

## Children's book 'Twinkle' authored by Mendon's Jenna Morgan

By Linda Chuss

Ever since she was in elementary school, Jenna Morgan wrote stories, amassing notebooks full of them. Her dream was to get them published, but other priorities, including three children and a career, came first. In 2021, she decided it was time, and wrote and published her first book, inspired by her daughter Kiki.

"When she was 3 years old," Morgan said, "Kiki started getting unwelcome comments and was described as rowdy. I didn't anticipate the criticism to start that young, and I thought she was cool. That led me to write 'Twinkle.' While it's fictional, it was based on what I'd seen. It took six months to draft but the words came easily."

"I wanted a story to capture the reality of being uniquely yourself while using a real



Jenna Morgan and her daughter Kiki, of Mendon, are both proud of the book "Twinkle". Photo courtesy of Jenna Morgan

**TWINKLE**

continued on page 9

## Getting the word out about the Main Street roadwork improvement project in Upton



Hair Affair owner Gloria Profetto and stylist Carolyn MacDonald are concerned about potential construction impacts on their salon and other businesses on Main Street. Photo by Linda Chuss

By Linda Chuss

It might be surprising to learn there's a construction project to reconfigure Main and Milford Streets in Upton, with a roundabout, bike lanes, and sidewalks, to start as soon as 2027. Because

it is a state road, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is running the project. Primary objectives are to

**MAIN STREET**

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CORRECTION

Hopkinton Center for the Arts has made a correction to the recent insert that was included in the May newspaper outlining their summer concert series. Due to a carnival happening in the town June 27 - June 30, the "Love Dogs" band concert has been rescheduled for Friday, June 21 and "The C-Jammers" has been rescheduled for Saturday, June 22. Full details of the summer concert series can be found at [hopartscenter.org](http://hopartscenter.org)

Nipmuc Regional High School students complete Future Builders Mentorship Program



Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School and Nipmuc High School students learned about building principles in the Future Builders program. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

Mendon-Upton Regional School District Superintendent Maureen Cohen and Nipmuc Regional High School Co-Principals John Clements and Mary Anne Moran are pleased to share that three Nipmuc Regional High School students completed an eight-week intensive after-school course provided by the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts, Inc., the Future Builders High School Mentorship Program.

The Future Builders High

School Mentorship Program educates students about construction-related career paths and develops leadership skills critical to the industry.

This opportunity for students to learn about the construction industry was offered for the first time this year to Nipmuc Regional High School.

Eight after-school seminars covered information on basic building design and construction principles, inspiring and enlightening students to explore



Nipmuc Regional High School students Youssef Abdelmesih, Jorge Gamboni and Maxwell Bevivino were given certificates of completion after attending the Future Builders High School Mentorship Program. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

careers in architecture, engineering and construction through connections with community professionals.

To enhance their learning, students from both Nipmuc High School and neighboring Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School worked in small teams with industry professionals to complete hands-on projects, such as building structurally stable model towers out of limited materials. Students also toured building

sites to see first-hand how the principles of their learning apply in real-world settings.

Professionals from Shawmut Design and Construction, Consigli Construction and Colantonio Inc. shared expertise in structural engineering, civil engineering, virtual design and construction, scheduling logic, environmental building concepts and public speaking throughout the two-hour sessions.

On May 16, students applied their knowledge and presented key takeaways they had learned throughout the program to invited mentors and guests.

The group of students discussed software applications for engineering and construction, the implications of virtual design and the benefits of hands-on learning.

Nipmuc High School students Youssef Abdelmesih, Maxwell Bevivino, and Jorge Gamboni were given certificates of completion following their presentations.

"This opportunity enhanced authentic learning for students in their career areas of interest," said Superintendent Cohen. "Application of innovative, collaborative and solution-oriented thinking in programs such as Future Builders is a key component of Nipmuc's 'Portrait of a Learner' model. At Nipmuc Regional High School we are dedicated to providing pathways for students to pursue their career interests and are proud of the success of this partnership."

Submitted by Mendon-Upton Regional School District

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## 'Coexisting with Coyotes in the Commonwealth,' free program June 13

UPTON – Metacomet Land Trust, a conservation nonprofit, will host a free program on how humans can learn to coexist with coyotes now present in the region. Mass Wildlife biologist Meghan Crawford will offer her perspective as a “Community Engagement Biologist” who has watched and learned from wild animals who might live in and around the back yards of suburban Massachusetts.

The program is part of the Land Trust’s annual meeting on Thursday, June 13, at the Upton Community Center, 130 Milford St., Rte. 140, in Upton. The public is invited. The general meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed at 7 p.m. by the program.

In a recent issue of MassWildlife magazine, Crawford not only describes in detail the life and habits of our Eastern Coyotes, now prevalent around the Commonwealth, but she also tackles the issues which arise

when coyotes arrive in residential areas. Her talk will include the reasons coyotes can frequent backyards and local parks, as well as offer some suggestions on “hazing” individual animals so they learn to avoid people.

Crawford says that she hears at least weekly from residents around the state asking for advice about coyotes near their homes, family and pets. “While every coyote conversation (with a resident) has unique circumstances, many can be boiled down to a single question: How am I supposed to live with coyotes?” Crawford writes.

In addition to her background in wildlife management, Crawford has over 10 years of experience increasing the public’s understanding of the natural world as a science educator in museums, zoos, and environmental education centers.

Lisa Mosczynski, president of the nonprofit conservation organization, said “We invite the



Photo credit: Bill Byrne, Mass Wildlife

public to bring friends and family to this program. Metacomet is hoping the presentation will give us a unique perspective on our environment and one that will also help us better understand our role in it.”

### COYOTE FACTS

Did you know:

- **It's not your imagination:** state officials estimate that the coyote population is now between 9,500 and 11,500 statewide.
- **Eastern Coyotes have long legs and thick winter fur that make them appear larger than they truly are. This is due to having 8-25% of their DNA from wolves. But...**
- **Coyotes also share about 8-11% of their heritage with domestic dogs**

Source: MassWildlife Magazine

Land Trust works in the communities of Norfolk, Franklin, Wrentham and Bellingham in Norfolk County, and in the Worcester County towns of Blackstone, Douglas, Hopedale, Millbury, Millville, Mendon, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge and Webster.

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# Financial literacy a key part of career enrichment at Blackstone Valley Tech

*By Linda Chuss*

Students at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) may not realize that the valuable financial literacy component of their Career Enrichment program is rare in Massachusetts. Nationally, 42 states require personal finance or economics coursework for graduation, but not Massachusetts. At BVT, however, financial literacy spans all four years and covers not only personal finance but also small business management.

Joseph Ursoleo, the Career Enrichment Team Leader at BVT, first introduced the topic seven years ago by having students create a personalized budget. He said, "Having been a business major at Bryant University, it seemed like a no-brainer to implement financial literacy for high school students. Our administration offered us the luxury of testing it out, and it showed immediate success."

Since that first budgeting spreadsheet, the financial literacy program has greatly expanded. "We review loans and compound interest, which is relevant to students considering post-secondary options," said Ursoleo. "We cover earning power and evaluate various types of compensation as we explore different careers with students."

"One of the main focuses of our sophomore curriculum is management and entrepreneurship. Even for students who don't want to run their own businesses, understanding these concepts makes them more em-

A "Day with Industry Experts" featured 40 professionals fielding questions from Blackstone Valley Tech juniors. Photo courtesy of Joseph Ursoleo

ployable. We address financial management of a small business like the differences between revenue and net income, variable and fixed expenses, and core economic principles like opportunity costs and cost-benefit analysis.

"During their senior year, each student creates a budget using the entry-level income of the career they're pursuing after graduation. They realize it's not only the cost to buy the car but insurance, maintenance, and fuel. From there, we cover financial markets, investing for retirement, managing and building credit, types of credit, and credit card use."

Financial literacy is one part of the Career Enrichment Program at BVT, which focuses on employability, management and entrepreneurship, and technology. "It supplements traditional academic and vocational coursework with authentic learning experiences for students," Ursoleo explained. "In their capstone project, seniors interview a professional who holds the career they will be pursuing. This provides an opportunity to network and a learning experience beyond the job description."

"Last year, we organized a 'Day with Industry Experts' where 40 professionals from

fields including the construction trades, health care, beauty, engineering, the military, and criminal justice came in to talk with over 200 juniors. The feedback was 100% positive, so we're adding it to the program."

Ursoleo summarized the program this way: "Students receive a personalized learning experience as they discover who they are individually and who they want to become professionally. They develop the employability skills, professional documents, and an economic understanding to maximize their potential and thrive in an ever-changing competitive society."



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# Financial freedom: A gift to your family



Mark Freeman

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Here's a sobering statistic: 72% of retirees say one of their biggest fears is becoming a burden on their families, according to a study by Edward Jones and the consulting firm Age Wave. If you are near retirement, how can you prepare yourself to become financially free, so you won't have to depend on grown children or other family members?

- Here are a few suggestions to consider:
- **Keep adding to retirement savings.** Today, with a greater awareness of healthy lifestyles, many people are spending two, or even three, decades in an active retirement. To help pay for those years, then, you'll likely need to build your retirement savings as much as possible. So, while you're still working, try to contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. If you are in the later stages of your career, possibly close to your peak earning power, you may be able to put in sizable sums every year.
  - **Choose an appropriate withdrawal rate.** While it's obviously important to build your retirement savings, it's just as essential to make the money last. Once you retire,

you'll want to establish an appropriate withdrawal rate — that is, the amount you can take out each year from your 401(k) and other investments without running the risk of outliving your money. The amount you can safely withdraw each year will depend on a variety of factors, including your age, your account balances, Social Security benefits, inflation, income tax rates and spousal income. In any case, selecting a suitable withdrawal rate can help go a long way toward preserving your financial freedom throughout your retirement.

- **Think about downsizing.** One possible way to boost your savings and add liquidity is to downsize your living arrangements. This may be an attractive option if your children are grown and your current home feels too large. Of course, downsizing is a highly personal decision — if

you've lived in your home for many years, have fond memories of raising a family in it and still enjoy the neighborhood, it can certainly be hard to leave. Consequently, you'll need to weigh these emotional factors against the potential financial benefits of moving into a smaller, less expensive space.

- **Prepare for long-term care costs.** If you were ever to need some type of long-term care, such as an extended stay in a nursing home, you could face some sizable expenses, most of which may not be covered by Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan. And clearly, you would not want to put your grown children in a position where they might feel the need to step in financially. To help avoid this possibility, you may want to consult with a financial professional about addressing these costs through strategies

that may be appropriate for your needs.


These aren't the only ideas to consider in helping maintain your financial independence and reducing your potential dependence on your family during your retirement years. But taken together, they can give you a good start — so think about putting them to work.

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

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

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# Mendon elect town officials, reject override for new senior and community center

By Theresa Knapp  
Mendon Town Clerk Ellen S. Agro reports that 1,240 votes were cast in the May 14 annual town election. The results are as follows:

- **Town Moderator** (1-year term): Thomas Merolli
- **Town Clerk** (3 yrs): Ellen Agro
- **Select Board** (2 seats, 3 yrs): Brendan Chenelle, Michael Merolli
- **Assessor** (3 yrs): Kevin Ruden (write-in)
- **Assessor** (2 yrs): David Kurczy (write-in)
- **Board of Health** (3 yrs): Thomas Fichtner
- **Housing Authority** (5 yrs): Peter Denton

- **MURSD School Committee** (3 yrs): Erick Brown
- **Parks Commissioner** (3 yrs): Jonathan Dudley (write-in)
- **Planning Board** (5 yrs): Eric Hodge
- **Taft Library Board of Trustees** (3 yrs): Alison Chu
- **Water Commissioner** (3 yrs): Vincent Roy

Voters were also asked if they would agree to raise money through a Proposition 2 ½ override “to pay for the bond issued in order to design and construct a Mendon Senior and Community Center”. The vote failed with 629 opposed and 577 in favor.

The full results can be found at bit.ly/MendonATEResults2024.

# Simas and Prop 2 ½ override prevail at Upton annual town election

Voters re-elect Selectman Simas, agree to override to fund BVT roof work

By Theresa Knapp  
On May 7, the Town of Upton held its annual town election. According to the results certified by Town Clerk Denise Smith, of the town’s 6,540 registered voters, 941 (or 14.4%) cast a ballot in the election. Of the ballots cast, 428 (45.5%) were in person and 513 (54.5%) were by mail.

- The results are as follows:
- **Town Moderator** (1-year term): David C. Loeper
  - **Select Board** (3 yrs): Brett Adam Simas
  - **Assessor of Taxes** (3 yrs): William A. Bonina
  - **Cemetery Commission** (3 yrs): Mildred F. Galeone
  - **Board of Health** (3 yrs): Laura J. Hebb


- **MURSD School Committee** (3 yrs): Vikki L. Ludwigson
- **Planning Board** (5 yrs): William W. Taylor
- **Public Library Trustees** (3 seats, 3 yrs): Alycia R. Phyllis, Laurie S. Wodin, Maureen B. Porter
- **Public Library Trustee** (1 seat, 1 yr): Lauren Catherine Fobes
- **Recreation Commission** (3 yrs): Christopher K. Murphy
- **Trust Fund Commission** (3 yrs): Lyn Haggerty (write-in)

In addition, there was one seat available on the Housing Authority (3-year term) with no formal candidate running. Some write-in names were

submitted at the ballot box, but the Town Clerk reports “No winner declared/tied write-in counts”.  
The town also agreed to raise, through a Proposition 2 ½ override, a yet-to-be-determined amount of money to cover Upton’s share of the “bond issued by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District for roof construction and the replacement to energy efficient rooftop HVAC units at the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School”. That vote was 517 in favor and 312 opposed (with 112 blanks).  
Complete election results can be found at [www.uptonma.gov/394/Town-Clerk](http://www.uptonma.gov/394/Town-Clerk).

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Upton Food Pantry hours

June 18, July 2 and 16: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. - The Food Pantry serves residents from Upton as well as nearby towns. Proof of income or church affiliation is not required. We offer non-perishable food, toiletries, paper products and infant needs. Donations can be dropped off in our donation shed located outside the church office on 1 Church Street, Upton.

Community supper on June 20

June 20: Community Supper - is on the third Thursday of each month from September through June at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., our Faith in Action committee provides a delicious and nutritious meal for the community. Everyone is welcome. This month, we'll be serving pulled chicken and cold salads. Please call the church office at 508-529-3192 by June 14 to make your reservation.

If your nonprofit organization is located in Upton or Mendon and provides free services to Upton and/or Mendon citizens, email [editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com](mailto:editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com) for consideration to be listed in this section.

# Southwick's Zoo excitedly welcomes new Eurasian Eagle Owlet

Southwick's Zoo is delighted to announce the birth of a new Eurasian Eagle Owlet. The owlet, offspring of two resident adult Eurasian Eagle Owls, is the first Eurasian Eagle Owl egg to hatch at Southwick's Zoo.

On April 25, 2024, zoo staff noticed the Eurasian Eagle Owlet's egg actively hatching. Recognizing the situation's urgency, the decision was made to intervene and ensure the owlet's well-being. With a commitment to its welfare, the egg was carefully retrieved for hand-rearing by the dedicated bird team at Southwick's Zoo, under their care, the egg hatched in an incubator on the day it was retrieved. Since then, the owlet has been under around-the-clock monitoring, feeding, and care, gradually acclimating to ambient temperatures outside of the incubator with the help of its growing feathers.

While the owlet's gender is yet to be determined, the zoo's veterinarian has submitted the eggshell for genetic testing, with results expected soon. Regular health checks conducted by the veterinary team at Southwick's



Zoo have confirmed the owlet is in excellent condition.

As the owlet continues to grow and thrive, plans are underway for its future role as an ambassador in Southwick's Zoo's bird shows and presentations. Visitors can look forward to special appearances by

the owlet during these events throughout the summer.

For an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Eurasian Eagle Owlet, be sure to visit Southwick's Zoo this summer for bird shows and keeper chats.

To plan your visit, please visit [www.southwickzoo.com](http://www.southwickzoo.com).

# BVT students earn 69 'precious medals' at SkillsUSA State Competition

## Mendon, Upton students among winners

The 50th SkillsUSA State Leadership & Skills Conference was held on April 26 at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School.

The annual event, hosted by SkillsUSA Massachusetts, welcomed more than 2,100 district champions to BVT's campus.

The state competition is like a bustling hive of talented students and industry professionals abuzz with energy, creativity, and a shared passion for excellence. It is an incredible showcase of vocational technical training at its finest. BVT's student competitors achieved remarkable results, earning 69 medals: 27 Gold, 23 Silver, and 19 Bronze. These achievements are a testament to the student's hard work and dedication.

The gold medalists earn the right to represent SkillsUSA Massachusetts and compete with champions from all over the country at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, this June.

BVT students who earned medals at the State Leadership & Skills Conference include Mendon and Upton residents:

### Mendon:

**Silver:** Noah LeFave, Electronics; and Leila Leyvas, Health Knowledge Bowl

**Bronze:** Kalynn Bellefontaine, Nurse Assisting

### Upton:

**Gold:** Justin Fransen, Mechatronics

**Silver:** Cassidy Lyon, Health Knowledge Bowl

*The complete list of medalists is available at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa).*

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05/16/2024	100 North Ave.	\$725,000
05/15/2024	52 North Ave.	\$560,000
05/09/2024	26 Maple St.	\$590,000
05/02/2024	15 Mowry St.	\$707,000

Date	Upton	Amount
05/31/2024	140 Warren St.	\$819,900
05/31/2024	8 Fieldstone St.	\$385,000
05/29/2024	3 Central Sq.	\$550,000
05/21/2024	10 Wildwood Ave.	\$300,000
05/20/2024	6 Shoemaker Ln.	\$733,400
05/16/2024	130 High St.	\$485,000
05/16/2024	95 Warren St.	\$1.11 mil

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



The 4-bed, 4-bath, 4,027 square foot house at 95 Warren Street in Upton recently sold for \$1.11 million. Photo credit www.zillow.com

Mendon recent safety log

Between April 21 and May 25, the Mendon Police Department responded to hundreds of calls, the majority of which were motor vehicle stops. Numerous other calls were related to 911 hang ups, motor vehicle violations, erratic drivers, disabled motor vehicles, fire and carbon monoxide alarms, burglar alarms, road hazards, parking complaints, suspicious activity, vehicle lockouts, lost and found property, and more.

Other entries of note during the month include:

- April 21 at 5:37 a.m., Uxbridge Rd., well-being check
- April 21 at 9:21 p.m., Uxbridge Rd., message delivery
- April 21 at 3:30 p.m., Southwick St., hit and run collision
- April 22 at 12:11 p.m., Morrison Dr., threats
- April 22 at 7:32 p.m., Carpenter Hill Rd., threats
- April 23 at 4:09 p.m., Park St., property damage

- April 23 at 4:51 p.m., Cemetery St., document service
- April 23 at 8:09 p.m., Cemetery St., document service
- April 25 at 1:25 p.m., Cape Rd., larceny
- April 27 at 7:54 a.m., Neck Hill Rd., property damage
- April 27 at 10:55 a.m., Vincent Rd., structure fire
- April 30 at 12:57 a.m., Millville St., message delivery
- May 1 at 4:11 p.m., Chestnut Hill Rd., threats
- May 1 at 4:50 p.m., Nipmuc Dr., harassment
- May 2 at 5:12 p.m., Hartford Ave. East, hit and run collision
- May 2 at 10:05 p.m., Hartford Ave. East, brush fire
- May 3 at 8:31 a.m., Northbridge St., well-being check
- May 3 at 9:40 a.m., Main St., civil complaint
- May 3 at 12:53 p.m., Oak Hill Rd., larceny
- May 3 at 2:09 p.m., Colonial Dr., civil complaint
- May 4 at 8:44 a.m., Northbridge St., animal
- May 4 at 5:59 p.m., Blueberry Dr., civil complaint
- May 5 at 3:18 p.m., North Ave., hit and run collision
- May 5 at 8:58 p.m., Main St., well-being check
- May 6 at 10:23 a.m., Rawson Farm Dr., stolen vehicle
- May 7 at 12:25 p.m., Colonial Dr., noise complaint
- May 7 at 6:37 p.m., Puddingstone Ln., larceny
- May 8 at 8:33 a.m., Asylum St., warrant service
- May 8 at 11:36 a.m., Milford St., warrant service
- May 9 at 10:51 a.m., Butler Rd., fraud
- May 11 at 12:16 p.m., Blackstone St., well-being check
- May 12 at 7:56 p.m., Hartford Ave. West, larceny



- March 13 at 9:59 a.m., Uxbridge Rd., harassment
  - May 13 at 11:03 a.m., Hartford Ave. West, animal
  - May 13 at 11:45 a.m., Hastings St., panic alarm
  - May 14 at 9:40 a.m., Springbrook Ct., well-being check
  - May 16 at 11:10 a.m., Hastings St., civil complaint
  - May 16 at 8:55 p.m., Oak Hill Rd., well-being check
  - May 17 at 2:51 p.m., Bicknell Dr., trespass
  - May 18 at 6:49 p.m., Taft Ave., harassment
  - May 18 at 7:01 p.m., Hastings St., animal
  - May 19 at 8:43 p.m., Cape Rd., missing person
  - May 20 at 2:45 p.m., Millville St., message delivery
  - May 21 at 3:44 p.m., Main St., warrant service
  - May 22 at 1:14 a.m., Park St., animal
  - May 23 at 10:12 a.m., Pleasant St., electrical fire
  - May 23 at 11:22 a.m., Bates St., animal
  - May 23 at 5:58 p.m., Gaskill St., hit and run collision
  - May 25 at 11:42 a.m., Uxbridge Rd., hit and run collision
  - May 25 at 6:48 p.m., Uxbridge Rd., well-being check
- Source: www.mendonpolice.com/  
IMAGE - Source: Facebook @mendonpolice



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TWINKLE

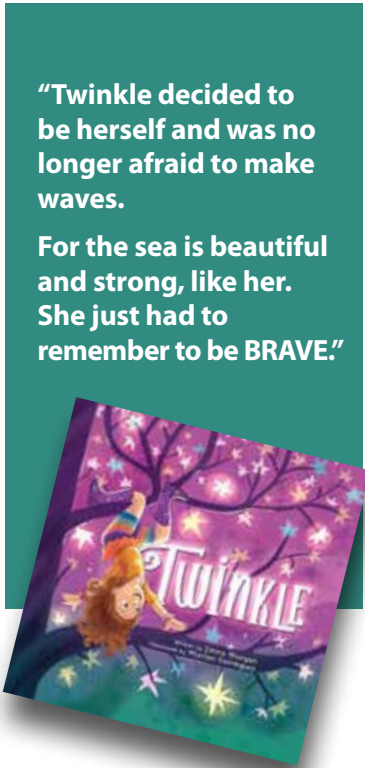
continued from page 1

and relatable character. I think ‘Twinkle’ is a great reminder that there is power in being different and it’s something to be celebrated rather than criticized.”

As summarized on the jacket, “Twinkle is a young girl with sparkly (often muddy) boots, wild, curly hair, and a whole lot to say ... Through its empowering message and relatable narrative, Twinkle encourages children to shine brightly and be unapologetically themselves, no matter what anyone else has to say about it.”

“I tried to make it fun,” said Morgan. “It’s a rhyming book, which young kids like. My three children were all involved in the drafting process – I call them my board of directors.”

She worked with an illustrator from Spain, Marian Dominguez. “Marian created sketches by hand and adapted them based on my feedback,” said Morgan. “We went through multiple rounds until we landed on watercolors as the illustration method, and Marian worked tirelessly to make sure each page fit both the style of the book but also mimicked my daughter’s style and mannerisms. I couldn’t be happier with how they turned out. We finished making changes in February and the book was released in April. It took over two years, but it was worth every minute we spent



“Twinkle decided to be herself and was no longer afraid to make waves.

For the sea is beautiful and strong, like her. She just had to remember to be BRAVE.”

making it flow seamlessly.”

While creating “Twinkle” was enjoyable for Morgan, marketing aspects have been less so. “I’m busy with work and family, so the rollout was low key,” Morgan explained. “I did read it to my daughter’s class, which was a full-circle moment.”

“It’s been a learning experience. Self-publishing isn’t the easiest path, but the results are worth it. For anyone thinking of writing a book, I encourage you to do it. Seeing the book in my daughter’s hands is an incomparable experience.”

“Twinkle” is available from online booksellers. For more about the book and Morgan, visit [www.odyssey-ink.com](http://www.odyssey-ink.com)

Thanks To Yanks donates lawn mower to scouts




Thanks To Yanks recently donated a lawn mower to a local scout troop associated with the Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River. The scouts and parish have an outreach program to mow the lawns of elderly veterans who need assistance with lawn care.

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MAIN STREET

continued from page 1

improve sidewalks and make them accessible, increase safety through better visibility at intersections and crosswalks, and repave the road.

Per Town Manager Joseph Laydon, “The town’s role is to serve as an interface between the constituents and the state. Upton does not contribute financially.”

In January 2023, MassDOT held a public hearing with abutters to review the design at the 25% stage and solicit early input. Another hearing is expected in 2024, when the design is at the 75% stage.

At the 2023 meeting, some abutters raised concerns about losing parking spaces to the bike lanes, and the impact of construction on businesses. To address those concerns, the project design was modified from having bike lanes on both sides of the street to only one side in that area, and affected businesses were invited to review the updated plans.

One of those business own-

ers, Gloria Profetto, has operated the Hair Affair salon at 7 Main St. for 28 years. Profetto learned her customers could park across the street, and that a crosswalk would be added. “All parking on my side of Main Street will be lost,” she explained. “Spots on both sides of the street are usually full during the day. Where will customers and employees of the businesses around here park?”

Traffic congestion during and after construction also worries Profetto. “There will be disruption for three seasons. Because of the inconvenience, people will avoid the area and customers might not return. Businesses like mine will suffer.”

Town Planner Michael Antonellis said, “We encourage people to call or stop by and review the plans. It’s important we hear their opinions so we can advocate on their behalf to best meet the needs of the town.” The kind of feedback that abutters presented at the first design review meeting about loss of parking led to design changes to add back some of the spaces.

Solutions to parking in that area are still being looked into. Laydon said, “We are preparing a plan to add parking spaces at town hall, working to add parking to the town-owned gravel lot on Grove Street, and finding other opportunities to add nearby parking.”

Regarding congestion, Laydon needs to see the 75% plans first. “We want to understand how the state intends to phase the project. If it’s like the West Upton TIP project they recently completed, the impact due to construction shouldn’t be that significant. We’ll look for temporary parking and make sure businesses are accessible.”

The roundabout planned for the intersection at Main, North Main, Warren, Grove, and Milford streets, “is getting the most attention,” said Laydon. “There aren’t a lot of examples of roundabouts in town centers. Millbury and Douglas each have one along Route 146. The amount of traffic we have throughout the day wouldn’t justify the need for a traffic light. And the state explained that a roundabout

leads to more efficient traffic flow and is safer than a light.”

Safety is a primary objective for the project. “We need safety improvements,” said Laydon. “Town hall overlooks the intersection where the roundabout will be added. On an hourly basis, we hear brakes screeching and horns blowing. Our staff regularly crosses the street, so we personally know the safety concerns in doing that. Pedestrians have been injured and there have been car accidents. The project includes plans to make the crossings more visible and realign the intersections so the views for cars coming onto Main Street will be clearer.”

Profetto concurred with the need for safety improvements. “Cars drive through here so fast,” she said. She added that she heard about problems with similar projects in other towns, like Hopkinton and Acton. “More people should be made aware of the project in Upton,” she said. “Most of my clients don’t know about it and want to know more because it might impact the whole town.”

Explained Laydon, “The Upton project is not tackling as much as projects like that in Hopkinton, which also buried utility lines. Once we have the 75% plan, we can assess it and provide comments to the state. Recently, the state asked the town to seek input on a compromise plan from the direct abutters in Upton center. Once the project progresses to the 75% public hearing stage, we’ll invite more people and engage the community as a whole.”

Antonellis said, “We can synthesize the information for the public and advocate on their behalf with the state.” Laydon added, “The town can retain consultants to perform inspections and make sure concerns are addressed. We also have leverage with our legislative delegation, if needed.”

Until there are broader public sessions, Laydon and Antonellis welcome anyone interested in learning more about the project to visit them at their offices at 1 Main St., or call to talk. Laydon can be reached at 508-529-6901, and Antonellis at 508-603-0219.



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# Over 40 and tired of wearing reading glasses?

## Refractive lens exchange may be for you

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

Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE) stands as a transformative solution for those grappling with vision impairments and hate wearing glasses. This intricate surgical procedure replaces the natural lens of the eye with an artificial one, offering a path to clearer sight and reduced dependence on corrective lenses. In this article, we delve into the depths of RLE, exploring its intricacies, indications, benefits, potential risks, and alternative options.

### Understanding Refractive Lens Exchange

RLE, often referred to as lens replacement surgery, is primarily utilized to rectify refractive errors such as severe nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism. Moreover, it effectively addresses age-related vision issues like presbyopia, which typically affects individuals over 40. Unlike LASIK or PRK, which reshape the cornea, RLE involves substituting the eye's natural lens with an artificial one, often termed an intraocular lens (IOL).

### Indications for Refractive Lens Exchange

The ideal candidates for RLE are individuals experiencing progressive vision deterioration due to refractive errors or age-related changes in the lens. Candidates typically exhibit:

Significant refractive errors, including severe nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism.

Age-related vision issues, particularly presbyopia, resulting in difficulty focusing on close objects.

Ineligibility for LASIK or PRK due to factors like thin corneas, high refractive errors, or unstable vision.

Desire for decreased dependence on glasses or contact lenses for clear vision.

### Best Candidates for RLE

The most suitable candidates for RLE often meet the following criteria:

Age: Candidates are typically over 40 years old, experiencing age-related changes in vision.

Stable Prescription: Their

refractive error should have stabilized, ensuring accurate preoperative measurements.

Good Eye Health: Candidates should have healthy eyes without conditions such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, or severe dry eye syndrome.

Realistic Expectations: They should possess a clear understanding of the procedure's goals, benefits, and potential risks.

### Benefits of Refractive Lens Exchange

RLE offers a plethora of benefits, making it an attractive option for those seeking vision correction:

Permanent Vision Improvement: RLE provides long-lasting vision correction, potentially eliminating the need for glasses or contact lenses.

Enhanced Visual Quality: The use of premium IOLs can enhance contrast sensitivity and reduce glare, improving overall visual quality.

Addressing Age-related Vision Issues: RLE effectively treats presbyopia, allowing individuals to regain near and distance vision without relying on bifocals or reading glasses.

Predictable Outcomes: With advanced preoperative testing and surgical techniques, RLE offers predictable and precise results.

Lifestyle Enhancement: Improved vision can enhance daily activities such as driving, reading, and participating in sports or hobbies.

No future cataract: Since RLE involves removing and replacing the natural lens, there will never be a cataract in your future because the lens that can cause a cataract and require cataract surgery will be removed.

### Risks Associated with Refractive Lens Exchange

While RLE is generally safe and effective, there are potential risks and complications to consider:

Infection: As with any surgical procedure, there is a risk of infection, although it is rare with RLE.

Glaucoma: Some individuals may develop increased intraocular pressure following surgery, potentially leading to glaucoma.

Retinal Detachment: In rare cases, RLE may increase the risk of retinal detachment, particularly in individuals predisposed to the condition.

Posterior Capsule Opacification: This common complication involves clouding of the capsule behind the IOL, which can be treated with a simple laser procedure.

Refractive Error: While precise measurements are taken preoperatively, there is a possibility of residual refractive error necessitating additional procedures or corrective lenses.

### Alternatives to Refractive Lens Exchange

While RLE offers significant advantages, alternative options may be considered based on individual preferences and circumstances:

LASIK (Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis): LASIK reshapes the cornea using a laser to correct refractive errors, making it suitable for individuals with rela-



tively stable vision and healthy corneas. LASIK does not correct reading vision after 40.

PRK (Photorefractive Keratectomy): PRK involves removing the corneal epithelium and reshaping the cornea to correct refractive errors, making it an option for individuals with thin corneas or irregular corneal

surfaces. PRK does not correct reading vision after 40.

Implantable Contact Lenses (ICLs): ICLs are surgically implanted lenses that work with the eye's natural lens to cor-

### READING GLASSES

continued on page 12

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READING GLASSES

*continued from page 11*

rect refractive errors, offering a reversible alternative to RLE for younger individuals. ICLs will not correct reading vision after 40.

Monovision: This approach corrects one eye for distance vision and the other for near vision, providing an alternative for individuals with presbyopia who prefer to maintain some degree of natural vision. Monovision can cause a loss of depth perception. Your brain may or may not get used to monovision.

Conclusion

Refractive Lens Exchange emerges as a revolutionary solution for individuals seeking lasting vision correction. By replacing the eye's natural lens with an artificial one, RLE offers a path to clearer vision and reduced dependence on corrective lenses. It is amazing to be able to reduce dependency on glasses, both for distance and near. While it presents numerous benefits, candidates should carefully consider the potential risks and alternatives before undergoing surgery. With advancements in surgical techniques and intraocular lens technology, RLE continues to redefine the landscape

of vision correction, providing hope and clarity to countless individuals worldwide.

RLE is all about better precision, freedom from glasses for far and near and excellent outcomes. At Milford Franklin Eye Center, our surgeons have performed tens of thousands of intraocular surgeries and are happy to offer the RLE procedure to our communities. We implant high quality premium lenses, with correction for distance, near and everything in between. Our percentage of posterior capsule complications and infections is one of the lowest in the US and is measured by independent sources. 100% of the surgeries are performed under topical anesthesia, so only drops, no need for shots and their risks and no need for stitches. Our surgery center is state-of-the-art and staffed by anesthesia full time. We treat our patients like family and ethically: we do not charge you fees for using our OR as another practice in Milford is doing. Our surgeries are performed in a certified and accredited surgery center, not in an office. World class outcomes closer to home.

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For more information on Venus or any other cats at The Milford Humane Society, please visit [www.milfordhumane.org/](http://www.milfordhumane.org/)



Venus is available for adoption at the Milford Humane Society. Courtesy photo

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The Chairman of the Upton Veterans Council, Russell Wood, would like to extend personal thank you's to the various groups that joined us to extend solemn remembrance of our fallen heroes in the Upton Memorial Day ceremonies.

I would like to add sincere thanks to the people who join us at the cemetery ceremonies. They are not there for recognition but for adding to the very important proceedings that recognize the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Thank you so much for attending!

Sincerely,  
Joseph McMahon  
District 8 Commander  
Massachusetts VFW



The Upton Mendon Free Press is currently seeking freelance writers who live in the area and are interested in writing for our publication. If interested, please send a résumé and writing sample to [editor@UptonMendonfreepress.com](mailto:editor@UptonMendonfreepress.com)



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# Upton recent safety log

The Upton Police Department provided a wide range of services between April 26 and May 25 related to motor vehicle violations, disabled motor vehicles, traffic enforcement, radar services, parking complaints, vehicle lockouts, road hazards, building checks, various alarms, abandoned and accidental 911 calls, gates opened/closed, community policing and preventative patrol, summons service (and attempts), court appearances, fundraiser-possible scams, solicitation, lost/missing/found property, car seat installations, and animal complaints. In addition, UPD often provided mutual aid to Grafton, Hopkinton, and Hopedale police, fire and EMS.

Other entries of note include:  
**April 26** at 9:35 p.m., S. Main St., suspicious person  
**April 27** at 12:24 p.m., Kiwanis Beach Rd., dispersed gathering  
**April 27** at 12:51 p.m., High St., lost animal  
**April 27** at 12:55 p.m., Milford St., brush fire  
**April 27** at 4:08 p.m., Milford St., trespassing  
**April 27** at 6:40 p.m., W. Main St., brush fire  
**April 27** at 10:45 p.m., Main St., criminal/noncriminal mischief  
**April 28** at 10:13 p.m., Mendon St., animal injured  
**April 29** at 3:49 a.m., Main St., suspicious person  
**April 29** at 10:36 a.m., W. River St., breaking and entering  
**April 29** at 2:14 p.m., Westboro Rd., lost plate  
**April 29** at 6:44 p.m., Hartford Ave. North, criminal/noncriminal mischief  
**April 29** at 6:53 p.m., Milford St., well-being check  
**April 30** at 2:36 p.m., Hopkinton Rd., harassment prevention order  
**April 30** at 3 p.m., Maple Ave., harassment prevention order  
**April 30** at 3:10 p.m., Milford St., disturbance  
**April 30** at 4:29 p.m., Florence Cir., fraud/forgery  
**May 1** at 11:22 a.m., Plumbley Rd., well-being check  
**May 2** at 8:53 a.m., Milford St., threats  
**May 2** at 8:02 p.m., Milford St., threats  
**May 3** at 9:33 a.m., School Resource officer, services rendered

**May 3** at 10:02 a.m., School St., identity theft  
**May 3** at 6:45 p.m., School St., threats  
**May 4** at 4:16 p.m., Upton State Forest, found/abandoned property, returned  
**May 4** at 5:29 p.m., Westboro Rd., lost animal  
**May 6** at 12:20 p.m., Shore Dr., neighbor dispute  
**May 6** at 1:38 p.m., South St., suspicious person  
**May 6** at 6:05 p.m., Milford St., lost animal  
**May 6** at 6:25 p.m., Hartford Ave. South and Farm St., fire dept. training  
**May 6** at 7:32 p.m., Main St., possible breaking and entering, advised civil action  
**May 6** at 5:01 p.m., Crockett Rd., trespassing  
**May 6** at 5:14 p.m., N. Main St., suspicious person  
**May 9** at 11:15 a.m., School Resource officer, services rendered  
**May 10** at 2:50 p.m., Milford St., stolen motor vehicle  
**May 10** at 9:42 p.m., Main St., criminal/noncriminal mischief  
**May 11** at 3:10 p.m., Main St., threats  
**May 11** at 6:13 p.m., Main St., loud music complaint  
**May 11** at 9:02 p.m., Milford St., threats  
**May 12** at 9:50 a.m., Elm St., noise complaint  
**May 15** at 11:01 a.m., Main St., larceny  
**May 15** at 5:38 p.m., Milford St., threats  
**May 15** at 10:27 p.m., Glen Ave., criminal/noncriminal mischief  
**May 16** at 11:23 a.m., Maple and School Sts., well-being check



**May 18** at 4:09 p.m., Freedom St., lost animal  
**May 19** at 12:18 a.m., Glen View St., loud music complaint  
**May 19** at 9:56 a.m., Milford St., psych. assist/section 12  
**May 19** at 10:47 a.m., Elm St., well-being check  
**May 19** at 5:27 p.m., Shore Dr., disturbance  
**May 19** at 7:25 p.m., Hartford Ave. North, well-being check  
**May 20** at 1:47 p.m., W. River St., power outage  
**May 20** at 4:23 p.m., Milford St., threats  
**May 20** at 6:08 p.m., Fiske Mill Rd., lost animal  
**May 20** at 9:07 p.m., Taft St., shots fired, services rendered  
**May 21** at 9:38 a.m., Milford St., well-being check  
**May 22** at 4:04 a.m., Walker Dr., suspicious person  
**May 22** at 8:03 a.m., Shore Dr., neighbor dispute  
**May 22** at 8:05 p.m., Mendon St., shots fired, unfounded  
**May 23** at 8:47 a.m., West St., prisoner transport  
**May 24** at 11:15 a.m., Mendon St., power outage  
**May 25** at 4 p.m., Miscoe Hill Rd., suspicious package/material

Source: Upton Police Department  
IMAGE: Source: Facebook @upton-police

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## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,  
The new Mendon Senior and Community Center was edged out in a close vote.  
At the annual Mendon Town Meeting on May 3, 2024, the residents authorized the design and construction of a proposed new Mendon Senior & Community Center by a two-thirds majority vote of 156 in favor to 78 opposed.  
Unfortunately, at the Town Election on May 14, 2024, the ballot question needed to fund the center by a debt exclusion did not pass, with 577 in favor & 629 opposed, an approximate margin of 48% to 52%.  
Countless hours of meetings, presentations and active outreach went into the process to develop and create a plan that would address growing community needs and enhance community activities.  
The existing Senior Center will continue to offer services that socially and physically engage our senior community, in addition to services that support our non-senior residents as well. We look forward to the future with the hope that one day our continuing needs will be fulfilled.  
We wish to express our deep gratitude to all who supported this endeavor with your kind words, encouragement, and your votes.  
With warmest regards,  
Mendon Senior & Community  
Center Building Committee

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# Mendon Senior Center

62 Providence Street, Mendon, MA  
508-478-6175  
Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 8:30-3:30  
Fridays – 9-12 by appointment

## Mendon Senior Walking Group

The Mendon Senior Walking Group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: 8:30 a.m. We walk weather permitting. Diane Howell, the group leader, requests email addresses and phone numbers to be sure all are aware of any walking changes/cancellations. If you are interested to have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Diane at [diane.m.howell@icloud.com](mailto:diane.m.howell@icloud.com) or call her at 508-473-3081. New Walkers are always welcome.

## Bocce Anyone?

The Senior Center bocce court is available for use. Call the center at 508-478-6175 to reserve time. Bring your own balls or ask to borrow out. Special thank you to Warren Goodnow for maintaining the court.

## New Players Welcome!

The Mendon Senior Center offers a variety of recreational activities including:

- Cribbage – Wed. 9:45 a.m.
- Hand, Knee and Foot Card game – Tues. 1 p.m.

- Brain Games – Thurs. 11 a.m.
- Mah-Jong (tile game) Wed. and Thurs. 1 p.m.

Please check our schedule regarding days, times, and availability. Not sure how to play? Our patient players are willing to teach you the games. Don't see your favorite game listed, please let us know what you'd like to see offered. We're looking for Scrabble enthusiasts for Tuesdays this fall!

## Attention: Knitters and Crocheters

The Mendon Senior Center invites you to join our Yarn Works Group which meets Thursday afternoons at 1 p.m. at the Senior Center to chat, share patterns knit and crochet. There is also a fabulous inventory of yarn in the basement for your use at no charge. Call Julie at 508-478-6175 to let us know of your interest or simply drop in.

## Tri-Valley Lunch Program & Menu

Come be our guest at the Mendon Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon for an enjoyable dining experience. The cost of meals is \$3 and reservation must be made 48 hours in advance. Transportation is available for Mendon senior residents. We appreciate

the kind, dedicated, Tri-Valley certified nutrition volunteers for making these meals possible: Janet Ahearn, Betsy Edsall, Beverly Fior, Rosie Hare, Julie King, John Lauzon, Peg Nogueira, Dona Marie Son, Carolyn Wass and lunch coordinator Diane Howell.

Additional volunteers are needed once or twice during the summer months to cover for vacations. Please call director, Amy Wilson Kent if interested. Menus are subject to change.

- Tuesday June 18*  
Chicken Cacciatore  
*Thursday June 20*  
Beef Stew  
*Tuesday June 25*  
Pasta & Meatballs, garlic bread and salad  
*Thursday June 27*  
Potato Crunch Fish

## Laughter: The Best Medicine

Join us on Tuesday, June 25 at 11 a.m. when David Shikes—Brookline native and current New Hampshire resident—returns to the Mendon Senior Center to entertain us with a witty, conservative potpourri of New England humor. Please join us for a pasta and meatball luncheon afterwards including garden salad, garlic bread and dessert. The comedy program is free; the cost of this meal is \$3

per person in advance. Please sign up for one or both events at the Senior Center.

## Summer Day Trip

Join the Mendon Seniors for a fun summer day trip on Wednesday, August 14 when we will all Escape to Margaritaville at the Ivoryton Playhouse, in Ivoryton, CT with lunch at the Scotch Pines Tavern with a choice one of four mouthwatering entries. "Don your Hawaiian shirts and kick off your flip flops at the Ivoryton Playhouse for a tour of a tropical paradise led by Tully, a part-time bartender, part-time singer, and full-time charmer who thinks he's got life all figured out—until a beautiful tourist steals his heart and makes him question everything." The cost is \$149 per person includes everything: round trip transportation (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.), admission to Ivoryton Playhouse, and a delicious luncheon choice. Payment is due by July 18. Call Beverly Fior, 508-473-8382 for more information. Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to reserve your space.

## Friends of Mendon Elders News:

The Friends of Mendon Elders would like to say thank you to all the folks that attended the Annual Town Meeting and voted YES to our next step forward in our quest for the new Mendon Senior Center/Community Center. We are obviously disappointed at the town election vote but we need to move forward towards a solution for the seniors of Mendon to have a building that serves their needs. A thousand thanks to the committee who worked so long and

so hard in creating the planned new building.

Thank you also, to everyone who stopped by our booth on Sunday, April 28 at Galliford's Give Back event celebrating local businesses and non-profits organizations. Congratulations to, Rene and Jeanne Demers, winners of the potted pansy plant offered by the Friends.

*The Friends is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization raising funds for the benefit of the senior center and the seniors it serves. We have not raised the membership fee this year, but if you are able, we would welcome an additional donation.*

## Friends Dine Out—Carpool

with friends from the senior center the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. or meet at the restaurant at 12 noon. The cost of lunch is your responsibility but the company is free!

Wednesday June 19 at Uno's in Bellingham. (The Senior Center will be closed on June 19 in observation of Juneteenth.)

A note of gratitude from the COA: The Mendon Council on Aging would like to thank the Friends for the many ways they support the senior center and its patrons—by offering grant funding for exercise programs so we can keep prices affordable, supporting the landscaping efforts of our Beautification Committee volunteers, funding quality programming and entertainment and paying for the bulk mailing permit to keep expenses down. These are just a few examples of the many ways the Friends fundraising efforts are put to good use. Thank you, friend, for your continued support of the Friends!

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# UniBank holds annual meeting at Pleasant Valley Country Club

Bank emphasizes strong financial strength and community assistance



Pictured: L-R: Chris Foley (President of UniBank), Cara Brindisi, Justine DeNorscia (EVP of UniBank), Michael Welch (CEO of UniBank)

WHITINSVILLE, MA – (May 20, 2024) UniBank, Central Massachusetts’ largest mutual community bank, recently held their Annual Meeting at the Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton, MA. Michael Welch, CEO of UniBank, said, “Our Annual Meeting was a great night of celebration and reflection of the entire past year of the Bank. We reported on our financial strength, our community giving both financially and through volunteerism, and being well-positioned to assist consumers and businesses throughout Central Mass with their financial needs through 2024. This year, our keynote speaker was Andrew Calamare, who has been in the banking industry for over 40 years. Adding to our night was singer, song-writer Cara Brindisi who was featured on the television show, The Voice – Season 22. Cara delivered beau-

tiful renditions of the National Anthem, America the Beautiful, and her self -written song, Jar of Flowers.” Welch continued, “As the Annual Meeting is the closing of the prior year, it’s also the springboard for the next year as it sets the vision to propel our mission to be the best mutually owned community bank in Central Massachusetts again.” UniBank is rooted in the Blackstone Valley with assets of \$2.5 billion as of December 31, 2023. A full-service, mutually owned community bank, UniBank has branches in Central Massachusetts and the MetroWest region of Massachusetts. UniBank is dedicated to contributing to the overall quality of life and economic health of the communities it serves, while maintaining a high level of financial soundness and integrity. UniBank is an Equal Housing Lender and Member FDIC. UniBank NMLS #583135. The company website is [www.unibank.com](http://www.unibank.com).

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# Upton Senior Center

## June Events

- Jeopardy & Pizza with Whitcomb, Friday, June 14 at 12 p.m.**

Challenge your brain - Join us for an afternoon of pizza and Jeopardy sponsored by the Whitcomb House in Milford.
- Mindful Meditation, Friday, June 14 at 1 p.m.**

Calm your mind and body so you can acknowledge and accept your thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment through Mindful Meditation with Robin Natanel.
- Bite Lab, Monday, June 17 at 12 p.m.**

Learn about the life cycle of mosquitos and ticks, diseases they cause, and important strategies to reduce the likelihood of contracting these dis-
- eases through this interactive presentation.
- Tech Help, Tuesday, June 18 at 1 p.m.**

Join us for our monthly tech help session. Our resident “techsperts” will be available for one-on-one assistance with your tech questions. Please bring your phone, laptop or tablet with you to follow along with the tech talk or for help with your specific device. Pre-registration requested.
- Exercise with Shirley - Extra Summer Class! Tuesdays at 11:15 a.m. & Fridays at 9:30 a.m.**

Shirley will be adding a second class for summer! Starting June 21, Exercise with Shirley will be offered at 9:30 a.m. on Fridays in addition to her
- regularly scheduled class on Tuesdays.
- Lunch Trip, Friday, June 21 at 12:30 p.m.**

Join us for lunch at 99 Restaurant in Milford. Following lunch, we’ll head to JJ’s ice cream for dessert. RSVP by June 17.
- 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s, Wednesday, June 26 at 2:30 p.m.**

June is Alzheimer’s & Brain Awareness Month. Join us for The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s: If you or someone you know is experiencing changes in memory, it’s time to learn the facts. Knowing the warning signs can help determine if you should speak to a doctor. Early detection matters!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us about an upcoming event or about a concern about things happening around town [editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com](mailto:editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com)

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# Mendon-Upton Regional School District hosts second annual Multicultural Night

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District recently hosted its second annual Multicultural Night.

On Thursday, May 9, about 600 Mendon-Upton community members, families, students and staff visited Nipmuc Regional High School for Multicultural Night. In total, 400 students participated in the event.

There were 20 tables throughout the cafeteria representing many different countries as well as ASL/Deaf culture, music culture and literacy with student music performances, literacy activities, crafts, informative posters, games and more. The event also had a student travel table highlighting the travel opportunities students were offered this school year and upcoming travel opportunities in Europe and South America.

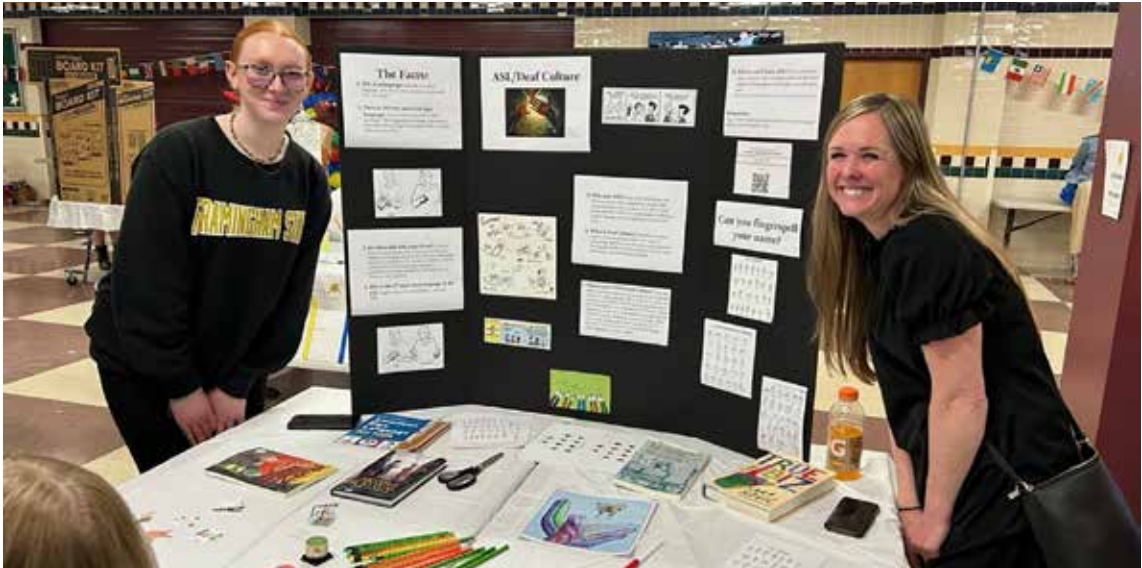
Performances were held in the auditorium, with additional activities in the cafeteria, courtyard and in the lobby. As part of the performances, the K-4 Spanish immersion students sang, danced and recited poetry,

and a high school student sang in Spanish and played piano for attendees. Additionally, two middle school students performed Irish step-dancing and a fourth grade student performed a traditional Indian dance.

The event also provided food from different food trucks representing different cultures, including Atreverte a Probar, 3 Kings BBQ, Sweet Wise Ice Cream, Mortar and Pestle, Bird's Nest Italian Street Food and Simmer and Spice.

"Having events to highlight the rich diversity of our community is a great way for us to come together, recognize and celebrate our similarities and our differences, and have fun getting to know each other and our cultures," said Spanish Immersion Coordinator Meagan Pike. "As our world gets smaller, cultural awareness and acceptance becomes crucial. Events like Multicultural Night are a fun way to work towards the goal of strong global citizenship in our community."

*Submitted by Mendon-Upton Regional School District*



ASL/deaf culture representative Frances Conlin (right) and her interpreter Emily Taylor, an Upton resident. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District



Fourth grade student Navisha Jain demonstrates a traditional dance. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

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# Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

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

## ADULT PROGRAMS JUNE 2024

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

### Slow Flow Saturday Yoga with Katie Aissis of Sprouting Tree Yoga

Come join Katie Aissis from Sprouting Tree Yoga for Slow Flow Saturday Yoga 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 15 upstairs in the library. This Vinyasa style yoga class links breath to movement in a dynamic sequence of postures. Participants will build strength while also finding moments throughout the practice to quiet the mind and rest the body. This class is appropriate for all levels and no previous yoga experience is necessary. Please bring your own yoga mat. Please register for the program on our website.

### Adult Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join us on Wednesday, June 19 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on. Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. No registration is required. Crafts are NOT supplied.

### Adult Book Club

Adult Book Clubs are typically held on the second Monday of the month. For upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259 to request copies of the books or log in to your account from our website to request them through interlibrary

loan. Upcoming books for the Adult Book Club are as follows:  
**September:** *Daisy Jones & the Six* by Taylor Jenkins Reid and *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese  
**October:** *The Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley  
**November:** *The Book of Lost Names* by Kristin Harmel  
**December:** *Oh William!* By Elizabeth Strout

### Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club typically meets downstairs in the library on a quarterly basis. This year the group will read five nonfiction titles. Those interested are asked to stop at the downstairs desk to sign the Footnotes registration sheet and pick up a copy of the latest book.

Upcoming books in the Footnotes series:  
**August:** *A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them* by Timothy Egan  
**October:** *Sociopath: A Memoir* by Patric Gagne  
**January:** *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans* by Eve Laplante  
**March:** *The Mysterious Case of Rudolf Diesel: Genius, Power, and Deception on the Eve of World War I* by Douglas Brunt  
**June:** *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith

### German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversa-

tions in German is no pressure, just fun! Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. Mark your calendars for Monday, June 24 at 6 p.m. for the next session. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

### Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library will meet next on Tuesday, June 25 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the library's Art Holmes Community Room for their monthly

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

### Summer Reading 2024

Why should kids have all the

fun? Did you know that the Taft Public Library offers reading incentive programs during the summer for teens and adults too? Get in on it! For all the details including Summer Reading registration and our calendar of events visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org.

### TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS

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

### TAFT LIBRARY

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# Mendon-Upton students showcased innovative projects at One8 Applied Learning Conference



Nipmuc Regional High School students explaining their project to an industry professional at the One8 Applied Learning Conference in Boston on May 10. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District



Miscoe Hill Middle School 8th grade students presenting their project PBL Volleyball Project at The TRACK at New Balance in Boston during the One8 Applied Learning Conference on May 10. Students shown in the picture (from the left) are: Caitlin DeBoer, Ava Cardin, Lianna Vasilakeris, Hayden Darragh, Maya Vercruysse, Sadia Daigle, and Charlotte Leitch. (Missing in this photo is team member Dahnna Chalak) Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

Students from the Mendon-Upton Regional School District showcased their work at the recent One8 Applied Learning Conference on May 10. Talented young minds from Miscoe Hill Middle School and Nipmuc Regional High School presented their projects in robotics, computer science, and project-based

learning. This prestigious event, hosted by the One8 Applied Learning Hub, served as a platform for students across the region to exhibit projects demonstrating real-world applications of classroom theories. Most significantly, student teams each had a table to present their project

to more than 500 industry professionals, who circulated and talked with presenting student groups — offering them verbal and written feedback. The conference featured a variety of innovative projects focusing on how applied learning can significantly improve education.

"Our students have worked incredibly hard on their projects, and this conference is a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their skills, learn from their peers, and receive professional feedback," said Maureen Cohen, Superintendent of the Mendon-Upton Regional School District. "We are proud to participate in such a dynamic event that celebrates the creativity and ingenuity of students."

The Mendon-Upton students' presentations included robotic mechanisms designed by the robotics team, software programming projects from the



Nipmuc Regional High School students with their project at the One8 Applied Learning Conference in Boston on May 10. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

computer science classes, and comprehensive solutions developed through project-based learning initiatives. These projects reflected the students' technical skills and ability to think critically and solve complex

problems. Please visit the One8 Applied Learning Hub website for more information about the One8 Applied Learning Conference. Submitted by the Mendon-Upton Regional School District



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# Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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

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

## Library Services

At the Upton Town Library you can ... Print, scan, copy and fax documents. Buy yellow and blue town trash bags. Find a used book for the summer. Apply for a passport. Learn about ebooks and digital magazines. Chat with a friendly librarian!

## Special Events

**Intro to Hand Drums & Drum Circles - Wed., July 10, 5:30 - 7 p.m.**

Hand drumming is a fun and exciting way for people to have a satisfying musical experience without years of training. Join Dave Curry as he introduces you to a range of different types of drums from various traditional sources. No prior experience is necessary, for ages 15+ Instruments will be provided. Register at [uptonlibrary.com](https://uptonlibrary.com).

**Beekeeping 101 - Sat., July 20, 10 - 11:30 a.m.**

Join beekeeper and Worcester County Beekeepers Association member John Hedly for a presentation on beekeeping! Topics will include starting a beehive, the bee colony, collecting honey, the importance of pollination, and more. Register at [uptonlibrary.com](https://uptonlibrary.com).

**Tabletop Game Night for Adults Thurs., June 20, 5:15 - 7:30 p.m.**

Join our tabletop game series for adults! New games are featured each month such as 7 Wonders, Mysterium, and Azul. Meets every third Thursday of the month from 5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Experienced players and beginners both welcome! Register at [uptonlibrary.org](https://uptonlibrary.org).

## Virtual Author Talk Series

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

Author Talk with Tiffany Jewell: Unpacking a History of Systemic Racism in the American Education System - Thurs. June 20, 2 - 3 p.m.

## Children's & Young Adult Events

**Summer Reading Program Begins - June 17**

Our Annual Summer Reading Program will begin taking official registrations beginning June 17. A paper form will be available at the circulation desk, or visit our website for a Google Form link and more information. Participants can then pick up a packet of materials including a calendar of events, a reading log, and more. Our theme this summer is Read, Renew, Repeat. Keep reading all summer to learn more about ways to help our environment and support conservation efforts!

**Kickoff Event - The Traveling Lantern Theatre - June 21 at 6 p.m.**

The Traveling Lantern

Children's Theatre will visit us once again at the Nipmuc High School Auditorium as we celebrate the start of our Summer Reading Program - Read, Renew, Repeat. This time they will bring us their performance of The Quest for the Kakapo! For ages 3+. Pre-registration is appreciated. This event is generously sponsored by The Friends of the Upton Town Library. Pizza slices will be for sale before the show beginning at 5:30 p.m.

**Paper Lanterns - June 24 at 3 p.m.**

Tweens and teens can join Mrs. Murphy to create paper lanterns using popsicle sticks, parchment paper, and battery-operated tealights. For ages 10 to 16. Pre-registration is required.

**Hands on Nature - Wildlife Tracking - June 26 at 6:30pm**

Come discover the tracks of our local mammals and learn to identify which ones leave which

types of tracks. We will also discover other animal 'signs', such as fur traces, scat, and scratch marks. Make some track rubbings and a track cast to take home! For ages 5 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

**Movie Night - June 27 at 5:30 p.m.**

Join us for Movie Night in the Greatroom. Check our website's Event Calendar for the title of our film. Hint: it's a movie about a certain famous candymaker! Bring your own snacks and enjoy a cool night at the movies, all for free at the library! For ages 5+. No registration necessary.

**Newspaper Crafts - June 29 at 10 a.m.**

Participants will use recycled newspaper scraps to create their own animal artwork! For ages 5 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

## UPTON LIBRARY

continued on page 20

# SOUTHWICK'S ZOO PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

Thanks to all those who entered! These 12 entries will receive a family four-pack of GA passes to Southwick's Zoo for the 2024 season!

<b>PUBLISHER'S PICK</b>  <b>"MACAW!"</b> Submitted by Nate H.	<b>STAFF CHOICE</b>  <b>"Oh what fun ..."</b> Submitted by Bobbie G.	<b>FAMILY</b>  <b>"Family time at the zoo"</b> Submitted by Nancy M.	<b>SOUTHWICK'S SIGN</b>  <b>"Southwick's is our favorite zoo!"</b> Submitted by Rachel R.	<b>KIDS</b>  <b>"A couple of cuties at the zoo"</b> Submitted by Christine H.	<b>HALLOWEEN</b>  <b>"No matter the season ..."</b> Submitted by Emily T.
<b>NOSTALGIC</b>  <b>"My daughter meeting Jeff Corwin, 1999"</b> Submitted by Lora D.	<b>RUNNER UP</b>  <b>"We are so goated"</b> Submitted by Agatha D.	<b>RUNNER UP</b>  <b>"Fun for all ages"</b> Submitted by Misty W.	<b>RUNNER UP</b>  <b>"Having a roaring good time!"</b> Submitted by Jillian R.	<b>RUNNER UP</b>  <b>"Yikes! What are these?"</b> Submitted by Brooke M.	<b>ANIMAL</b>  <b>"Oh, Hay There"</b> Submitted by Emily S.



ILLUSTRATION BY ROWAN KAPLAN/MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

UPTON LIBRARY

continued from page 19

Monthly Library Events – Register now!

All programs and events require pre-registration at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org) or call 508-529-6272. Registrations open the month prior to events.

Baby Storytime – Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

Baby Storytime is for ages birth to 3 and is held on Fridays. This is a 20-30-minute lapsit program featuring stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. Pre-registration required. Waitlisted patrons will receive priority for the following month.

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

Preschool Storytime is for ages 3 to 5 and is held on Thursdays. This is a 45-minute program, featuring longer stories, songs, rhymes, and crafts. Pre-registration required. Waitlisted patrons will receive priority for the following month.



Photo Credit: Theresa Knapp

During the summer, this program is replaced by our Read around the Town series, where we visit municipal locations in Upton for storytime. Register for each location separately on our Event Calendar.

Saturday Storytime – June 22 at 9:30 a.m.

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

Drop-In Storytime – June 24 at 9:30 a.m.

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

Kids' Book Club – July 3 at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile fiction

titles on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m. Our June title will be the science fiction pick, *The Alien Adventures of Finn Caspian: The Fuzzy Apocalypse* by Jonathan Messinger. For July, we will be reading *Who Was?* biographies. This group is for ages 8-12. We welcome new members all year round. Pre-registration required.

\*NEW\* Tween Book Club – June 20 at 6:30 p.m.

This club is especially for our middle grade patrons, ages 10 to 14. This group reads popular middle grade titles selected by our members. Our June title is the adventure title, *The Misfits: A Royal Conundrum* by Lisa Yee. For July, we will be reading the realistic fiction title *Thirst* by Varsha Bajaj. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

Teen Group – Tuesdays 3 p.m.

This group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 3 - 4 p.m. and focuses on a new theme each month, sharing books, crafts,

games, and more. This group is for tweens and teens ages 10-16. This is always a drop-in program led by Adult Librarian Micaela.

Upton Reads Book Group

An eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction with meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening of each month in the Community Center classroom, with a Zoom remote option. Tuesday, July 16 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, July 18 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Stationary Shop* by Marjan Kamali.

Fic or No Fic Book Group

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

Wed., June 26 at 6:45 p.m.: nonfiction title, *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder* by David Grann. For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email [mbachtol@cwmars.org](mailto:mbachtol@cwmars.org)

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# Giancola, Spargo, Sullivan are newest Eagle Scouts



(L-R) The newest Eagle Scouts in Boy Scout Troop 132 of Upton are Ty Sullivan, Will Spargo, and Jake Giancola. *Courtesy photo*

UPTON - Boy Scout Troop 132 of Upton is proud to announce its newest Eagle Scouts: Jake Giancola, Will Spargo, and Ty Sullivan.

Jake Giancola, the Troop's 121st Eagle Scout, is a senior at Blackstone Valley Technical High School. For his Eagle project, Jake built a bocce ball court for St. Gabriel's church.

Will Spargo, a senior at Nipmuc Regional High School, is the Troop's 122nd Eagle. Will built a storage closet for the food pantry at the United Parish of Upton.

Ty Sullivan, the Troop's 123rd Eagle, is also a senior at

Nipmuc Regional High School. Ty built helmet racks for the softball fields in Mendon for his Eagle project.

In addition to completing their projects, each Scout earned a minimum of 21 merit badges, advanced through six ranks, and held various leadership positions in the troop. Their journey culminated with an Eagle Board of Review where they were interviewed by local members of the community and Scout officials.

Congratulations to these young men on this incredible accomplishment!

## TAFT LIBRARY

*continued from page 17*

register along with more information for the programs.

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

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

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

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

**Flying High Dogs**  
Mike Piazza is a multiple-time world finalist and world record holder in the sport of K-9 Frisbee and the current #1 Professional K-9 Frisbee performer in the world. Mike and his K-9 crew's program is very youth and family friendly. They will perform a variety of Frisbee and other entertaining tricks during the show. Hope you can join us Tuesday, June 25 at 6 p.m.

**Oreo Stacking**  
It's Cookie Time! Who doesn't love Oreos? Ever build with them? Now's your chance! Register today

for this annual event. Each participant will have mere seconds to stack as many Oreo sandwich cookies in a single stack as they can. Each stack must stay standing on its own (no hands allowed for support) for at least 5 seconds after the end of the stacking period. Register today to get in on the fun. Wednesday, June 26 at 10:30 a.m.

**Summer Reading 2024**  
Can you believe it's already time for Summer Reading? Your friends at the Taft have been busy for months putting together a Summer Reading program we think will be sure to please. For every three hours of reading, children through grade 4 will be able to pick a prize from our treasure chest. Be on the lookout for more information about Taft Summer Reading registration and events and visit our website. [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org)

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SPORTS

Valley Tech Boys' Track unbeaten in dual meets

Beavers also showed well at state level

By Chris Villani

As in all sports, one of the primary goals for any track and field coach is to see his team peak at the right time of the season. That was the case for Blackstone Valley Tech head coach Colton Cox this year, who watched as the Beavers steadily improved through an unbeaten dual meet campaign and strong finishes at the league and state meets.

“Overall, it was a very, very good season,” Cox said. “They peaked at the correct time. One of the biggest struggles in coaching track is we want our kids to peak when it matters the most and see the majority of the team just get better and better.”

Cox said the coaching staff was “thrilled” to see the jumps from meet-to-meet. “It was quite a special season for that,” he said.

Valley Tech placed third at the Colonial Athletic League

meet and placed second at the state vocational meet despite missing some key athletes.

Senior Soumith Madadi broke the school record in the 800 meter and took home a state title in that event at the divisional meet. He also qualified for states in the mile, and helped solidify the 4x800 relay team.

BVT had another state champ this year in junior Kenny Kalvinek, who took first place in the discus and added a fourth-place finish in the shot put. Kalvinek set BVT program records in both events.

Another junior, Sam Stringer, captured first-place finishes in the 100 meter dash all season and advanced to the state divisional meet in both the 100 and 200 meter events. He was also part of the state-qualifying 4x100 relay team that also included senior Landon Parent, junior Alex Burgos, and sophomore Troy



The BVT boys' track team displays some of their medals after a second place finish at the state vocational meet. Photo source: Coach Colton Cox

Rudder.

In the hurdles, Jonah Rosenkrantz capped off a strong career by medaling in the state vocational meet and the CAL championships.


“He has been a big hurdler for us over the last four years,” Cox said. “It’s going to be sad to see him go, because he gets

us a lot of points.”

BVT is bringing back a number of strong athletes, including Rudder and fellow sophomore sprinter Andrew Noble. Distance runner Aaron Korpi and middle distance runners Nathan Taylor and Ryan May are also athletes Cox said will be ones to watch in the

coming seasons. Improvement and injury avoidance will be crucial to their development, he added.

“As coaches, our goal is to stay healthy physically,” Cox said. “This has been the best year health-wise for all of our kids. Physical health is always a priority.”



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SPORTS

# Nipmuc Girls LAX finishes strong regular season

*NRHS improved greatly from 2023 campaign despite key injury*

By Chris Villani

The Nipmuc girls' lacrosse team won a lot more matches than it lost through the regular season and, even in the few setbacks the team had, head coach Grace Merten said the improvement was palpable. Losses that had come by double-digits a season ago were close games that came down to the wire.

"We really closed the gap on some of those higher level games where we weren't as competitive last year," Merten said. "We also toughened up our schedule with Medway, Lexington, Oliver Ames, just to get some more high stakes games before states."

One of Nipmuc's biggest setbacks this spring was the loss of star midfielder Liz Lange to an ankle injury. But the loss afforded other players the chance to shine, including co-captain Fallon Lozano.

"She was a great leader before, but she has stepped up into an even bigger leadership position since Liz was also one of our biggest leaders,"

Merten said.

Maria Ceruti has shown her ability to guide her teammates on defense. Merten described her as a "very gritty" player whose vocal style draws a response from the rest of the team.

Paige Anderson and Jade Munoz are two more players who Merten credited for stepping up and helping Nipmuc to a stellar 17-4 regular season record. Sophomore Jayden Lilburn is one of the program's young talents.

"She is a sophomore on the attack and she takes our draws," Merten said. "She put in a lot of work in the off-season, and you can tell it's really paying off for her."

"The fact that the kids were able to compete after Liz broke her ankle speaks volumes to the kind of team we were going to be," Merten said, adding that she had high expectations at



The Nipmuc girls' lacrosse team huddles during a recent game. Photo source: Coach Grace Merten

the start of the season.

"We knew that, coming into this year, this was going to be our year," the coach said. "They are a very strong team and we have a lot of young talent. Similar to last year, our biggest competition was us: we

had to learn to mature and play in those high stakes games."

Heading into the postseason, Merten said the team's goal is simply to make it as far as possible.

"I think we have the potential to do it, we just have to be

in the right mental state," she said, adding that working with a sports psychologist has helped the girls focus on playing hard for one another.


"If you're not doing it for yourself, you're doing it for your teammates," Merten said.



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<p><b>2019 CHEVY TRAX LT AWD</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$58/WK</b></p> <p>#46072 • TURBO, PREMIUM AUDIO</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$27,565</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$17,377</b></p>	<p><b>2023 TOYOTA TUNDRA 4x4</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$176/WK</b></p> <p>#TP3493 • SR5, ALLOYS, 3K MILES</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$58,405</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$49,977</b></p>	<p><b>2019 JEEP CHEROKEE 4x4</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$60/WK</b></p> <p>#124-131A • LATITUDE, ALLOYS</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$34,400</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$18,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 HYUNDAI TUCSON SEL</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$72/WK</b></p> <p>#TP3079H • AWD, HEATED SEATS</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$36,750</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$22,977</b></p>	<p><b>2021 TOYOTA COROLLA SE</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$71/WK</b></p> <p>#ST0582A • 31/40 MPG CITY/HWY</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$24,589</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$21,477</b></p>	<p><b>2022 CHEVY BLAZER LT</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$94/WK</b></p> <p>#45663R • AWD, ALLOYS, TURBO</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$38,015</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$28,977</b></p>	<p><b>2021 HYUNDAI KONA AWD</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$72/WK</b></p> <p>#45990 • SEL TRIM, MOONROOF</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$27,350</del> <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$21,977</b></p>
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