

Cactus and Succulent Society of MA to Hold Festival

18th Annual Event Takes Place Sept. 14 on Norfolk's Town Common and Library

BY GRACE ALLEN

Each September, Norfolk plays host to a unique event: a festival celebrating cacti and succulents. The humble plants have a devoted, passionate following, and the festival attracts both aficionados and the simply curious.

"These plants are breathtaking, like living sculptures," enthused Laurence Magner, the festival's coordinator. "It's not like going to any other plant show at all."

The festival will take place on Saturday, Sept. 14 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Norfolk's town common and in the adjacent public library. Inside the library, hundreds of plants will be on display, while outside on the common vendors and artisans will offer horticultural-themed



The annual festival takes place on the town common and inside the Norfolk Public Library.

items and gifts, along with cacti and succulents for sale. The Norfolk Lions will be grilling hotdogs and hamburgers, and there will be fresh local produce available, too. Admission is free, and the festival will be held rain or shine.

The festival is the premier event of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts, which meets monthly at the Norfolk Library. The group is an affiliate club of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Magner serves as vice-president of the Massachusetts group, which draws from all

over New England. The group has 200 members.

People are surprised, says Magner, to learn that the Northeast has such a large and active group focusing on plants many think of as native to the Southwest. Not true, he says, noting that Massachusetts has its own native cactus, the prickly pear, and succulent, the yucca plant. Cacti and succulents can grow almost anywhere on earth, which is why they are considered a low-maintenance plant.

CACTI & SUCCULENTS

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Wrentham Native Empowering Women Through Beauty Products

BY GRACE ALLEN

Samantha Asprelli, a junior at Northeastern University, is making a significant impact in the Boston area with a non-profit she founded called Give n' Glow. The initiative provides disadvantaged women with donated beauty products, helping them feel more confident and valued.

Asprelli studies social innovation, entrepreneurship, and brand management at the D'Amore-McKim School of Business. The King Philip graduate says she enjoys the boost in self-esteem that makeup can provide, and that personal experience inspired her to launch Give n' Glow, aiming to spread that confidence to others through the power of beauty products.

Give n' Glow collects new and gently used cosmetics and skincare items, primarily from influencers and brand partners like Glossier, Physicians Formula, Skinfix, Flyte.70, and First Aid Beauty, as well as individuals. The initiative has grown to over 35 partner shelters and nonprofits that place the donated



Sam Asprelli, right, is providing beauty products to women in need. Contributed photo.

makeup directly into the hands of those who need it.

Asprelli's interest in community service was inspired by her involvement with Project 351, a Massachusetts organization in which eighth-graders in each town across the state are selected by their teachers for a 12-month program of service

EMPOWERING

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CACTI & SUCCULANTS

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Magner, a Norfolk resident, even created a desert filled with the plants in his own backyard.

“I call it ‘Little Arizona,’” he said. “There is zero maintenance. They are rabbit-proof, deer-proof, little-kid proof. They don’t care about the cold, they care about the amount of water, and for the most part they don’t want a lot at all.”

Magner fell in love with the plants while he lived in San Diego over 50 years ago. He did a lot of hiking, and while hiking in Mexico became fascinated with the variety of desert cacti he saw. When he came to Massachusetts in the late 1980s, he connected with Art Scarpa, the so-called “Cactus King” and Boston resident who had begun to gain acclaim in the plant world. Scarpa started the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts, which moved to Norfolk in 2014, and Magner now counts him among his closest friends.

According to Magner, education is the primary purpose of the yearly festival, as well as raising money for the club’s pro-



Festival-goers can view hundreds of cacti and succulents.

grams. Festival attendees can talk to club members and learn about the various plants, many of which are award-winning and museum quality. All plants for sale are grown by the club’s members.

The monthly meetings of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts average about 60 to 70 people. Meetings take place the third Saturday of each month and revolve around a member plant show and competition, raffles, and an auction. Nominal club dues help bring in guest speakers, professionals from around the world, who present to the group via Zoom. Dues also support initiatives to help save endangered cacti and succulents from global trafficking. An illegal plant trade and active black market is flourishing, and some plants, dug up and smuggled out of the desert, sell for over \$1,000 to collectors in Asia and Eastern Europe.

From the saguaro cactus, the iconic hallmark of the American West, to hens and chicks, the common succulent in many



Laurence Magner is the festival coordinator and the club’s vice-president.

home gardens, the plants are fascinating to experts and laypeople alike. Legends surround many of the plants, which add to their appeal.

“I just love their attitude,” says Magner. “They can live in the worst places in the world, like the desert or up on mountain peaks in the Andes, under the snow. Their spines defend them from predators, and they grow and thrive. Then as a bonus, many of them grow the most beautiful flowers you’ve ever seen, a symbol of good luck. Every cactus and succulent has a story.”



Unique plants will be on display.

Symbolizing resilience and strength, offering medicinal benefits, cleaning the air—just some of the qualities long associated with cacti and succulents. Is it any wonder they are so popular? When many garden clubs and horticultural groups folded during the pandemic, the cactus and succulent societies survived, says Magner. People flocked to these interesting plants with the easy-care reputation, and now they’re hooked.

“We not only survived, we thrived,” he said. “Because cacti and succulents are fascinating, perfect plants. You don’t fertilize them, most need little water, and some live for hundreds of years in the same pot. They are amazing, amazing plants.”

For more information about the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts, as well as the festival, visit <https://cssma.org>. Questions? Send an email to info@cssma.org.

Donations Needed for Church Fair

The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham is seeking donations for the “Attic Treasures” area of its Christmas Tree Church Fair. To collect the donations, the OCC will hold a “Drive-Up Donation Day” on Saturday, September 28 from 1 to 4 p.m. Drive into the parking lot, and someone will help unload your vehicle. Items can also be dropped off during office hours, Tuesday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please, no electronics, large furniture, car seats, strollers, or clothing. Clothing is only accepted at the on-site clothing shed, located at 1 East St. in Wrentham. The clothes must be in tied bags. For more information, call 508-384-3110 or visit www.occhurch.net. The Christmas Tree Church Fair will be held on November 16.

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EMPOWERING

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learning, leadership development and civic engagement. The experience with Project 351 led Asprelli to execute food and clothing drives and collections for veterans and active military, all while a student in the King Philip school system.

“That passion—giving back—has stuck with me; being able to lead the change,” she said in an email. “But I needed to feel a personal connection to that change I was creating, and for me, that was beauty. I feel that much more confident with makeup on, an outfit I feel good in, or my favorite piece of jewelry. I know I’m not the only one who feels that way.”

Asprelli founded Give n’ Glow in August of 2023, starting with extra prom makeup from friends, and hosted a successful pilot event at Wrentham’s food pantry. That success prompted her to seek additional donations and broaden the organization’s reach, even though makeup is not typically prioritized by shelters and food pantries.



Wrentham Cooperative Bank has contributed to Asprelli’s project.
Contributed photo.

“At first I was worried; how to make sure I was meeting a demand,” Asprelli said. “Why would shelters take in beauty products when they could be getting essentials? But I didn’t know

if I didn’t try, and that’s what I did.”

Give n’ Glow also hosts pop-up shops, makeovers, and workshops at food pantries and homeless shelters, teaching



women how to apply makeup and use beauty products effectively. Asprelli manages the donations, categorizes products, and ensures they meet safety standards. Volunteers support her with research, outreach, social media, and content creation.

In June, Asprelli and Give n’ Glow received recognition at Northeastern’s 2024 Women Who Empower Innovator Awards, winning first place in the undergraduate student category.

“I was so honored to receive the award,” said Asprelli. “It’s a validation of Give n’ Glow’s mission. Women in need, whether

because of abuse, addiction recovery, or homelessness, deserve to have beauty products at their fingertips without worrying about their budget. Being part of the Women Who Empower community reminds me that I have a role to fulfill and a responsibility to continue creating positive change with beauty.”

Asprelli would like to expand Give n’ Glow to drive change within the beauty industry itself, hoping to redirect extra beauty products to those who could benefit, rather than letting them go to waste.

Her efforts are getting attention beyond Northeastern. Give n’ Glow was recently the recipient of a \$2,500 donation by Wrentham Cooperative Bank.

“We are so thankful for the bank’s generosity and belief in our mission of giving back with beauty,” said Asprelli, noting the bank will also host a drive during the holidays to collect beauty products on behalf of Give n’ Glow. “We are so happy to have their support.”

For more information about Give n’ Glow, visit givenglow.org.

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Charles River Chorale Still Singing Strong after 40 Years

BY DAVID DUNBAR

Over the past four decades, the Charles River Chorale has been providing widely acclaimed performances for members and attendees in area towns including Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Millis, Medway, Norfolk, and Wrentham.

The Charles River Chorale is celebrating its 40 years and currently has more than 90 members. It's a non-profit organization, led by Board Chair Robert Archibald, Director Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, Assistant Director Susan Fortin, and a board of directors.

"It has been an amazing 40 years," notes Archibald. "We are bound together by a love of singing."

And that they are. There are two major performances each year, one in December with a holiday theme. And this past May, the concert entitled "Road Trip Across America" offered songs and styles from many regions of the country.

In addition, there will be 13 rehearsals between September 17 and December 6. On Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., the first three are "open" and folks who want to know more about the Charles River Chorale, or perhaps want to join it, can get better acquainted. (See article on page 6.)

"It is an honor to be the director of this amazing organization, especially on a milestone anniversary," explains Nelson-Oneschuk. "Congratulations to every member and supporter, past and present."

She continues, "Whether I'm working with 10 singers or 100, I always strive to keep everyone engaged, challenged, successful, and laughing. Happy people have a much better chance at creating beautiful music and wonderful experiences." Current members range in age from 15 to 83 (Jeanne Johnson cheerfully admits to being the oldest).

Jean Lynch, a 20-year member and singer, says, "Ashley is extremely talented, super orga-



Charles River Chorale members gather to discuss their organization's 40th Anniversary. Seated, from left, are Jean Lynch (20+ year member), Jeanne Johnson (30+ year member), and top row, from left, Anne Czarnowski, Meaghan Quilop, board member, and Board Chair Robert Archibald.

nized, beautiful, young mother and has a super-human ability with music."

"We have members from nearly 20 communities in the Charles River valley and beyond," according to Board Chair Archibald. "We have been rehearsing and singing at the Church of Christ, Congregational, in Millis for all of our 40 years." The winter and spring concerts are held at Medway High School. Tickets for adults are \$20 each; seniors and students are \$15; five years and under are free.

"The Millis Chorale began in 1975 as the Bicentennial Chorus with concerts in Millis, Washington D.C., and at the Eastern States Expo in Springfield," according to Jeanne Seyfarth, an original member.

Archibald adds, "The group disbanded after the Bicentennial and continued to sing as a church

choir at Church of Christ in Millis. In 1985, the group was revived under Roy Kelley to draw in members from Millis who were not members of the church. That group became the Millis Community Chorale in 1985. As we chose to expand beyond Millis to the Charles River Basin in 2000, we changed our name to the Charles River Chorale."

Roy has been described as a "showman," and has since passed away. Ashley, who took over as director 10 years ago, has been described as a "storyteller."

Seyfarth continues, "All of the music that has been chosen for us has been challenging. I plan to continue singing until I am unable to sing anymore!"

There were moments during the COVID pandemic when many thought they would be "unable to sing anymore." Concerts and rehearsals were cancelled or moved to a virtual presentation "so we could continue to perform," says Archibald.

"We finished the pandemic with zero dollars in the bank and 22 members," recalls Meg Quilop, a 13-year member. Membership and attendance have continued to grow post-pandemic with 350 people attending the last concert, 90+ members now, and the bank account is no longer at zero.

Quilop also mentioned some relatively new programs including a Children's Choir, scholarships for music students, and something called the "Sunshine Committee" that promotes a feeling of closeness among members and organizes birthday celebrations.

Jean Lynch observes that "many people are looking to do something for themselves. Singing can help people become friends."

One dictionary defines music as "an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color." It should have included a picture of the Charles River Chorale next to it.

Discover more at www.charlesriverchorale.com.

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Business spotlight

come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

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

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

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

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



And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices, so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

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

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

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston. It's not uncommon for

someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

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Charles River Chorale Holding Open Rehearsals in September

The Charles River Chorale will begin its 40th season with 3 open rehearsals in September.

The non-audition chorale meets on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Church of Christ, 142 Exchange Street, in Millis. The open rehearsals (September 17th, 24th, and October 1st) allow those interested to explore the possibility of joining the Chorale. New members are always welcome!

Under the leadership of Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the Charles River Chorale is entering its 40th year as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 chorale. Nelson-Oneschuk, a music professional in her 10th year with the Chorale, is also the choral director for Medway High School. Her goal for the chorale is "focused on cultivating a joyful community

first, with excellent musical experiences as the vessel to achieve this."

Chorale members hail from many surrounding towns and range in age from teenagers to octogenarians. The group presents 2 concerts each year, in December and May. "Let It Snow!" is the theme of this year's winter concert, which will be held the first weekend in December. The program will feature traditional and modern songs all related to - snow!

Membership dues for the Chorale support operating costs. There are no dues for high school students and scholarships based on need are available. The Charles River Chorale also supports the Charles River Children's Choir as part of its outreach mission.

For more information about the organization and the upcoming open rehearsals, visit www.charlesriverchorale.com. Those who are interested in joining the chorale for the start of the season on September 17th are asked to complete a short sign-up document via the attached QR code or via this link: <https://forms.gle/VLG3EoxvoeeeHBcV9>. Sponsorships and advertising opportunities are also available.



Walk to Honor Connor Reilly

The Norfolk Lions will hold a fundraiser walk to honor the memory of Connor William Reilly, who passed away on July 9, 2023, from Spinal Muscular Atrophy. He was 21 years old.

The 1.5 mile walk will be held on Saturday, Sept. 21 at 2 p.m. The route starts and ends at the Federated Church of Norfolk, 1

Union St. Rain date is Sept. 22. Walkers registered by September 7 will receive a free t-shirt.

All proceeds from the event will go towards a scholarship in Connor's name. Donations are welcome.

To register for the walk, or to donate, visit norfolkmalions.org.

Wrentham Resident Graduates with Honors from MassBay

MassBay Community College 2024 graduate Madison Rose Varvarigos of Wrentham earned an All-College Academic Award for her 4.0 GPA, awarded at the college's 62nd commencement exercises, held on May 23.

She also received the Division Award for achieving the highest

GPA in the academic division of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Program Award for the highest GPA in her academic program, Liberal Arts: Psychology/Sociology.

Varvarigos is now studying for her bachelor's degree in psychology at Emmanuel College.

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Five Area Teens Join Eagle Scout Ranks

BY GRACE ALLEN

Five Boy Scouts from Norfolk Troop 80 were honored in May for achieving the highest award in the Boy Scout program, the rank of Eagle Scout.

On Friday, May 31, Tommy Cambria, Luca Giardini, Alden Hardy, Chris Mosley, and Jackson Putt were recognized at the Eagle Court of Honor celebration, held at the Norfolk Grange.

Eagle Scout projects must be developed, planned, and led by a Scout, and benefit a religious, school, or community organization. Scouts serve as project managers and team leaders, soliciting help from fellow Scouts, family, and friends to execute the often complex and ambitious projects. Nationally, only about 6% of Boy Scouts achieve the Eagle rank.

As they rose through the ranks of Scouting, each boy earned numerous merit badges, which are awards earned within an area of study. Topics range from camping to survival skills to first aid, plus much more. Each boy also performed hours of community service throughout their years in Scouting. Finally, at the culmination of the Scouting journey, each boy completed an individual Eagle Scout project and passed an Eagle Scout Board of Review.

Tommy Cambria

For his Eagle project, Tommy Cambria installed a “blessings box” for the Federated Church of Norfolk. The shed will be used as a 24-hour pantry for food, clothes, and personal items, with the understanding of “leave what you can, take what you need.” Norfolk’s food pantry has limited hours, while the new shed allows anonymity and more flexibility for people in need.

Working with the church, Cambria raised the funds to purchase the shed and accessories. He also had to relocate a garden where the shed was to be installed.

Cambria is a senior at Tri-County High School and resides in Norfolk.

Luca Giardini

Luca Giardini’s Eagle project was to design, build, and install five chair swings at Leland Wildlife Preserve, the former airport

in Norfolk. Leland Wildlife Preserve, open to the public, encompasses nearly 200 acres of wildlife habitat. The swing project will provide spots for visitors to relax and enjoy time outdoors in this protected area.

Working with Leland Wild’s executive director, Kyle Pribish, Giardini and a team of assistants completed the project. The public is invited to stop by and see their efforts while exploring the property.

Giardini, a Norfolk resident and 2024 King Philip High School graduate, is attending the University of Rhode Island to study engineering.

Alden Hardy

For his Eagle project, Alden Hardy designed and assembled seven feral cat shelters for the Mansfield Animal Shelter. The 18” x 20” shelters have been placed across the area and are an important management strategy for the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. The TNR program focuses on spaying, vaccinations, and ear tipping, considered humane treatment for feral cat populations.

Hardy and fellow Scouts worked in the Wrentham Council on Aging facility to construct the shelters, which were designed using a computer aided-drawing program.

Hardy, a Wrentham resident and 2024 King Philip High School graduate, is attending Wentworth Institute of Technology to study cybersecurity.

Chris Mosley

Chris Mosley came to Norfolk from San Jose, California in 2020, where he was also a Boy Scout. After joining Troop 80 to continue his Scouting journey, Mosley worked towards his Eagle rank by creating a prayer garden at the church he and his family attend. Working with fellow Scouts, Mosely cleaned the area of invasive shrubs and weeds, and installed two benches and a Japanese maple tree, plus mulch.

The project entailed working with church clergy to develop sketches for the area, and then executing the vision while planning for the future. Plantings will grow and provide shade for the meditative area.



Troop 80’s newest Eagle Scouts were honored on May 31. From left, Scoutmaster Robert Mosley, Chris Mosley, Jackson Putt, Alden Hardy, Luca Giardini, Tommy Cambria, former Scoutmaster Adam Cambria, and Assistant Scoutmaster Jason Soares. Photo by Jeff Putt.

Mosley is a 2024 graduate of King Philip High School and is attending Suffolk University to study biochemistry.

Jackson Putt

Jackson Putt’s Eagle Scout project was to build 28 new tree stands for the Norfolk Lions Club’s annual Christmas tree

sale. The project replaced stands that were over 20 years old. Putt met with the Lions Club board to propose the project and go over its budget. He worked with other Troop 80 Scouts to disassemble the old stands and build new ones, recycling materials as much as possible.

The Lions’ annual Christmas tree sale is the club’s most important fundraiser, and its proceeds support local, regional, and national causes.

Putt, from Norfolk, is a 2024 graduate of Xaverian Brothers High School and is attending the University of South Carolina to study exercise science.

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Guest Column

Creeping Tax Tide

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

Your writer recently awoke to a news report that the average price of a single home here in the Commonwealth is now nearly \$700,000. This unbelievable escalation in real estate values during the last few years has created a conundrum for property owners, not just potential buyers. As these numbers skyrocket to ridiculous levels, property tax costs are moving into the stratosphere as well. Homeowners living on fixed incomes, especially the elderly, must now adjust their already strained budgets to accommodate the increase. Obviously, other costs of home ownership are also significantly impacted, such as homeowners' insurance. At a time when such folks are struggling with inflationary prices for food and other essentials, these unexpected increases can mean the difference between staying in a home or selling it, reluctantly.

In this bizarre real estate market, predatory potential buyers

lurk behind every shrub, sending out unsolicited messages to homeowners, looking to grab properties they can flip for quick profit. Panicked property owners under stress may react emotionally, without due consideration for problems a seemingly lucrative sale may bring.

This disconcerting situation brings to mind a question, among others, about property tax policy. When the housing crisis abates, which it eventually must, will local property tax rates move downward to reflect de-escalation in market value? If so, how quickly will that occur? Is there a standard formula that governs that adjustment mandated by law? A chat with the assessor's office in Wrentham indicated that property values are adjusted downward as well to reflect decreasing market prices, citing the recession in 2008. These adjustments, up and down, significantly trail the actual real estate market, awaiting financial data to support

needed changes. The consensus is that assessed real estate values will continue to increase for the foreseeable future, given the severe shortage of housing in the Commonwealth.

Some Massachusetts communities allow Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Programs for resident homeowners 60 years or older. These are capped at a maximum of \$1500. The amount is not taxed by the state but the IRS taxes this benefit as income and the volunteer is considered a W2 employee. As the average tax bill escalates each year, the value of the MA Work-Off program is rapidly decreasing.

The amount of the benefit needs to be adjusted upward considerably. Maximum income level qualifications need to be adjusted accordingly as well, in keeping with cost-of-living inflationary trending.

By contrast, the state of Washington offers a more realistic approach, enabling senior homeowners to retain home

ownership in stressful financial situations. The program adjusts property taxes for qualifying home owners by reducing the taxable value of a residence in the first qualifying year once the owner has reached 61 years of age (57 for surviving spouse of an exemption qualifier). A disabled person, unable to work (veterans included) also qualifies.

What we could be witnessing is the subtle but inexorable shifting of property ownership from the hands of the common citizen to the coffers of a well-heeled minority with the cash to prey upon a less advantaged homeowner. Massachusetts is beginning to experience the departure of significant numbers of middle-class residents who no longer consider the state an affordable place to live. If this trend continues, we will be left with a two-tier population of the very rich and the marginal income folks, the latter forced to pay bloated rental costs until such time that this illogical situation falls apart at the seams as the population of the homeless expands.

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

The Haunted Train Ride is Back!

Tickets for the Norfolk Lions and Norfolk Community League-sponsored Haunted Train Ride will go on sale at 5 p.m. on September 10 on the Norfolk Lions website until sold out. Go to norfolkmalions.org to purchase tickets.

The Haunted Train Ride will be held on October 19 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at Holmes Field on Myrtle Street in Norfolk for ticket holders only! No tickets will be sold the day of the event. Come in costume! The darker it gets, the scarier it gets!

All proceeds go to worthy Norfolk causes through distributions by Norfolk Community League and Norfolk Lions.

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First Universalist Society in Franklin Announces September Services

All services start at 10 a.m., followed by coffee and conversation.

September 8: Ingathering Sunday- Connecting and Reconnecting

See old friends, meet new friends, and re-connect to what makes FUSF a beloved community. New folks welcome! All are invited to bring some water to share with the congregation as we continue our annual ritual of mingling this precious resource and blessing it for use throughout the year at child dedications, weddings and other sacred times.

September 15: Racing in the Rain

Navigating through life's ups and downs can be as perilous as

racing in the rain. This Sunday, in a sermon inspired by the book "The Art of Racing in the Rain" by Garth Stein, we will look at the lessons that can be learned from race car drivers. Is there an art to racing in the rain? What are the parallels between controlling the steering wheel and directing our own lives? How do we describe the "lost races," integrate the lessons and go back to drive another day?

September 22: Peace-ing Together

Join us as we celebrate the International Day of Peace. What is peace? How can we achieve it and maintain it – in our lives, our community, the world? As part of this worship service we will go outside and re-dedicate the FUSF peace pole.

September 29: The Power of the Rev.

Join Rev. Bev as she explores the power of the title, the changes in relationship when a person puts on the collar, robe and/or stole. And she might even share some secrets to cultivate the best possible relationship with the next minister.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin MA. For further information about FUSF please explore our website at fusf.org or contact our Interim Minister, the Reverend Beverly Waring at 508- 528-5348 or minister@fusf.org

Your Money, Your Independence

Mastering the College Admissions Process



Glenn Brown, CFP

Navigating the college admissions process can be a complex and stressful experience for both students and parents.

Understanding nuances of early action and early decision, exploring merit-based aid, and utilizing 529 plans and loans effectively can impact this journey. Here's a guide to help clarify these crucial financial aspects.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

When it comes to college applications, Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED) are two options usually due November 1st, but they have distinct differences.

Early Action (EA) allows students to apply earlier than the regular deadline and receive a decision sooner, but they do not

have to commit immediately. This means students can apply to multiple schools under EA and weigh their options.

Early Decision (ED) is a binding commitment as students agree to attend that college if admitted. Applying ED can enhance acceptance chances because admissions committees view ED applicants as highly motivated. However, it is crucial to request any needed merit aid in the application process, as later requests of needing aid to attend can jeopardize the acceptance.

Focus on Merit-Based Aid

Merit-based aid is financial assistance awarded based on a student's academic, athletic, or artistic achievements rather than financial need. To maximize merit-based aid:

Take The Road Less Traveled: The "trophy schools" aren't giving a lot of merit, because they receive many applications and don't need to incentivize top students. Therefore, look for niche colleges and/or programs in big schools that excite your student and align to their strengths.

Build Student/Recruiter Relationships: Merit is a relationship business, where personal interactions influence rewards. Encourage students to proactively connect with local recruiters and express their interest in specific programs. Ongoing communica-

tion leads to sharing campus visit plans, allowing the recruiter to set up meetings with professor(s) and admissions. Upon applying EA or ED, your student shares with the recruiter and admissions personnel their enthusiasm, application, and calculation of merit needed to attend. Now admissions has a personality with a name and need, plus the local recruiter is making your student's case.

Students must lead these communications, as recruiters are turned off when parents are writing, editing, and/or speaking for the student.

Using 529 Funds

Contributions to a 529 plan grow tax-free, and withdrawals for qualified education expenses are tax-free. To use funds from a 529 plan effectively:

Adjust Investment Strategies: If your child is only a couple of years from starting college, then shift a portion of future expenditures into more stable investments, such as bond funds or

money markets, to help minimize future volatility and potential losses.

Qualified Expenses: Ensure that withdrawals are used for qualified expenses like tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Using funds for non-qualified expenses can result in penalties and taxation at the parent's AGI rate.

Exploring Loan Options

Understanding the different types of loans can help in managing student debt:

Federal Student Loans: Typically offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment terms compared to private loans. They include Direct Subsidized Loans, where the government covers interest while the student is in school, and Direct Unsubsidized Loans, where interest accrues immediately.

Parent PLUS Loans: These are federal loans parents can take out. They have a fixed interest rate and offer flexible repayment terms but place the financial burden on parents.

Private Loans: Offered by banks or private lenders, private loans have higher interest rates and fewer repayment protections than federal loans, so they should be the last resort.

In conclusion, informed parents and proactive students can achieve better financial outcomes and a smoother transition to college life. To learn more, talk with your Certified Financial Planner.

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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FPAC Searching for Young Musicians to Star in School of Rock

The Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) is seeking young local musicians ages 10-16 to complete their cast for their October production of Andrew

Lloyd Webber's *School of Rock - The Musical* at THE BLACK BOX. FPAC is holding auditions for singers, guitarists, bassists, pianists, and drummers ages 10-16

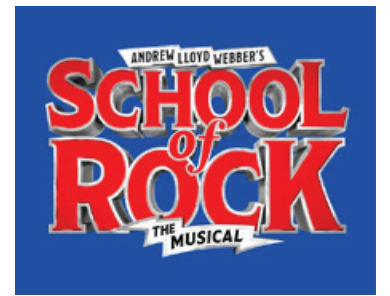
to play the students of Horace Green.

Auditions will be held on September 4th at 4:30pm at THE BLACK BOX located at 15 W. Central Street in Franklin, MA. Those auditioning are asked to prepare a brief cut of a song in the style of the show. If auditioning for a role that plays an instrument, prepare one brief cut of a song in the style of the show to sing with the pianist as well as one brief demonstration of playing ability on one's instrument. FPAC will have amps, a drum set, and piano available. For full character descriptions and instrument information, visit FPAConline.com. All questions regarding the audition/casting process can be emailed to FPACcasting@gmail.com.

The production will be directed by FPAC Artistic Director Raye Lynn Mercer, choreographed by Broadway's Clay Rice-Thomson (*Moulin Rouge*, *Matilda*, *Newsies*, *King Kong*),

with music direction by FPAC's Resident Music Director Hallie Wetzell. The production runs October 18-27 at THE BLACK BOX.

FPAC is a professional regional theater (Actors' Equity SPT Tier 1). The casts and creative teams are made up of Broadway stars, professionals from NYC and Boston, local talent, and student apprentices. All performers 18 (high school) and under cast in FPAC productions appear as "Student Apprentices." The FPAC Student Apprentice program gives students of the arts a chance to share the stage with and be directed/choreographed by Broadway stars and New York, Boston, and local professional artists. A learning experience in the world of professional regional theater, Student Apprentices are sometimes called upon to assist FPAC's Stage Management team and crew with things like technical rehearsals, upkeep of THE BLACK BOX space, and more.



Based on the hit movie, *School of Rock* follows Dewey Finn, a failed, wannabe rock star who decides to earn an extra bit of cash by posing as a substitute teacher at a prestigious prep school. There he turns a class of straight-A pupils into a guitar-shredding, bass-slapping, mind-blowing rock band. But can he get them to the Battle of the Bands without their parents and the school's headmistress finding out? With its sensational live kids' rock band, *School of Rock - The Musical* is a loving testimony to the transforming power of music.

Tickets for *School of Rock* and FPAC's entire 2024-25 Season are available now at FPAConline.com or by calling the box office at 508-528-3370.

David Harvey Martin, age 88, of Wrentham, MA, a native of Andover, MA, formerly of Medfield, MA, Bellingham, MA, Norfolk, MA and Middletown, RI, passed into eternal life peacefully in the arms of his loving wife on Saturday, July 13, 2024, at Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro. David was born in Lowell on March 25th, 1936. He was the son of the late James and Vera (Harvey) Martin.

David was extremely devoted to his wife, children, grandchildren, stepfamily members, and proud of all their accomplishments. David was a compassionate, intelligent, and loving man who took the time to genuinely get to know all of those with whom he crossed paths. His witty sense of humor, his immense fund of general knowledge, and his engaging personality made spending time with him a joy. He was a true gentleman and scholar. One of David's greatest days was getting married on his birthday on March 25th, 1990, at the Federated Church in Norfolk, MA to Francesca. David was extremely proud and pleased that his son Scott served as his Best Man.

Besides his beloved wife, Francesca Marie (Hoffman) (Gill), he is survived by his daughters; Nancy J. Martin of San Jose, CA., Michele J. Martin of Marblehead, son Bradford W. Martin of Salem. He was pre-deceased by son Scott D. Martin. Also survived by his stepchildren; Thomas J. Gill (Kristen) of Walpole, Edward J. Gill (Gillian) of Wrentham, and Christopher P. Gill (Danielle) of Roslindale. Devoted grandfather of Douglas, Lauren, Alexander, Samuel, Calvin and William Martin, step-grandchildren Lucas, Sophia, Samson Gill, and Maxwell and Nathaniel Reuter. Devoted great-grandfather of Bryson and Andrew Martin. Cherished brother-in-law of Charlotte A. Steeves and family of Canton.

David was a motivated life-long learner who took on challenges and continued to grow. He graduated from Punchard High School in Andover in 1953. He was employed by Raytheon Company in Andover, Hillsinger Company in Plainville, and Polaroid Corporation in Cambridge and Westwood. His degrees included a BS in Business Administration from Boston University in 1966, an MBA from Suffolk University in 1973 and Juris Doctorate from Mass School of Law in 1993. David was exceedingly proud of these accomplishments and while others his age were contemplating retirement, he was preparing for a new legal career. From there he practiced law at the late Anthony Petrocca's Law Office in Millis, MA. David was an actively engaged and caring citizen. With his new legal skills, he devoted time to do pro-bono cases to assist the less fortunate. David also worked for Putnam Investments.

In retirement, David enjoyed and appreciated his friends and social activities while residing at the Community at Pond Meadow. He also enjoyed being a member of the Wrentham Senior Center.

Per David's request, funeral services were omitted. Contributions in David's memory may be made to New England Brittany Rescue, C/O NEBR Treasurer, 829 Mill Street, Marion, MA 02738 or on line at www.nebrittanyrescue.org.

Francesca Martin would like to thank the dedicated staff at Alliance Health at Maples for their compassionate care.

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Bi-County Collaborative Launches New Website

Bi-County Collaborative (BICO) has launched a new website. The organization, a multi-purpose educational collaborative, provides educational programming for students with educational and physical learning disabilities.

This new website, <https://bi-county.org>, includes a modern, user-friendly design for families that gives visitors easier access to key information about the collaborative's various programs and services.

The new design provides many new features for users to explore, including an interactive academic calendar that offers a

subscription service as well as a listing of professional development opportunities with an online registration and payment service. Additionally, BICO's new website offers a plethora of online resources as part of their parent training series.

"Our new website is an excellent resource for families to access information about BICO with ease," said Executive Director Jeanne Sullivan in a statement. "John Guilfoil Public Relations did an excellent job displaying all of our information and resources in an interactive and accessible design."

Norfolk Resident Graduates from Montrose School

Shannon Mahoney of Norfolk graduated with high honors from Montrose School in Medfield on Friday, May 31.

At Montrose, Mahoney played varsity volleyball, basketball and lacrosse for four years, serving as co-captain of both varsity volleyball and lacrosse. She earned recognition as an IGC All-Star and MVP, NEPSAC All-Star and MVP, as well as an All-Scholastic Athlete by the Boston Globe and Boston Herald.

Mahoney will attend St. Anselm College where she is committed to play lacrosse.

About Montrose School

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develop greatness of mind (veritas), greatness of heart (caritas), and character (libertas).

Educating 245 students, Montrose is located in the heart of historic downtown Medfield. Learn more at montroseschool.org.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Unlock Your Best Look: Must-Know Haircut Trends for Fall 2024

BY GINA WOELFEL

We're unpacking the hottest trends for the autumn/winter 2024 season with the most sought-after hairstyles. After a mostly minimalist summer with styles that seemed to style themselves, we're seeing a return to bold, highly personalized looks that emphasize definition and texture and are poised to turn heads this season! Bangs are back, shorter and more voluminous bobs are adopting new angles, and there's a noticeable nod to the past with a resurgence of retro-inspired cuts like the mullet, the shag, and even "The Rachel."

One noticeable trend emerging in the salon industry is the increased customization of haircuts for both women and men. Clients want to express their individuality in a unique way instead of simply following what they see on social media. There's more freedom to mix and match looks and showcase inventive ideas; this departure from the norm reflects a deeper ownership of individual style.

Get Ahead of the Curve with This Season's Hottest Style Trends!

THE MODERN SHAG AND WOLF CUT:

These styles appear similar but are actually different haircuts with similar elements. The **modern shag cut** combines long layers with shorter layers

to frame the face, creating volume and lift. One key element to a great shag cut is bangs! For longer shag cuts, curtain bangs (see below) flow effortlessly into the shag's side layers. The popular butterfly cut is also another name for a longer shag. Its shorter, softer, chin-length side layers and long layers at the back create the illusion of butterfly wings, from which it derives its name.

The **wolf cut** is a popular haircut that combines the fringe of a shag and a mullet's statement style. It's known for its slightly edgy look with choppy bangs, shorter layers on the crown, and longer layers on the back. The style is said to resemble a wolf's wild and unkempt coat. The wolf cut has no exact, definitive shape. It can be long or short, with hair gradually layered thicker around the back and longer base layers that intentionally give a mullet effect.

BANGS:

Bangs are back, adding a fresh and stylish update to our hairstyles this fall season. The most significant trend we're seeing is all about the fringe that frames our faces. From the effortlessly chic **curtain bangs** that soften your facial features and blend beautifully into longer layers to the iconic **Birkin bangs** (inspired by Jane Birkin) that exude vintage charm, there's a perfect style for everyone! **Wispy bangs** add a touch of romantic softness, while **bold baby bangs** can be chunky



and well-defined, with separated strands for a daring statement. For an edgier look, **choppy short bangs** work great with cuts like the wolf cut and French bob haircut, while **layered bangs** are less committal with various lengths that blend into your hair. Whether you prefer a polished center part or the glamorous vibe of vintage **bombshell bangs**, this season's trend invites you to experiment and express your inner glam.

THE RACHEL 2.0:

The **Rachel 2.0** is a modern take on the iconic hairstyle made famous by Jennifer Aniston's character, Rachel Green, on the popular TV show Friends. We all sported this haircut in the mid-90s, even if it didn't quite suit our style. However, the modern version showcases a shaggy, layered, shoulder-length look with plenty of texture and movement and can be tailored to accentuate your best features. It's a versatile and stylish haircut that has



gained popularity for its fresh, effortless vibe. The Rachel 2.0 is a great option for those looking for a trendy yet timeless haircut.

ASYMMETRICAL BOB:

The **asymmetrical bob** is set to be a standout style for fall 2024. This modern twist on the classic bob haircut features a distinctive angled cut, adding edgy elegance and timeless sophistication. With a shorter back and longer front, this versatile haircut complements various hair textures and face shapes, making it a trendy choice for those looking to embrace individuality and defy symmetry. This variation of the bob haircut can be short, medium, or long and can vary in the sharpness of its angle.

These are just a few of this season's most popular hairstyles.

We're also seeing significant demand for high-end men's haircuts, hair extensions, toppers, and faux bangs, as well as no-heat natural styling solutions and layers for all hair lengths. We'll be discussing these in our upcoming Beauty Beats. Scan the QR code to follow along and read our full blog each month, where we share photo inspiration, promotions, and a more in-depth dive into the Beauty Beat.

With so many ways to personalize your style, embrace this season and make it your own.

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School Enrollments Decline Despite Increased Building in Norfolk and Wrentham

By JOE STEWART

By the beginning of 2024, both Norfolk and Wrentham were working to create new overlay districts that would comply with state regulations intended to increase housing. To comply with so-called MBTA Communities requirements, Norfolk and Wrentham are defining zoning districts that will allow development of high-density housing such as multi-story apartments, condos and townhomes.

In the case of Norfolk, the new zones were approved at Town Meeting in May and all indications are that Norfolk's new zones comply with state law.

In the case of Wrentham, there have been many opportunities for residents to share their views, from Planning Board hearings, Select Board hearings, a Select Board "informational meeting," even a joint Planning and Select Board hearing. In all, there are 18 meetings recorded and available here: <https://bit.ly/4drehQ0>.

As noted in previous articles, opponents of MBTA Communities cite increased school enrollment driving up school costs. Opponents have also cited increases in population driving increases in police and fire costs

as reasons to oppose the zones.

According to the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, since 2003 Norfolk has built 2,605 new bedrooms and Wrentham has built 3,024 bedrooms. Over the same 20-year period, according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, sixth grade enrollment in both Norfolk and Wrentham has held steady or declined somewhat. Norfolk enrollment has declined from 172 in 2002 to 134 in 2023; Wrentham enrollment has declined from 172 in 2002 to 125 in 2023.

Over 20 years, enrollment in both towns has declined despite thousands of new bedrooms being added.

These trends were highlighted in Wrentham's Master Plan Vision of Tomorrow 2030, published in 2022 by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and available here: <https://bit.ly/4cmt5Oh>. The report stated that the proportion of households with children has been decreasing in Wrentham, consistent with the aging population.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, over the same period, 2002

| | Norfolk | Wrentham |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Education | 56% - \$25M | 51% - \$26M |
| Fire | 2.7% - \$2.4M | 6.3% - \$3.6M |
| Police | 6.8% - \$3.2M | 5.9% - \$2.8M |

to 2023, education represents about 50% of costs for both Norfolk and Wrentham, while police and fire each represent less than 10% of town spending.

Interestingly, despite flat or declining school enrollment, education costs as a proportion of town spending have been consistent, though in real terms increasing over 20 years. Fire and police costs have likewise increased.

Regarding Norfolk Schools enrollment, Superintendent Dr. Ingrid Allardi noted that housing in the form of one- and two-bedroom apartments does not have a significant impact on enrollment and Norfolk is not projecting significant school enrollment growth from projects that would provide high density housing or apartment style living. However, Norfolk is anticipating enrollment growth from other housing developments taking place in Norfolk and has also experienced steady inward migration of families into Norfolk

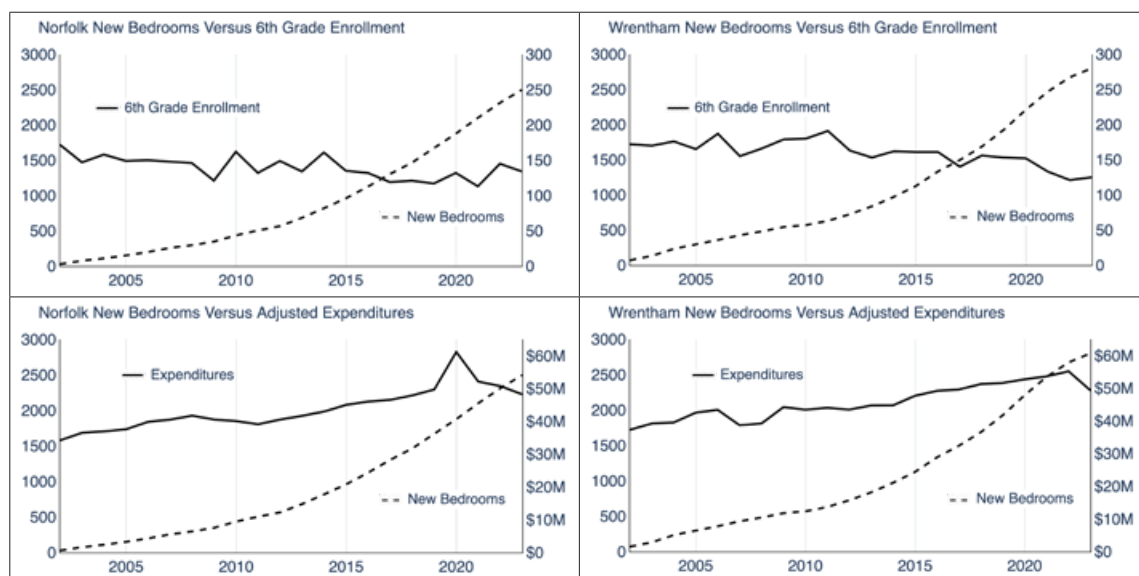
from other more urban areas.

Dr. Allardi also highlighted that over the past ten years enrollment in Norfolk's lower elementary school has increased by approximately 100 students or 25%. As these larger classes roll up through the district, enrollment is expected to grow over the next ten years by another 200 students.

Regarding Wrentham schools, school board chair Phil Jordan observed that the financial services disclaimer, "past performance is no guarantee of future results," applies to other projections, like enrollment, as well. He also highlighted the impact of charter schools on public school enrollment, noting that

the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School has Norfolk and Wrentham children in its program. Like Norfolk, Wrentham is projecting growth in total enrollment growth and is currently in the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) feasibility study phase - the MSBA's current 5-year growth projection is approximately 150 students.

Steve King, a Wrentham resident whose profession includes data analysis and visualization, combined the data and produced these charts. New residential sales data was supplied by the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®. Enrollment data was provided by DESE. Municipal expenses were provided by DOR. The expense data was adjusted for inflation and normalized to 2023 constant dollars using CPI factors from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Source: Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, Massachusetts Department of Revenue and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Note: Expenditures are inflation adjusted to 2023 constant dollars

X axis ranges from 2002 to 2023. Left y axis is cumulative new bedrooms. Right y axis is annual 6th grade enrollment or annual total town expenditures.

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Piano Student Wins First Prize at Carnegie Hall

Paulina Dudzin of Wrentham was awarded First Prize at the Little Mozart's Crescendo International Competition 2024. The eight-year-old performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall during the winners' concert in May, after securing second place at a musical competition held at Bryant University.

Dudzin takes lessons with Nana Grace at the Rhode Island DoReMi Music Academy in Smithfield, RI. Grace says her students' recent trip to New York City for the prestigious international competition marked a significant highlight, with Dudzin one of seven of her students achieving top placements.

In a statement, Grace said, "This recognition not only highlights the outstanding musical abilities of our students, but also underscores the global reach and impact of the arts emanating from our community."

To qualify for Carnegie Hall, students first applied online and then performed in person at Bryant University. Successful candidates advanced to the Carnegie



Paulina Dudzin, center, won first prize at Carnegie Hall in May.



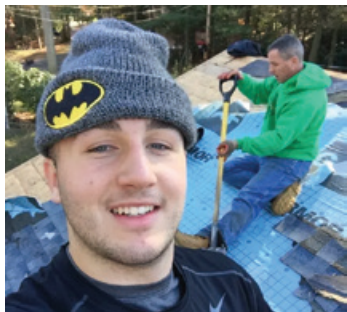
Dudzin with piano teacher Nana Grace of DoReMi Music Academy.

Hall International Competition, where they earned cash prizes, opportunities for overseas per-

formances, and other accolades. Thousands of artists apply each year, with only 25 students

selected for the trip, seven of whom were from Grace's studio.

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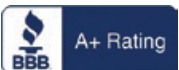
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FPAC Announces 2024-25 Season

The Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) is excited to announce its 2024-25 season of musicals and plays in their home venue THE BLACK BOX. The exciting lineup will include *School of Rock*, *Proof*, *To Tell a Story About the Earth*, *The Producers*, and *Little Women*.

FPAC will open its season with Andrew Lloyd Webber's *School of Rock - The Musical* October 18-27 at THE BLACK BOX. Based on the hit movie, *School of Rock* follows Dewey Finn, a failed, wannabe rock star who decides to earn an extra bit of cash by posing as a substitute teacher at a prestigious prep school. There he turns a class of straight-A pupils into a guitar-shredding, bass-slapping, mind-blowing rock band. But can he get them to the Battle of the Bands without their parents and the school's headmistress finding out? With its sensational live kids' rock band, *School of Rock - The Musical* is a loving testimony to the transforming power of music. Directed by FPAC Artistic Director Raye Lynn Mercer, with choreography by Broadway's Clay Rice-Thomson (*Moulin Rouge!*, *KING KONG*, *Matilda*, *Newsies*), and music direction by Hallie Wetzell.

The season continues with David Auburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Proof* November 15-17 at THE BLACK BOX. Catherine has spent years caring for her brilliant but unstable father, Robert. When he dies she has more than grief to deal with: there's her estranged sister, Claire, and Hal, a former student of her father's who hopes to find valuable work in the 103 notebooks that Robert left behind. And a further problem: how much of her father's madness - or genius - will Catherine inherit? Directed by Nick Paone. Patrons are advised: *Proof* deals heavily with themes of grief, death, and dying and contains strong language and some mature themes.

FPAC Holiday Productions will mount their annual production of *The Nutcracker* with live orchestra, special guest artists, and more than 100 area dancers December 7-8 at the FHS Auditorium. December 20-21, the holidays are jolly and bright as *'Tis the Season!* returns to entertain audiences with great merriment, fanfare, and fun. An original

large cast musical first presented by FPAC Holiday Productions in 1995, *'Tis* is an upbeat, jazzy extravaganza with contemporary arrangements of favorite holiday classics in musical styles ranging from R&B, gospel, and Motown to Rock, Pop, and Broadway.

After the holidays, FPAC will present *To Tell a Story About the Earth*, a new play by Miranda Rose Hall in development by LubDub Theatre Co January 10-12 at THE BLACK BOX. After a disastrous first production, a fledgling theater company has decided to call it quits. But when the local librarian requests a new performance for Earth Day, the young artists have a decision to make, and questions abound: what's the deal with this weird fish? Who built the room we're standing in? Isn't there supposed to be a storm tonight? Part scripted play, part guided introduction to devising methods, part environmental investigation, and part fill in the blank, *To Tell a Story About the Earth* prompts ensembles everywhere to create and share an original show about the natural world close to home. Directed by Caitlin Nasema Cassidy and Geoff Kanick.

The 2024-25 season will continue with Mel Brooks' *The Producers* March 14-23 at THE BLACK BOX. The plot is simple: a down-on-his-luck Broadway producer and his mild-mannered accountant come up with a scheme to produce the most notorious flop in history, thereby bilking their backers (all "little old ladies") out of millions of dollars. Only one thing goes awry: the show is a smash hit. The antics of Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom as they maneuver their way fecklessly through finding a show, hiring a director, raising the money and finally going to prison for their misdeeds is a lesson in broad comic construction. At the core of the insanely funny adventure is a poignant emotional journey of two very different men who become friends. With a truly hysterical book co-written by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan (Annie) and music and lyrics by Mr. Brooks, *The Producers* skewers Broadway traditions and takes no prisoners. Directed by Raye Lynn Mercer, with choreography by Broadway's Clay Rice-Thomson (*Moulin Rouge!*,

KING KONG, *Matilda*, *Newsies*), and music direction by Hallie Wetzell. *The Producers* is a Mel Brooks comedy full of adult humor and innuendo. Audience discretion is advised.

FPAC's season will conclude with the musical adaptation of *Little Women* June 6-8 at THE BLACK BOX. Based on Louisa May Alcott's life, *Little Women* follows the adventures of sisters Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy March. Jo is trying to sell her stories for publication, but the publishers are not interested - her friend, Professor Bhaer, tells her that she has to do better and write more from herself. Begrudgingly taking this advice, Jo weaves the story of herself and her sisters and their experience growing up in Civil War America. *Little Women* embodies the complete theatrical experience, guaranteeing a night filled with laughter, tears, and a lifting of the spirit. The powerful score soars with the sounds of personal discovery, heartache, and hope - the sounds of a young America finding its voice. Directed by Ali Funkhouser with music direction by Hallie Wetzell.

FPAC is an Actors' Equity Small Professional Theater company based at THE BLACK BOX in downtown Franklin.



Each season, FPAC produces musicals, plays, ballets, and more featuring Broadway stars, professional actors, local artists, and students of the arts. Tickets for the 2024-25 season will be

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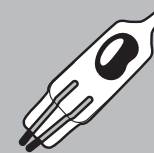
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Living Healthy

Debunking Common Myths in Eye Care

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

When it comes to eye health, myths and misconceptions abound, often leading people to adopt unnecessary or even harmful habits. From the belief that carrots significantly improve vision to the notion that sitting too close to the TV damages eyes, it's time to set the record straight. Here, we debunk some of the most common myths in eye care and provide evidence-based advice to help you maintain optimal eye health.

Myth 1: Carrots Improve Your Vision

One of the most persistent myths is that eating carrots can vastly improve your vision. While carrots are indeed rich in vitamin A, which is essential for eye health, they do not possess magical vision-enhancing properties. Vitamin A helps maintain healthy vision, especially in low light conditions, but it won't

correct vision problems such as myopia or hyperopia. A balanced diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables is more beneficial for overall eye health.

Myth 2: Reading in Dim Light Damages Your Eyes

Many of us were warned as children that reading in dim light would harm our eyes. However, this is not true. While reading in low light can cause eye strain and temporary discomfort, it does not cause any long-term damage to your eyes. To reduce eye strain, ensure that your reading area is well-lit and take regular breaks.

Myth 3: Sitting Too Close to the TV Will Ruin Your Eyes

Another common myth is that sitting too close to the television can damage your eyes. While it might cause temporary eye strain or fatigue, there is no evidence to suggest that it leads to permanent eye damage. Modern televisions emit less radiation

than older models, making this concern even less relevant today. However, it's always a good idea to maintain a comfortable viewing distance to avoid eye strain.

Myth 4: Wearing Glasses or Contacts Will Weaken Your Eyes

Some people believe that wearing glasses or contact lenses will cause their eyes to become dependent on them and weaken over time. This is not true. Corrective lenses improve vision by compensating for refractive errors, and they do not affect the physical health of your eyes. In fact, wearing the correct prescription can help prevent headaches and eye strain.

Myth 5: Blue Light from Screens Is Dangerous for Your Eyes

With the rise of digital device usage, many products have emerged claiming to protect your eyes from the harmful effects of blue light emitted by screens. However, the evidence support-



ing the effectiveness of blue light-blocking glasses is lacking. Several studies suggest that blue light-blocking glasses do not significantly improve symptoms of digital eye strain. The American Academy of Ophthalmology does not recommend any special blue light-blocking eyewear for computer use. Instead, focus on taking regular breaks, practicing the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds), and adjusting your screen's brightness to reduce eye strain.

Myth 6: Eye Exercises Can Cure Vision Problems

Various eye exercises are often touted as remedies for conditions like nearsightedness or astigmatism. However, there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that eye exercises can correct these refractive errors. These conditions are caused by the shape of the eyeball or the cornea and cannot be altered through exercises. If you have vision problems, consult an eye care professional for appropriate corrective measures such as glasses, contact lenses, or surgery.

Myth 7: You Don't Need an Eye Exam If You Have Perfect Vision

Even if you have perfect vision, regular eye exams are crucial. Eye exams can detect early signs of diseases like glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy, which may not present symptoms until significant damage has occurred. Regular check-ups can help prevent vision loss and ensure early treatment if necessary.

Myth 8: Only Older Adults Need to Worry About Eye Health

While it is true that the risk of many eye diseases increases with age, eye health is important at every stage of life. Conditions such as digital eye strain, dry eye, and even cataracts can affect younger individuals. Protecting your eyes from UV rays, maintaining a healthy diet, and having regular eye exams are important habits for people of all ages.

Myth 9: Sunglasses Are Only for Sunny Days

Sunglasses are often viewed as a summer accessory, but they are important year-round. UV rays from the sun can damage your eyes even on cloudy days. Wearing sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays can help protect your eyes from harmful effects such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Choose sunglasses that offer full protection and wear them whenever you are outdoors.

Myth 10: A Cataract Must Be 'Ripe' Before It Is Removed

False. With older surgical techniques, it was thought to be safer to remove a cataract when it was "ripe." With today's modern surgical procedures, a cataract can be removed whenever it begins to interfere with a person's vision and activities.

Myth 11: Eyes Can Be Transplanted

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Living Healthy

Annual Wrentham Day Set for September 7

Celebrate all things Wrentham on Saturday, September 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The popular community event takes place on the town's common.

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The Wrentham Fire Department, Police Department and Department of Public Works will line the street to host "Touch a Truck," and the Wrentham Lions' popular banana split ice cream sundae will be served.

Benjamin the Clown will make his annual appearance, with magic tricks, juggling, balloons, and more.

The popular Wrentham Wroad Wrace 5K also takes place on Wrentham Day. The race starts at 9 a.m. on Taunton Street. Entry fee is \$25 by Sept. 6, or \$30 the day of the race. Medals will be awarded for overall male and female in eight divisions, and top finishers receive cash prizes. Merchandise prizes will be awarded by lottery. Food and drink for runners will all be available. Check-in opens on race day at 7:30 a.m. Sign up at <https://runsignup.com/wrenthamwroadwrace>.

EYES

continued from page 16

of this, the eye is never removed from its socket during surgery. The cornea, the clear front part of the eye, has been successfully transplanted for many years. Corneal transplant is sometimes confused with an eye transplant.

Myth 12: Laser-Assisted Cataract Surgery Is the Same as Traditional Cataract Surgery

False. The five best-ranked eye hospitals in America offer bladeless laser-assisted cataract surgery. We do too. Bladeless cataract surgery aims for better precision, more safety, and excellent outcomes. The laser's advanced precision and ability to correct astigmatism translate into a better likelihood of seeing well without glasses following cataract surgery. The same laser breaks up and softens the cloudy cataract, so less ultrasound is needed to remove it. Less ultrasound translates into less energy used inside the eye and clearer corneas, which helps produce better vision on the first day after surgery. This becomes even more critical if you have a weak cornea or a small eye with a dense cataract.

Dispelling eye care myths is crucial for maintaining good eye health. Instead of relying on hearsay, base your eye care practices on scientific evidence and professional advice. Regular eye exams, a balanced diet, proper eyewear, and good screen habits are the cornerstones of healthy vision. By understanding and debunking these common myths, you can take better care of your eyes and enjoy clear vision for years to come.

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Marla P. was frustrated dealing with her 8 year old son. He had difficulty finishing schoolwork and difficulty completing his daily tasks at home. She would ask him repeatedly to get dressed, brush his teeth and put his toys away. He would start but not finish these tasks because he became distracted easily. At first, she thought he was just lazy, but very quickly realized that there was something wrong. The behavioral patterns of inability to focus, complete tasks or sit still for any length of time "set off bells" in her head. She realized that



Dr. Rochelle Bien & Dr. Michael Goldstein

something was not right and that he might have ADHD. She didn't want to put him on meds and decided to take a holistic approach. A dear friend suggested she call The Holistic Center at Bristol Square in Walpole. Within 2 weeks of beginning treatment, Marla noticed that her son could sit to do his homework and complete the assignment without screaming, yelling and tears. Within 4 weeks, he was completing his daily tasks at home easily and happy to do so. Within 2-3 months her son was happy and more confident, because he

was finishing his assignments in school as well as at home in a reasonable time frame.

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Sports

Poirier: Right Coach at Right Time for KP Matmen

Gained Experience After 9 Years as An Assistant

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

A new coach, so often, needs time to acclimate to new personnel, assess a program's culture, install a process and get familiar with facilities.

None of those adjustments are likely to be problems for Mike Poirier, who was selected in July to succeed John Adams as King Philip's wrestling coach. Adams not only retired from coaching, but he also has left education. He was a guidance counselor in the KP school district for 23 years.

Poirier, who was Adams' assistant for nine years, was highly recommended by the former coach to succeed him. The 36-year-old Poirier directed the junior-varsity team, worked with varsity wrestlers, and was in charge of compiling film for practice sessions.

"My transition to head coach should go smoothly," said Poirier who lives in North Attleboro with his wife Jill and son Tucker. "Everyone in the program knows me and I'm fully aware how the program has progressed. We'll continue to do the things that John and I did in practice. It will be a little different, but basically still the same."

During Adams' 10-year stint, there were nine winning seasons and his dual-meet record at KP was 149-77.

Poirier, who'll be starting his 10th year as a special education teacher on KP's faculty this fall, has high praise for Adams and thoroughly enjoyed his nine years as his aide.

"John had so much knowledge and I tried to absorb as much as I could," Poirier emphasized. "He paid strict attention to detail and

taught me what coaching is all about. As time went on, he gave me more and more responsibilities that allowed me to learn and grow from my mistakes. He was a fantastic mentor."

Poirier has set three goals for his rookie year that he believes are realistic.

"I want the team to perform at the highest level during the regular season and that means winning an in-season tournament," he noted. "Another goal is to qualify at least half of our team for the state tourney, which is a minimum of seven. And, my last objective is to get as much post-season hardware (trophies) as possible. These goals are hard but they can be achieved."

Poirier is acutely aware that wrestlers must be disciplined because of the nature of their sport.



Mike Poirier's transition to head coach of the KP wrestling team should be smooth after nine years as an assistant.

mentally tough and being comfortable with discomfort," he said. "Our competitors must be strong, quick and athletic, be technically sound, students of the sport and able to trust the process by learning from the daily grind."

Poirier's philosophy of competing will focus on three areas. "I want to produce the best performing team I can, recruit kids who respect the sport and are good ambassadors for KP's program, and make sure all our competitors are enjoying their athletic journey," he said.

Valuable life lessons that Poirier hopes his wrestlers learn by competing are: "to develop a strong work ethic, overcome adversity, be resilient, and learn to be leaders and good teammates."

A native of North Providence, R.I., Poirier graduated from North Attleboro High in 2006 where he wrestled for four years. He was a captain and a Hockomock all-star as a senior and the 2005-06 team finished as a sectional champion. He enrolled at Bridgewater State University and received his degree in history in 2011.

For the next five years, Poirier, who has a master's degree in special education from Endicott College, worked as a substitute teacher in Plainville and North Attleboro before he was hired at KP in 2014. Before coaching at KP, he assisted his brother (Brett) who was coaching at the Kryptonite Wrestling Club in Plainville.

Poirier, who is KP's public address announcer for football games, has three more months before his team suits up for practice in late November. His advice to his wrestlers is "to stay active."

He's advising personal workouts, strength and conditioning drills and "if a boy plays a fall sport, that's a plus."

Mike Poirier has a good grip on what's needed to maintain KP's success on the mat. He's the right coach at the right time to direct the Warriors' wrestling program.

His style and approach will focus on keeping discipline high. "I'll stress the need to maintain discipline and I'll also emphasize that technique and skill development are the keys to excel and to get to the next level."

KP lost 11 seniors to graduation but Poirier doesn't have any thoughts about rebuilding because about 20 boys are returning with different degrees of experience.

"I'm in a good spot," he said. "We lost some talented kids but we have a strong senior group and our juniors and sophomores have the ability to fill gaps, thanks to the hard work of Bob Cloutier at the youth level. The KP Youth Wrestling program helps us to bring in quality athletes year after year. Our returnees have high wrestling IQs, they're athletic, well-skilled and technically sound."

Poirier's favorite moment during his time as Adams' assistant came in 2017 when Brad Oliveiro won a state title competing in the 215-pound class. "He was the first KP wrestler to win a state title during my years as an assistant," Poirier recalled. "I spent a lot of time with Brad in practice. We knew he could do well in the post-season but he surprised everyone."

The attributes Poirier admires in his wrestlers are all about being competitive and disciplined. "I want our kids to have the drive to win and that translates to being

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Sports

KP Boys Soccer Team Aiming to Achieve 3 Goals

BY KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The goals for the 2024 boys soccer team at King Philip Regional are clearly defined.

Coach Mike O'Neill, who's guided the Warriors to three tourney berths in five years, is optimistic his squad "will work hard to build a strong team dynamic, qualify for the state tourney, and contend for the Kelly-Rex Division title in the Hockomock League."

The 54-year-old O'Neill is confident his objectives will be achieved because KP has a plethora of strengths, even though 11 players from last year's 10-6-5 team have graduated.

"Our technique and skill level are solid and our soccer IQ is high," said O'Neill. "We've got a hard-working group that's competitive, passes and possesses the ball effectively and is creative. Our athleticism is good and we've got experience (11 returnees) and depth."

The Warriors' senior captains — defensive midfielder Sayan Panda and center back P.J. Sullivan — embody many of the strengths on O'Neill's list.

"Sayan is a terrific competitor who understands the game," O'Neill noted. "An excellent leader, he's a high-character player who's outstanding in transition. Although P.J. is recovering from shoulder surgery, we're hopeful he'll return in time for post-season play. He's a highly capable defender and a ferocious tackler who's very intense. An excellent leader, he's liked because of his supportive nature."

Junior Marco Amorim plays on the forward line and can compete as a wing or striker. "Marco is a very smart attacking player who's quick, clever and dribbles well. He got quality minutes last year as a sophomore and we're hoping he has a breakout year."

Three senior forwards — Braden Lynn, Colin Nolan and Joseph Craff — will be prime contributors because of the attributes they possess. Lynn can

also play as a midfielder and Nolan and Craff are strikers.

"Braden displays excellent close control, is a creative passer and has a high soccer IQ," O'Neill said. "He's also a great decision-maker. Colin and Joseph have similar styles. They're excellent athletes, have great speed and are instinctive. Both are strong attackers who have a physical presence."

Seniors Aidan Alvezi and Chimezie James headline a corps of quality midfielders.

"Aidan is one of the best midfielders in the Hockomock League," O'Neill emphasized. "He wins the transition battle, is exceptional with his decision-making and has great technical ability. He's the total package. Chimezie is a terrific competitor who has a great attack mindset and is an incisive passer."

A trio of juniors — George Blakesley, Ryan Love and Mender DiMartino — can compete as midfielders or defenders. "They're a very important group," O'Neill said. "They played significant minutes as sophomores last year and have excellent playoff experience. They're very athletic and they're polished technical players. We've got high hopes for them."

At Local Town Pages deadline, O'Neill was still assessing a strong sophomore group and goaltending candidates. "A few sophomores could emerge and earn playing time," he noted. "We also have decisions to make with our goalies. The competition is on-going."

O'Neil will count on two capable assistant coaches — varsity aide Peter Amorim and junior-varsity coach Julie Strong. "They're not only excellent assistants, but they also have good knowledge of the game and both know how to build strong relationships."

A native of Long Island, O'Neill relies on a coaching philosophy that focuses on making sure his players reach their potential and enjoy their athletic journey. "And, if they're competitive, then winning will be the by-product," he empha-



KP's boys soccer coach, Mike O'Neill, likes his team's experience and depth.

sized. "There are also life lessons that can be learned in athletics and it's always a plus when our players learn how to overcome adversity, learn to be resilient, and develop character to pursue challenging goals. Other top-notch lessons are how to become strong leaders and how to acquire mental toughness."

KP's calling card this season will feature an up-tempo style. "We call it 'possession with purpose,'" O'Neil said. "It's all about controlling the ball with an intent to move it effectively."

This year's team goals and objectives have been clearly spelled out. They're all about maintaining a dynamic work ethic, building team chemistry, qualifying for the state tourney, and contending for the Kelly-Rex Division title.

When the division crown is up for debate, O'Neill has some definite thoughts.

"Franklin is the defending Kelly-Rex champ and is a traditionally strong team," he noted. "Milford will be improved and Attleboro will be very competitive."

KP no doubt will be in the mix — not only for the division title, but also to qualify for the state tourney for the fourth time in the last six years.

The journey begins on Sept. 5 when the Warriors host Mansfield.



The Warriors' captains are, from left, defensive midfielder Sayan Panda and center back P.J. Sullivan.



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Sports

2024 Division 1 U9 Hockomock Champs

The U9 Norfolk D1 team took down Easton to win the 2024 Hockomock Championship 31-6.

After an extra innings game against Mansfield in round 1 of the playoffs, these boys went on to score a combined 58 runs in the Semi's and Finals with wins over Bridgewater and Easton. Their final record this summer was 15-4.



Pictured in front, Finn Hanson. Kneeling, from left: Logan McGann, Peter Iacono, Tyler McKeever, and Weston Stark. Standing: Cameron Connelly, Thomas Fuller, Brooks Lonergan, Andon Close, and Connor Hebert. Back row: Coaches Zack McKeever, Andy Fuller, and Matt Hebert.

Art Classes Help Seniors Tap into their Creative Side

By GRACE ALLEN

A diverse collection of artwork by Norfolk's Senior Center artists were on display last month at the public library. The senior art exhibition kicked off with an opening celebration and reception on August 1, showcasing the skill that flourishes within the community.

On display were watercolors, drawings, photography, diamond art, acrylic painting, and knitting.

This was the first time the senior center has held an art exhibit. The event was proposed by Sharon Carloni, who has been teaching drawing and watercolor at the senior center for

years. "You're going to find your own voice and see where it leads you."

Along with drawing and watercolor, Carloni has started instructing her students in sumi-e, which is Japanese brush painting in black ink. The sumi-e technique is helpful to students learning watercolor, which also focuses on brush stroke.

Carloni believes art is an expressive act and a way to communicate to the world. Art is deeply personal and a way to think critically, too. Exhibiting one's work for public appraisal is also a way to express who you are as a person, and to feel seen and heard, she says.



Sharon Carloni teaches the popular art classes at the Senior Center.

In addition to teaching adults, Carloni has taught art for students in elementary through high school, and also teaches a class at the Franklin Public Library. This fall she will be teaching a scripture-based art class at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Norfolk.



Busy art class at the Senior Center. Photos contributed by Debbie Sand.

In 2007, Carloni was honored as the Elementary Art Teacher of the Year in Massachusetts.

She says the Senior Center's first art exhibition was a success because it brought the community together while shining a light on the town's talented seniors. Art, after all, has no age limits.

"I would love to do this every year," Carloni said. "The artists see their work on the wall and think, 'Look at what I did. I learned a lot.' And they see what someone else did and maybe

they want to try that technique too. It's all a learning experience, and that's a good thing, because you're never too old to learn and grow."

For more information about the Norfolk Senior Center and its art classes, visit the Council on Aging page on the town's website: <https://norfolk.ma.us>.

Follow Sharon Carloni on Facebook (Sharon Carloni art) to see her own artwork, as well as the artwork of her students.



The Norfolk Public Library was the site of an opening day reception to celebrate the Senior Center's first art exhibit.



Visitors attend the new art exhibit at the library.

a year now.

The popular classes are fun to teach, she said.

"It makes me happy to share what I love," said the long-time art teacher and Norfolk resident.

The classes include some very talented students, as well as some who just enjoy a creative outlet. Carloni says her goal is to teach techniques but then lets the students take it from there.

"You don't have to copy me or anyone else," she tells her stu-

"Art is language," said Carloni. "You're saying something every time you paint a picture. You are expressing yourself, putting yourself out there, and that builds confidence, too."

She also thinks art can be healing. As a former art therapist, she says the "zen" of painting is real and can make participants feel better.

"It's therapeutic and expressive as you tell a story about yourself, and the world around you."

On July 12, Norfolk Troop 80 donated \$500 to the campership program at Stony Brook. The campership program provides the opportunity for underprivileged children to attend the Audubon camps at Stony Brook. Troop 80 raises money from the annual Christmas Tree pick-up, which they use to fund camping trips, etc., but they also donate excess funds to local charities. Norfolk Troop 80 Boy Scouts chose the campership program because the Audubon camps espouse important Scouting values of respecting and caring for the environment.



From left, James Courtney, Asst. Scout Master; Colin Courtney; Marla Cohen, Stony Brook Camp Director; Tyler Walker, Senior Patrol Leader; Michael Davis, Asst. Patrol Leader; Jake Diamond, Asst. Patrol Leader; and Rob Mosley, Scoutmaster. Contributed photo.

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The Common Application Activities Section

Navigating the Common Application is generally very straightforward, although students often encounter challenges when completing the activities section.

Each section of the Common Application (CA) represents a distinct chapter in the student's story, emphasizing their values and strengths. While the CA essay reveals the student's character, and the courses & grades section showcases the student's course rigor and GPA, the activity section illustrates how the student has chosen to spend their time both in and out of school. It offers an opportunity to showcase more than just a student's GPA and test scores - it is a chance for the student to demonstrate their passions, interests, and contributions to their community.

An extracurricular activity for the CA is any activity that a student engages in outside their academic coursework. These activities are particularly impactful when the activity aligns with the student's interests and goals. Traditional examples include athletics, clubs, volunteer work, religious involvement, and jobs. However, family responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings or working a part-time job to specifically help pay for fam-



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

ily expenses are important duties and should also be included. Activities don't need to be limited to school related ones; but some nontraditional activities can be tricky to define in terms of what qualifies as an acceptable activity. These examples should help:

- Student #1 loves to bake and bakes cakes for her family on holidays. While baking itself is not considered a CA activity, her additional efforts- such as making flyers and distributing them at her grandfather's senior living home and now making theme cakes for her grandfather's friends monthly is considered a CA activity.

- Student #2 enjoys regular exercise. While exercising alone is not a CA activity, he takes it a step further. He sets up a challenge with a group of friends, and they work out together daily, tracking their progress, and as a final challenge they compete in a 1/2 marathon - which is a CA activity.

Additional tips:

1. You are allowed 10 activities in the CA activities section. Although It is perfectly fine if the student does not have 10 activities - every student is unique, and their experiences vary.

There is no magic number of activities - what matters most is reflecting on what holds significance to the student. The student should consider the impact they have made on their family, community, or club.

2. What if you have too many activities? (1) Reflect: remember each part of the CA contributes to the student's unique story. They need to take time to reflect on what is the most important and choose activities that paint the truest picture of who they are; (2) Consolidate: If there are a cluster of similar activities, such as various volunteer jobs or theatre-related activities, combine them into a single entry; (3) Use the additional information section in the writing tab to highlight a particular significant activity - provide context and explain its impact, and (4) some colleges allow applicants to upload a resume in the CA. This is an excellent way to showcase all the activities.

3. Is there limited space in the CA activity section? There are only 150 characters (not words) for the activity description so make every word count. Use action words, be specific, emphasize leadership skills, list items versus using full sentences, quantify involvement with numbers, and use the present tense for current activities.

And as always - family is a great resource to brainstorm ideas. Moms/dads/guardians never forget all the wonderful things that their children have accomplished!

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. CLOSED Sunday**

Yankee Quilters Welcomes Members New and Old to Fall Events

Yankee Quilters, a local guild of dedicated quilters, will begin its program year on Tuesday, September 10 at 7 p.m. at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in the Horace Mann Plaza in Franklin. Quilters from new to experienced are welcome to join throughout the year.

Yankee's Comfort Quilts team of dedicated members work together to create beautiful quilts for Dana Farber cancer patients, homeless/displaced children, and for international aid groups through the "Wrap the World in Quilts" organization. Yankee members also contribute quilt blocks for Quilts of Valor for veterans. Each of these charity projects is a great opportunity for learning and practicing quilt skills with

friendly volunteers using fabric provided by the guild. Comfort Quilts meets Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in Franklin.

Newcomers are encouraged to come and help get beautiful quilts into the hands of people who truly appreciate the gift. The nurses at Dana Farber Milford recently sent a thank you note to the Yankee volunteers with confirmation that the quilts bring much joy. One nurse wrote, "Our patients treasure them and feel the love. You all are making a difference."

In addition to monthly meetings on the second Tuesday, the group offers speaker programs, member "show and tell" demonstrations and opportunities to sew together throughout the

year, including a four-day sewing vacation in the spring. Updates are posted on the group's Facebook page.

In October, Yankee will collect used clothing, soft goods such as sheets and blankets, and books to raise funds for guild activities. Members use mostly donated materials to make these quilts; however, funds are needed for batting which adds warmth and texture to the quilt. This fundraiser also helps pay for lectures to improve members' skills. The collection day will be Saturday, October 5 from 9 a.m. to noon at Prime Storage, Route 126, in Bellingham. Details are available by emailing Yankeequilters11@gmail.com for drop-off or pick-up.

The regular Guild meeting

on Tuesday, October 8 will include a potluck supper, and a presentation on quilts that Yankee volunteers have donated for children. The first meeting for newcomers is free; annual dues for new members are \$40; returning members \$30.

This year's Fall Staycation will be held Friday, October 18 to Sunday October 20 at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 600 Central Street, Holliston. Three different craft techniques will be offered, include a Scrappy Log Cabin pattern, Barn Quilt Painting on wood, and Glass Etching. Prices, food and signup information are posted on Yankee's page.

In November, a clinic on how to fix problem quilts will be given. Speakers Lynn Thibault

of Leominster and Nancy Sullivan of Phillipston encourage members to bring quilts that need help, rulers that are difficult to use, and questions about patterns.

For more information about any of these events, please contact YankeeQuilters11@gmail.com.

Yankee Quilters Guild is a 501-c-3 charitable organization based in Franklin with members throughout the region. The Guild meets on the second Tuesday each month at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in Franklin, Horace Mann Plaza, East Central Street, Franklin in space generously donated by the store. Donations to the Guild are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by current law.

September 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 Council on Aging page on the town's website: norfolk.ma.us.

Saturday, September 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Norfolk Community Blood Drive** The American Red Cross will host a blood drive at the Senior Center to help alleviate an ongoing blood shortage. All are welcome to donate. RSVP to 800-RED-CROSS or RedCrossBlood.org.

Tuesday, September 10 at 11 a.m. **Mass Audubon's The Nature of Fall** This program will introduce the seasonal dynamics of Massachusetts in fall, including the plants and animals that experience it. RSVP requested.

Wednesday, September 11 at 1:15 p.m. **Elderly Brothers Concert** Four senior musicians will perform hits from the 50s and 60s. RSVP requested.

Thursday, September 12 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. **Norfolk Flu Clinic** The Metacomet Public Health Alliance is hosting its annual flu clinic at the Norfolk Senior Center for residents 18 years and older. Online registration will be available on the town website at Norfolk.ma.us. Call the Center if you

need help making an appointment.

Thursday, September 12 at 12:30 p.m. **Norfolk Sheriff's Office "Are You Ok Program" Plus Fall Prevention** Deputy Sheriff Cheryl Bambery will discuss the "Are You Ok?" program, a free daily telephone reassurance program. Each morning, enrolled seniors receive a call to check on their well-being. If an individual fails to respond or requires assistance, staff notifies family and if necessary, local police and/or emergency services. Fall prevention tips will also be discussed. RSVP requested.

Thursday, September 19 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Community Shredding Event** Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey is sponsoring a secure document shredding event in the parking lot of the Norfolk Senior Center. All residents are welcome.

Thursday, September 19 at 1 p.m. **Saints and Sinners Spoken Word Concert** Master storyteller Linda Schuyler Ford introduces us to Saints, Sinners, and everyone in between. She uses folktales, fairy tales and personal stories to explore our foibles and celebrate our successes. We are perfectly made and wildly imperfect—and that's okay! RSVP requested.

Tuesday, September 24 at 5:30

p.m. **Rare Books with Ken Gloss of Brattle Book Shop** Ken Gloss, an internationally known rare book specialist and appraiser, will talk about the "improbable finds" of his decades-long career and discuss the value of old and rare books. He'll explain how he appraises books and manuscripts and offer guidelines for building and maintain a significant collection. Following the talk, Ken will give free verbal appraisals of books participants have on hand or will do so at his shop in Boston at a later scheduled date. RSVP requested.

Wednesday, September 25 at 1:30 p.m. **Instacart, Uber & Venmo** KevTech explores using Instacart, Uber, and Venmo apps, used for ordering groceries, getting rides from one place to another, and making transfers from your bank or card to friends and family. Limited to 15 people. iPads are available to borrow from the Center. RSVP required.

Thursday, September 26 from 9:30 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. **Foliage Turkey Train Tour** We'll start with a scenic fall foliage drive to Meredith, NH where we will board the Winnepesaukee "Turkey Train" at the Hobo Railroad. The 2-hour train ride includes a full turkey dinner from Hart's Turkey Farm. Then we head to Moulton

Farm and pick up a treat at the bakery. Cost: \$139. We need 40 people to run the trip. Please reserve your spot ASAP. Payment due by September 5.

Friday, September 27 at 11:30 a.m. **Shine Open Enrollment Presentation** Medicare Open Enrollment is the one time of

year when you can review and change your health and drug Medicare plans, potentially saving money while ensuring appropriate coverage. Sign up for your SHINE appointment early and attend this presentation to learn more. RSVP requested.



Annual Meeting of the Norfolk MA Cable Corporation (NCTV)

Monday, September 9, at 6:30 PM

The Norfolk Grange, 28 Rockwood Road,
Norfolk MA, 02056

Election of directors and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

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Rabbi Rachel Putterman Named as New Spiritual Leader at Temple Etz Chaim

Temple Etz Chaim in Franklin announced the election of Rabbi Rachel Putterman as its new spiritual leader, effective August 1, 2024.

Rabbi Rachel, as she prefers to be called, brings a wealth of experience in Jewish leadership, education, and community building to her new role. She most recently served as the Director of Hillel and Associate Chaplain at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where she oversaw religious, cultural, and educational programming while providing pastoral care to the campus community.

“We are thrilled to welcome Rabbi Putterman to our Temple Etz Chaim family,” said Dr. Michael Rubin, President of Temple Etz Chaim. “Her diverse background in Jewish education, pastoral care, and community engagement aligns perfectly with our congregation’s commitment to spiritual fulfillment, lifelong learning, and Tikkun Olam, or

the repair of the world.”

Rabbi Rachel’s extensive experience includes serving as an adjunct faculty member in Hebrew College’s adult education program and two units of chaplaincy training at Boston area hospitals. She also created an innovative series of tefillin videos - “All Genders Wrap” - which is widely used in Jewish education programs around the country.

“I am honored and overjoyed to step into this role as the next spiritual leader of the Temple Etz Chaim community,” said Rabbi Rachel. “I have been impressed by the warmth, commitment, and thoughtfulness of all of the community members I have met so far. I can’t wait to get to know everyone, and look forward to being present with congregants during times of joys and oys - and everything in between.”

Rabbi Rachel received her rabbinic ordination and master’s degree in Jewish studies from

Hebrew College in 2020. She also holds a J.D. from American University’s Washington College of Law and brings a unique perspective from her previous career as an attorney advocating for veterans and domestic violence survivors. She takes over for longtime Rabbi Tom Alpert, who retired from the pulpit in June 2024 after more than a decade of service and who remains connected to the community as a rabbi emeritus.

Temple Etz Chaim, founded in 1990, is a Reform Jewish congregation serving Franklin and surrounding communities. The Temple is committed to providing a welcoming space for spiritual fulfillment, Jewish education, and community engagement for members of all ages.

For more information, contact Temple President Michael Rubin: president@temple-etz-chaim.org



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Real Estate Corner

St. John's Pumpkin Patch Set for Sept. 29 - October 31

The 5th annual pumpkin patch and sale will be open to the public from Sunday, Sept. 29 to Thursday, Oct. 31 at St. John's Episcopal Church, 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin.



A huge selection of pumpkins and gourds of all sizes, shapes and colors will fill the front lawn at St. John's Church. Kids will have fun picking out their favorites. It's a good photo opportunity for families and a fun way to start your autumn.

Colorful mum plants will also be available for purchase.

The pumpkin patch will be open Monday through Friday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. On Columbus Day, Monday October 14, the pumpkin patch will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The pumpkins are grown using sustainable agricultural practices that help benefit the environment.

They are grown in a region of New Mexico with 42% unemployment, providing jobs for Navajo people. Your purchase supports the Navajo Nation in New Mexico as well as St. John's Church and its work and service in the community.

For more information, call 508-528-2387. Or send an email to Admin@StJohnsFranklinMA.org.

Follow St John's Episcopal Church on Facebook, and visit the church's website at

www.stjohnsfranklinma.org.

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Norfolk COA Hosts Register of Deeds

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell appeared as a guest speaker for the Norfolk Council on Aging as part of his ongoing efforts to bring the Registry of Deeds directly to the residents of Norfolk County.

Register O'Donnell gave an overview of the Registry of Deeds, which is the principal office for real property records in Norfolk County, cataloging and housing more than 13.1 million land documents dating back to 1793.

"I welcome any time I can get out into the community and have the opportunity to speak with people about some issues that homeowners might face," he said. "I was impressed by the audience engagement and truly glad to see that so many individuals attended the seminar hosted by the Norfolk Council on Aging."

Register O'Donnell also reminded attendees about the importance of filing a mortgage discharge after their mortgage has been paid off. A discharge is a document (typically one or two pages) issued by the lender, usually with a title such as "Discharge of Mortgage" or "Satisfaction of Mortgage." When a

mortgage has been paid off, a mortgage discharge document needs to be recorded with the Registry of Deeds to clear a homeowner's property title relative to that loan.

He explained, "In some cases discharges are filed directly by banks or settlement closing attorneys with the Registry as part of a property sale or as a result of a refinancing transaction. In other instances, the mortgage discharge is sent to the property owner, who then becomes responsible for making sure the document is recorded. Whether or not a discharge is recorded by the lending institution or the individual property owner, it is important that the property owner makes sure all necessary documents have been recorded at the Registry of Deeds."

Register O'Donnell also described an ongoing deed scam being perpetrated against all citizens of Norfolk County, young and old. Norfolk County residents continue to receive direct-mail solicitations offering them a certified copy of their property deed for exorbitant fees. The average price for a mailed homeowner's certified deed by the Registry, usually two pages, is \$3.



From left, Norfolk Council on Aging Director Karen Edwards, Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell, and Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Sand during a speaking event at the Norfolk Council on Aging, as part of the Register's ongoing efforts to bring the Registry of Deeds directly to the residents of Norfolk County.

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"Consumers may interpret these notices as a bill since they are affixed with a due date. These companies are making outrageous profits. If a consumer knew that the Registry of Deeds would provide them a certified copy of a property deed for a charge of only \$1 per page plus an additional \$1 for postage, they would never agree to pay these companies such

an outrageous fee for service," stated O'Donnell.

Register O'Donnell discussed the advantages of the Massachusetts Homestead Act. The Homestead Act is an important consumer protection tool for homeowners, as it provides limited protection against the forced sale of an individual's primary residence to satisfy unsecured debt up to \$500,000.

"Homeowners can have peace of mind knowing that with a Declaration of Homestead recorded at the Registry of Deeds, their primary residence cannot be forcibly sold to satisfy most debts. This is especially important when you consider that for most of us, a home is our most valuable asset," said O'Donnell.

Real Estate Corner

Norfolk County's Top Real Estate Sales in 2nd Quarter of 2024

During the second quarter of 2024, ten properties in Norfolk County, a mix of commercial and residential, sold for more than \$16,000,000, with an average price of \$31,044,300. Sales occurred from April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024.

The ten properties were:

10. 34-50 Central Street, Wellesley, a collection of three boutique mixed-use retail units with a total area of 40,860 square feet, was sold in May for \$16,000,000
9. Braintree Manor, a 177-bed senior living facility located at 1102 & 1106 Washington Street, sold for \$22,000,000 in April
8. 715-795 Bridge Street, Weymouth, known as Riverway Plaza, a 250,000-square-foot retail center, sold in June for \$23,000,000
7. 65 Walnut Street, Wellesley, a five-floor, 67,500-square-foot, multi-clinic medical outpatient building sold in June for \$24,300,000
6. 1400 Providence Highway, Norwood, the three-building, 155,912-square-foot mixed-use office space, and research and development facility known as the Norwood Business Center, sold in June for \$24,500,000
5. The Southfield Redevelopment Authority purchased property on Memorial Grove Avenue, Weymouth, 368,270 square feet of land on the site of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station in June for \$25,000,000
4. 1 Richard A Stratton Way, Quincy, the five-floor, 89,507-square-foot Holiday Inn hotel, sold in May for \$30,498,000
3. 1280-1300 & 1330 Boylston Street, Brookline, a 5.34-acre office park comprised of four commercial buildings totaling nearly 120,000 square feet, sold in May for \$41,000,000
2. 122 & 130-132 Granite Street, Quincy, the 100,000-square-foot retail shopping plaza known as Granite Place, sold in May for \$41,500,000
1. 655 Washington Street, Weymouth, the 4-story, 160-unit luxury apartment complex known as Helix Apartments, sold in May for \$62,645,000

The top sales appear to have been a combination of apartment complexes, retail, and office space. Excise taxes from these 10 sales totaled more than \$1,415,620 for the state and county.

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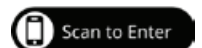
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2. What would you like to see more of in your local newspaper? _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____



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