk County seems to be holding steady with some increases in property sales, noted O'Donnell.

"It is still very early in the year, and with the traditional home buying season yet to begin, it will be important to continue monitoring these trends and to see how external factors, such as interest rates, may impact the real estate market in the coming months to see if this positive momentum will be sustained throughout the year," he said.

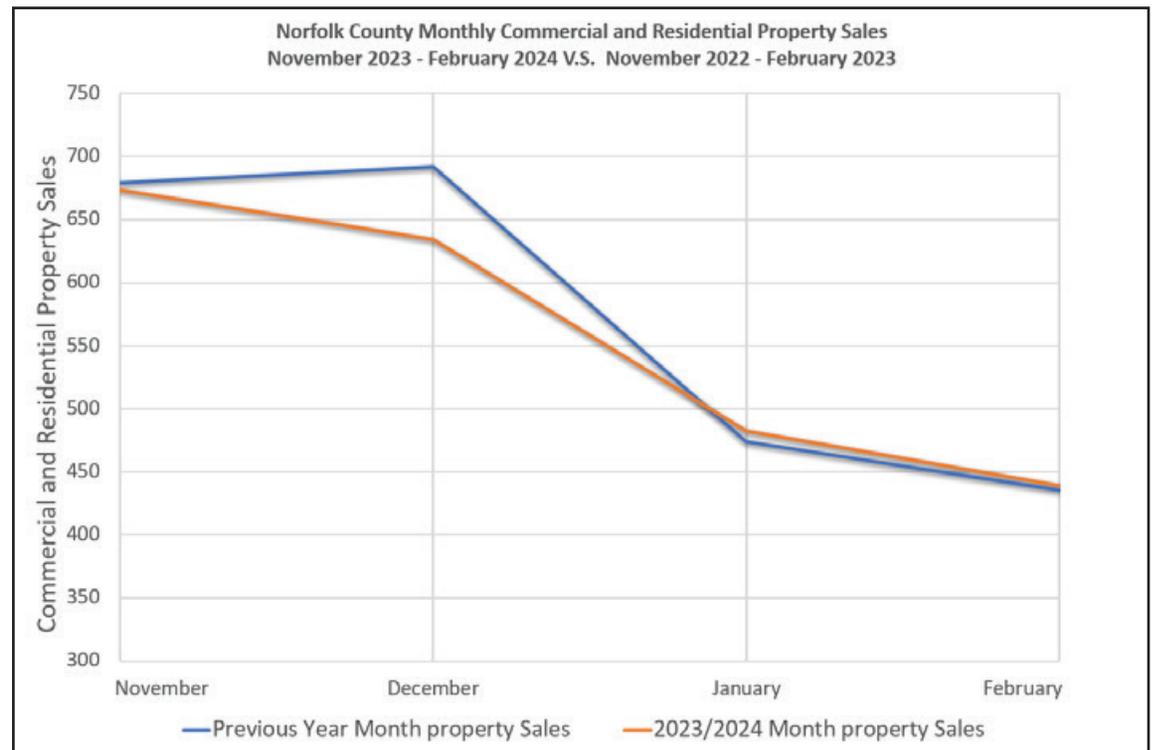
The total number of deeds recorded for February 2024, which reflects both commercial and residential real estate sales and

transfers, was 961, which was nearly equal to the number in February 2023. However, looking at just commercial and residential real estate sales, the number was up 1% from last year.

"Despite some difficult market conditions, the total number of commercial and residential property sales in February 2024 showed a slight increase compared to the previous year," stated Register O'Donnell. "This year-over-year increase may suggest that the prospects of lower mortgage interest rates, predicted by some market observers to come down by the first half of the upcoming year in 2024, are bringing buyers to the table early."

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties for February 2024 rose to \$994,236, a 5% increase compared to February 2023 but a decrease of 2% from January 2024. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is up, increasing 6% from last year but down 11% from last month.

O'Donnell said, "With a limited supply of available properties on the market, any increase in demand is likely to cause an increase in the average property sales price. Unfortunately, when



prices rise without a corresponding rise in inventory, it may result in increased competition among buyers. This makes it harder for homebuyers in general, but especially for first-time homebuyers."

For the month of February, lending activity showed an increase compared to the same month a year ago, the first time this has happened in over a year. A total of 916 mortgages were recorded in February 2024, up

1% from February 2023 and 4% less than last month.

The increase in lending activity this month is likely a product of the increase in the number of property transactions compared to 2023, said O'Donnell. This may suggest that while some homeowners are still hesitant to make moves with average mortgage interest rates above 6%, others are not dissuaded by current interest rates.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds continues to closely monitor the foreclosure market. In February 2024, there were 6 foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, whereas in February 2023, there were 3 recorded. The total number of notices to foreclose, the first step in the foreclosure process, increased from last year, going from 26 notices in February 2023 to 43 in February 2024.

"We all experience unforeseen events in our lives. Sometimes these events are beyond our control and can have a devastating impact on our finances. I would urge anyone struggling to pay their mortgage or who knows someone who is struggling to contact one of the non-

profit organizations listed on our website, www.norfolkdeeds.org," said O'Donnell.

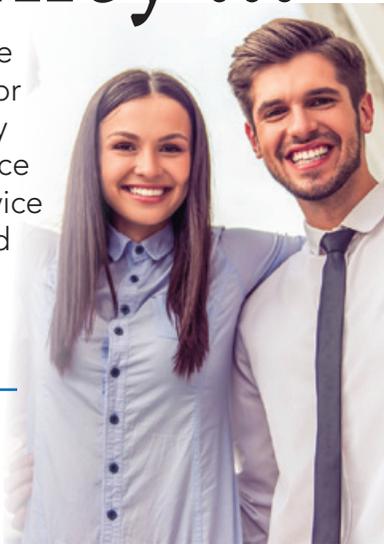
For the past several years, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has partnered with Quincy Community Action Programs (617-479-8181 x376) and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (617-770-2227) to help anyone facing challenges paying their mortgage. Another option for homeowners is to contact the Massachusetts Attorney General's Consumer Advocacy and Response Division (CARD) at (617) 727-8400.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, located at 649 High St., Dedham, is the principal office for real property in Norfolk County. The Registry is a resource for homeowners, title examiners, mortgage lenders, municipalities, and others with a need for secure, accurate, and 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 at (781) 461-6101 or by email at registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

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Real Estate Corner

Wrentham Receives Federal Grant for Water Quality Improvement Project

The town of Wrentham has received a federal grant to support the Wrentham Water Quality Improvements project.

U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss secured \$959,752 for the project through the federal FY24 Community Project Funding Program. The FY2024 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies funding bill provides \$58.2 billion in new spending for energy and water development, including \$10 billion toward improving critically important water infrastructure.

“Wrentham needs water infrastructure upgrades to reach its economic development goals, and I’m here to support the investments necessary for responsible growth,” Rep. Auchincloss said.

The town of Wrentham will use the funding to locate and build infrastructure for a new public water source in West Wrentham, most likely within the

Blackstone River Watershed. An additional water source will satisfy current critical water needs and allow for future development throughout Wrentham. Additionally, providing a third water source will lessen the strain on the Charles River and Taunton Watersheds and the town of Wrentham hopes to see improved water quality and water pressure with an added water source. The town is working with Environmental Partners, Inc. to identify areas of improvement within the water system.

“While this project will focus on the enhancement of the west end of town, it will continue the town’s pursuit in ensuring all of our residents have the adequate quantities and the highest quality of potable water,” Wrentham Town Manager Kevin Sweet said in a released statement. “We’d also like to express our thanks to Representative Auchincloss for his support.”



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20 Tips for Preparing Your Home for Sale



Carissa Whitbread

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Selling a home is a complex undertaking that can feel daunting and overwhelming for even the savviest homeowner. Hiring the right Realtor early in the process is key to maximizing value and ensuring the sale is smooth and successful. In facilitating hundreds of real estate transactions in the past 20 years, I have found the following preparations and actions to be beneficial.

20 Tips for Preparing a Home for Sale:

1. Declutter. Pack away off-season items. Organize the garage, basement, cabinets, and closets. Purge, donate or sell unused and unwanted items.
2. Depersonalize. Remove personal photos or items that show political affiliation, ethnicity, race or religion.
3. Obtain the Plot Plan from Town Hall. Be aware of any easements, wetlands, conservation land, or other limitations on the lot.
4. Contact the town's Building Department. Make sure all permits from past projects are closed.
5. Schedule a Title 5 Inspection. Obtain a Certificate of Compliance if there is a private septic system. Well water testing may also be prudent, if applicable.
6. Make a list of renovations or improvements completed. Show the investments made in updating the home.
7. List the ages of "big ticket items" such as roof, windows, siding, furnace, water heater, electrical and plumbing. Note items that were replaced or updated, as they may increase the home's value.
8. Identify and disclose inclusions/exclusions upfront. Create a list of items that are excluded from the sale of a home (examples: refrigerator, washing machine, dryer, swing sets).
9. Spruce up the curb appeal. Attract potential buyers who often do a "drive-by" to view exterior. Tend to landscaping. Sweep walkways and front steps. If needed, power wash siding and/or decking.
10. Have furnace/HVAC serviced if it hasn't been in the past 12 months. Show proper maintenance and efficiency of utilities, as they are important to potential buyers.
11. Collect owner manuals and warranties pertaining to home to pass along to the buyer.
12. Freshen home inside and out. Improve the appearance of the home with a fresh coat of paint. Cleaning or replacing the carpets can also help the property show and smell better.
13. Prepare for Fire Dept Inspection. Ensure the street # is visible by the front door. Make sure all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are less than 10 years old, are the right type and are in the correct locations.
14. For condominiums or neighborhoods with a Homeowners Association, obtain HOA documents such as Rules/Regulations, Bylaws, Financials & Operating Budget. Inquire about upcoming/pending Special Assessments.
15. Wash windows (inside and out). Remove heavy or dark drapery. Ensure all light fixtures are operational with maximum wattage lightbulbs fixture safely allows.
16. Stage the home. Remove or move bulky furniture, clear off counters and other surfaces. Adding new, white linens can make home feel brighter and more inviting.
17. Clean. Schedule a professional deep cleaning immediately prior to hitting the market. A clean home always shows best.
18. Complete inexpensive, minor updates such as replacing light switch plates, upgrading cabinet knobs, refreshing fireplace, or replacing bath hardware.
19. Research the local housing market and look for comparable properties to give an indication of competition.
20. Preparation is key to a successful home sale. A knowledgeable and experienced Realtor will provide a personalized plan and additional customized suggestions for high impact, low-cost ways you can improve the appeal, value, and salability of your specific property.

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Real Estate Corner

Norfolk County's Top 20 Real Estate Sales in 2023

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported that during 2023, twenty properties, a mix of commercial and residential, sold for more than \$18,000,000, with an average price of \$50,868,490.

The prices on the properties listed in this article relate to real estate sales during the period of January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023 that occurred in the 28 communities that make up Norfolk County.

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," stated 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."

1. The 472-unit apartment complex on the border of Canton and Randolph, known as Prynne Hills, sold in October for \$143,500,000.
2. 8 Upland Woods Circle, Norwood, the 262-unit apartments.
3. 51 Trotter Road, Weymouth, known as the MIO Apartments, an upscale residential studio apartment complex, sold in July for \$94,600,000.
4. 175-185 Campanelli Drive, Braintree, the 494,520-square-foot former United Liquors warehouse and distribution facility, sold in December for \$77,500,000.
5. 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.
6. 1284 Beacon Street, Brookline, the 8-story, 148-unit apartment building known as Pelham Hall, sold in December for \$70,000,000.
7. 135 Will Drive, Canton, a 417,014-square-foot warehouse and logistics facility on 26.3 acres of land, sold in December for \$68,000,000.
8. 45 Maple Street, Stoughton, a 49.98-acre asphalt and pavement quarry, sold on the first day of December for \$62,000,000.
9. 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.
10. 23.07 acres of land from the former U.S. Naval Air Station in Weymouth, sold in September for \$50,000,000.
11. 57 Littlefield, Avon, multiple portions of land known as the "Avon Business Center" sold in July for \$47,250,000.
12. 40 Allied Drive, Dedham/Westwood, The Hilton hotel on the Dedham Westwood border sold in June for \$41,900,000.
13. 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.
14. 176 Grove Street, Franklin, a 171,000-square-foot freight transportation center and warehouse, was sold in May for \$29,500,000.
15. Wheeler Circle, Stoughton, the 280-unit apartment complex, known as Stone Ends Apartments, sold in July for \$28,972,000.
16. 206 Grove Street, Franklin, a 150,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution facility, sold in July for \$28,000,000.
17. 102-104 Revere Street, Canton, a 3-story apartment building known as "Millside at Heritage Park," housing 60 units built on 2.24 acres, sold in February for \$26,625,000.
18. 85 John Road, Canton, a 435,600-square-foot research and development facility on 10 acres, sold in August for \$22,750,000.
19. 210 Grove Street, Franklin, a 167,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution facility, sold in July for \$19,500,000.
20. 2121 Central Street & Henry Street, Stoughton, a 91-unit, 277-room assisted living facility, sold in April for \$18,713,000.

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