

Ceremony Held at Norfolk Park for Historical Commission Member

BY GRACE ALLEN

On August 17, Norfolk historian Barbara Bartholomew was honored at a dedication ceremony at Fales Memorial Park Preserve. The late Bartholomew was instrumental in the creation of the park, which is located at 24 Campbell St. in Norfolk.

Bartholomew, a lifelong resident who passed away on February 12, 2023 at the age of 90, was a member of the town's historical commission and contributed significantly to maintaining Norfolk's rich history throughout the years.

The ceremony was attended by town officials, historical commission members, and friends.

According to Geri Tasker, chairperson of the Norfolk Historical Commission, Bartholomew was known as a tenacious researcher who dedicated herself to "unwinding and correcting the many local legends of Norfolk history and filling in the missing pieces."

It was Bartholomew's research that helped spur the creation of Fales Memorial Park.



A bench overlooking Highland Lake was dedicated to Barbara Bartholomew, in recognition of her efforts to establish Fales Memorial Park Preserve.

She discovered that in 1943, Bertha Fales, the author of the first history of Norfolk and the daughter of Silas E. Fales, Norfolk's first Town Clerk, bequeathed 13.5 acres of her family's land to the town of Norfolk with the goal of establishing a park and bird sanctuary. The gift somehow got overlooked in town files, and in 1980 the land was taken by eminent domain for the Charles River Watershed.

That did not deter Bartholomew, who was determined to find open space nearby to establish the park Bertha Fales had intended for the town. In 2009, voters at Town Meeting approved a warrant article creating the park from land purchased by the Conservation Commission at Highland Lake. It took 66 years for the park to

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Fundraiser Launched for Diabetes Alert Dog

BY GRACE ALLEN

Savannah Langford is an 8-year-old child living with Type 1 diabetes. The Wrentham girl faces daily challenges while managing her condition and trying to have a normal childhood.

To enhance her safety and quality of life, a GoFundMe campaign has been set up to raise funds for a diabetes alert dog—a specially trained canine that can detect changes in blood sugar levels and alert Savannah before a crisis occurs. These remarkable dogs offer a unique blend of critical health monitoring and companionship, making them a welcome and invaluable addition to families struggling with the illness.

The certified service dog will come from Diabetic Alert Dogs of America, an organization vetted through the office of State Rep. Marcus Vaughn, says Jamie Domenica, Savannah's mother. The dogs are trained to alert their owners of low (hypoglycemia) or high (hyperglycemia) blood sugar levels before they become dangerous.



Domenica, a single mom who has had to balance a job and household responsibilities while caring for her daughter, says the decision to start a fundraiser did not come easy, but the cost of \$25,000 for the dog plus worries about Savannah's medical and emotional needs were the impetus to turn to crowdfunding.

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become a reality, thanks in no small part to Bartholomew.

At the ceremony in August, the Historical Commission dedicated a bench to Bartholomew in recognition of her accomplishments, not just in creating the park but also in her dedication to preserving Norfolk's history.

"She's been called Norfolk's walking history book, and I agree," said Tasker. "She was just amazing."

The park is set in a grove of trees overlooking picturesque Highland Lake. There are benches and picnic tables, and trails named for the Fales family branching off. Rizzo Santo, a Boy Scout in Troop 80, undertook cleanup of the park for his Eagle Scout project, removing fallen trees and clearing pathways. Rizzo also built and installed bird houses, unaware at the time that a bird sanctuary was one of Bertha Fales', and then Bartholomew's, intended uses for the park.

"It came full circle, and that was very cool," said Tasker.



Barbara Bartholomew

Bartholomew was a history teacher in Ashland and was active in both the Walpole and Norfolk historical commissions. She authored two books, "Life and Times of Bertha Fales" and "History on the Hill Collection." She also collaborated on "The Settlement of Stop River Falls."

There are five historical information panels in various areas of Norfolk, and Bartholomew was responsible for four of them. Similar to those used in national and state parks, the panels paint a narrative history of Norfolk's important points of interest.



Bartholomew was instrumental in the water chestnut removal project in Highland Lake, which prevented the lake from turning into a swampy marsh.

She also served as a mentor to various Scouting projects around town, including the cleanup of headstones in the colonial section of the Norfolk Cemetery.

After her death, the Norfolk Historical Commission was notified that Bartholomew bequeathed a portion of her estate to the town with the goal of establishing a scholarship for a college junior majoring in history, and for the establishment of a local history unit in the Norfolk public schools.

"History and research were so important to her, and this gift will ensure that her legacy will continue," said Tasker.

She added, "Barbara loved Norfolk and was dedicated to the town, and the establishment of Fales Memorial Park Preserve epitomizes her dedication to preserving Norfolk's rich history. I think she and Bertha Fales would've been friends."

The Norfolk Historical Commission is always looking for new members. Anyone with an interest in preserving history can contact the group for more information about their meetings and projects. Email them at nhc@norfolk.ma.us.

localtownpages

Published Monthly
Mailed FREE
to the Community of
Norfolk/Wrentham
Circulation: 8,473
households and businesses

Publisher

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Editor

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Send Editorial to:

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Ad Deadline is the
15th of each month.

*LocalTownPages assumes
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Save the Dates: Town Meetings Set for Norfolk and Wrentham

Both Norfolk and Wrentham will hold Special Town Meetings this fall.

Norfolk's is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12 at King Philip Middle School, beginning at 7 p.m.

Wrentham will hold two Town Meetings this fall to comply with the state's MBTA Communities act. The first will be held on Monday,

October 21 to address typical town business. The second will be held on Monday, December 9 to address adopting zoning changes in relation to the new law. (Norfolk adopted its zoning changes earlier in the year.) Both Wrentham Town Meetings will take place at King Philip High School, beginning at 7 p.m.

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Norfolk Author's Third Book Debuts Next Month

BY GRACE ALLEN

Amid the uncertainty and solitude of the COVID pandemic, Jeffrey Feingold found himself assessing his life and his legacy. Many older family members were long gone, and the Norfolk resident realized he had nothing but memories of those relatives to leave his children. It would be the start of a writing journey dreamed of long ago but interrupted by life and circumstances.

When the world ground to a halt in 2020, Feingold, like so many others, started reflecting on his place in the world. He had told his children stories about the 1918 pandemic that he had heard from relatives.

"And now it's a century later and we're all living through this again," he said. "I started to think, what if the next pizza box I touch is carrying the virus? What do I have to leave them? If I write down my memories, at least they'll have that."

He enrolled in a remote Grub Street workshop on creative non-fiction writing, and it was the springboard for his first book, "Black Hole Pastrami," a series of short stories built around memories of relatives. Loosely autobiographical, the stories paint a picture of Feingold's Ukrainian Jewish heritage that is both funny and poignant—not unlike most families.

"I wanted to recreate the experiences I had with my relatives to give to my children, like the wonderful aunt who would take sugar packets from the diner because she lived through the Depression. I came to realize that the real loss for my children is that they didn't know these people. That was the real intention of the book."

Feingold says the short story form has always appealed to him, noting that novels tend to have a different feel and structure that he finds difficult to work with.

"You can't sustain the level of energy in a 1,000-page novel that you can in a short story of 5 or 10 or 20 pages," he explained.



Norfolk author Jeffrey Feingold.

"A short story is like opening a window and peering inside a building and there's a character you're seeing at a particular moment in time. It's like a movie in a sense, and I just love that and find it more compelling than a novel which just goes on and on."

All the stories in "Black Hole Pastrami" and in his second book, "There Is No Death in Finding Nemo," were published to critical acclaim in literary journals over the span of a year. It was an astonishing journey for someone who had never published anything before.

"Feingold has a pleasantly unconventional descriptive style...a textured, imaginative debut collection. Inventive and emotionally observant writing" — Kirkus Reviews

"Jeffrey M. Feingold writes with tremendous charm and has a gentle, affectionate attitude towards his characters..." — Indie Reader

Feingold says that while the awards and kudos serve as a nice type of validation, it's the reviews by readers that have touched him the most.

"When you hear that your stories are moving to people, whether to tears or because they are so hilariously funny that they can't put the book down, there's a joy in connecting with someone in that way."

Feingold, 65, grew up wanting to be a writer but pivoted to a business degree at the University of Massachusetts, with minors in English literature and philosophy. He toyed with the idea of a writing career, even during a stint in the Navy, where he entered the journalism program at the Defense Information School, the learning institution for communication across the Department of Defense. He went on to achieve career success in the

business world but says he always felt a pull to the arts, dabbling in music and acting on the side.

In his second book, most of the stories are fictional and have an element of magical realism. The plots are fabricated but some of the characters are based on people he knew.

"You have to write from what you know if it's going to be effective," said Feingold. "We don't grow up in a vacuum. We are molded by our experiences, by the people who raised us, whether we accept it wholly, question it, or outright reject it. I wouldn't be who I am if it weren't for my heritage and lineage."

When inspiration strikes, Feingold will often write the stories in his head before putting them down on paper. He wrote one story in the parking lot of the South Walpole Post Office, using the Notes app on his phone.

"Writing for me is play, and I suspect that's true about creativity for a lot of people," he said. "To make it work really well you have to be in a playful mind set.

That's what I'm waiting for before I write."

Feingold's third book, "A Fine Madness and other Mad Stories," comes out in November. Is it a coda for his writing career? Not likely, because it seems he still has a lot to say. The older one gets, the need to put a life in context seems to become more urgent.

"I think it would have been sad if I ended up on my deathbed, never having written something, but now I don't have to worry about that," he said, laughing. "Maybe I just didn't have enough to write about before now. Maybe I wasn't ready, or I was conveniently forgetting how important it was to me. Or maybe it took this long to get to the point where I could write about some of these memories and people. And I now think, this is what I was meant to do."

For more information about Feingold and his books, visit his website: jeffreymfeingold.com.

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FUNDRAISER*continued from page 1*

“I hate asking for help, but I think this is going to be the best thing for Savannah,” she said. “It’s just me handling this, and I cannot leave her alone nor do I sleep much at night because her diabetes requires 24/7 monitoring.”

Savannah uses a continuous glucose monitor to measure blood sugar levels, but the device has limitations. It does not work in water, which hampers pool and beach time, and is frustrating for Savannah, who loves to swim.

Domenica, who is supposed to be alerted to her daughter’s sugar readings via an app on her phone, says the device has failed on occasion, sending her into a

panic if Savannah is not with her. The mother has also slept through some alerts out of sheer exhaustion.

The insulin pump Savannah wears has failed and fallen off, and the child is currently battling her second staph infection this month from the needle.

Savannah has developed severe anxiety because of the constant worry about blood sugar levels, says her mother.

“She hates diabetes,” says Domenica, a life-long Wrentham resident. “She hates having to wear devices on her body, she cries every time she has to go to the doctor. She asks, ‘why does this have to be me?’”

Savannah is in second grade at Wrentham’s Delaney School. The latest school shooting prompted her mother to ask the school about the procedure

during a lockdown, a scenario she was alerted to in Facebook groups for parents of diabetic children.

“People were asking, ‘what is your plan if there’s an active shooter in the building,’ because the devices these kids wear beep,” said Domenica. “I’m like, WHAT? In addition to worrying about her glucose levels during a lockdown, I have this worry now too.”

The school, added Domenica, is now working with the police department to come up with a plan for children with diabetes during a lockdown.

Domenica, 39, says if she can raise enough funds, Savannah would receive a diabetic alert dog in 8 to 10 months. The dog will be matched with the family’s needs and lifestyle and will come with a lifetime training

guarantee. Domenica will be responsible for the dog’s food and veterinary bills.

Savannah was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes five years ago on November 14, National Diabetes Day. On the same day, Domenica was diagnosed with lupus.

“It’s a lot, I’m not going to lie,” said Domenica. “I’m under so much stress. Savannah has never been on a sleepover at a friend’s house, and hardly goes on playdates because I have to be there. Summers are tricky, I can’t send her to just any camp because they don’t all have a nurse. I just want her to be a normal kid. She doesn’t want to be different.”

Domenica hopes a dog will provide a measure of assurance that Savannah’s condition will be monitored, especially at

night, and while she grows. Puberty can bring on hormonal changes that can impact metabolic control in diabetes.

“I need to know that when she’s older or on her own, that she’s got this. I won’t be able to do it all forever, and right now there’s just so much to worry about. I think this will be the best thing for Savannah.”

To help Savannah acquire a dog, visit www.gofundme.com and search for “Support Savannah’s Journey with a Diabetic Alert Dog.” Or mail a check to Diabetic Alert Dogs of America, 6037 S. Fort Apache Rd., Suite 120, Las Vegas, NV 89148. Write “Savannah Langford” in the memo line.

Donations can also be made directly on the organization’s website:

www.diabeticalertdogsofamerica.com.

Apply for a Wrentham Cultural Council Grant

Wrentham’s Cultural Council announces the opening of its community grant application window.

Online applications will be accepted through October 16, 2024, until 11:59 p.m. Applicants are encouraged to team

up with a local organization to jointly present a cultural project which has a specified program/event date, a marketing plan for

attracting the target audience to the program, and a contingency plan for partial grant funding.

Apply at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/wrentham/>.

Applications are considered with the following priorities in mind:

- Performance Arts suitable for outdoor Arts Festival (Arts on the Common – 5/31/25)
- Projects that are innovative, creative, collaborative, and community-based
- Projects that support established community cultural programs

- Projects that show strong planning and evidence of ability to follow through
- Programs and events that bring diverse voices into the community

- An applicant may not submit more than two project applications per grant cycle and each applicant is limited to (two) consecutive years that a project can be re-submitted for funding

Please keep in mind that average grants are modest (\$300-\$500).

Questions? Send an email to ContactWCC@wrentham.gov.

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'Chemo Care Package Project' Sets Ambitious Goal

BY GRACE ALLEN

For the past 8 years, a Norfolk woman has been collecting donations and assembling gift bags for women undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Rachael Cochran estimates she has given away over 1,000 bags in total, in a quest to make women feel cared for during a difficult time.

This year, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, she has set her goal at 500 bags. Last year, she donated 350 bags.

"We are seeing so many sad, terrible things in our world right now, and this is one way I can make a difference," said Cochran. "It's a nice way to give back and it's something I'm really proud of."

Cochran is a Senior Division Leader for Park Lane Jewelry, a direct sales jewelry company. For her fundraiser, she suggests a donation of \$40 which she uses to purchase a piece of jewelry through Park Lane. She then uses her commissions to purchase self-care items like socks, lip balm, tea, and hand cream, for example. These items, along with the jewelry, are placed into pink bags which are then delivered to UMass Breast Center Health, formerly the Breast Center at Milford Regional Medical Center.

"Some people give \$5, some give \$200," explained Cochran. "Everybody gives what they want to give, and I don't make any money personally from this. I just enjoy giving back through my business."

Park Lane is not affiliated with the project, although some of Cochran's team members have contributed and even started their own projects. Cochran says she got the idea from a previous company after watching a friend battle breast cancer.

Recipients of the gift bags are very appreciative, Cochran has learned. She has received notes from patients, including one that said, "I was just at Milford Hospital Breast Center and received the kindest gift during my visit. You are doing an amazing thing. Visits bring all levels of anxiety. Leaving with this amazing gesture put a smile on my face, and I love the bracelet."

Two years ago, Cochran was delivering the bags to the hospi-



Rachael Cochran, right, delivering the bags to oncology nurses at the Milford hospital in 2023.



tal and a man stopped her and asked for one for his wife, who was sitting nearby in the lobby. Cochran gave a bag to her—the first time she had handed a bag over herself.

"Watching her open the bag and seeing how much excitement and joy it brought her in a time when she was going through so much, it really moved me to keep doing this," said Cochran.

A team of volunteers--friends and family--help Cochran assemble the bags in early November. Around Thanksgiving, the bags are delivered to the Milford hospital, which was one of the few area facilities that would take the bags during the height of the COVID pandemic.

Cochran and her husband Paul have lived in Norfolk since 2001. They have three children, a daughter in college and twin boys in high school. She is a

long-time volunteer in town and served for many years on the Norfolk Community League board. During COVID, she ran a similar project—Project Sparkle—for nurses in local hospitals, as a way to acknowledge and thank them for their commitment during a difficult time.

Amanda Sweeney, the surgical oncology supervisor at UMass Breast Health, said in an email that the new hospital system is eager to work with Cochran.

"We have been giving these little packages to our newly diagnosed breast cancer patients and they have been so well received," she said. "While this was something the previous breast center did, it was important to UMass Breast Health Center to continue this. The patients see this kind gesture and it allows them to make a deeper connection to the care



Cochran, left with Park Lane teammate Cori Liptak, a breast cancer survivor who also donated to the project.

team that will be overseeing this new journey in their life. While the diagnosis is always hard, seeing the smiles on women's faces when receiving these bags has been a reward to us here in this space. Our patients are always so grateful, and I couldn't see

moving forward without these!"

Want to help? Send an email to Cochran at rachaelc13@yahoo.com to make a donation to the Chemo Care Package Project during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

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October News and Program Highlights at the Fiske Public Library

For a full list of programs at the Fiske, visit <https://fiskelib.org/>.

The Fiske Public Library will be closed Monday, October 14 for Columbus Day and Indigenous People's Day. The library's regular hours are Mondays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

New Hours Starting this Fall

This fall, the Fiske Library's hours will be expanding! The library will be open Mondays until 5 p.m. and Wednesdays until 8 p.m. The start date for the new hours is still to be determined. Announcements will be made once the date is confirmed. Stay tuned!

Reading Challenge 2024

Fiske Library is partnering in the Massachusetts Center for the Book 2024 Reading Challenge for kids, teens and adults! Visit <https://www.massbook.org/>

org/readingchallenge to see how to participate. The challenge for October is a book about a time in history you'd like to know more about.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Halloween Costume Swap

Bring your gently used kids' Halloween costumes to the library between September 23 and October 1. Beginning October 5, come by the library to find a "new-to-you" costume! All are welcome to shop whether you donated a costume or not. Donating does not guarantee you will find a new costume.

Mother Goose on the Loose

Tuesdays, 10 to 10:30 a.m.
Children from birth-age 3 with a caregiver are welcome to join in on this fun story time for our littlest patrons! Mother Goose on the Loose is a thirty-minute early literacy program that uses rhymes, stories, music, and movement to support your child's development. No registration required.

Preschool Storytime

Thursdays, 10 a.m.
Kids aged 3-5 are invited to join Ms. Sara for weekly themed stories, songs, and crafts.

Special Halloween Preschool Storytime

Thursday, October 31, 10 a.m.
Wear your costume for a spooky-silly Halloween story time! No registration required.

Baby/Toddler Playgroup

Fridays, October 11 & 18, 10 to 11 a.m.
Babies and toddlers under 2 with a caregiver are welcome to come and meet new friends and play with the toys and gym equipment purchased with funds from the Friends of Fiske.

Choose Your Own Adventure Book Club

Wednesday, October 9, 3:30 p.m.
Have you ever wished you could decide the ending of a story? Kids in grades K-3 are invited to join us for an interac-

tive book club. We will read the book aloud and work together to choose a path and decide the fates of the characters! Register at fiskelib.org

ADULT PROGRAMS

Free Drop-in IT Help Office Hours

Tuesdays, 5 to 7:45 p.m.
IT expert Ben Elliot will be available to help with personal technology issues in an informal setting on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pilgrims and Patriots: Discovering Your Massachusetts Ancestors

Tuesday, October 22, 6 to 7:45 p.m.
Genealogy professional Marian Pierre-Louis will provide an overview on how to search for ancestors in Massachusetts, which has maintained some of the best-kept records for genealogists.

What is Big Foot? with Ronny LeBlanc

Thursday, October 17, 7 to 8 p.m.
Author and Bigfoot investigator Ronny LeBlanc will discuss the mythical creature. LeBlanc is an independent researcher and author of the critically acclaimed and best-selling book "Monsterland: Encounters With UFOs, Bigfoot and Orange Orbs."

Fiske Public Library Book Club

Tuesday, October 29, 7 p.m.
Book club will discuss "The Only One Left" by Riley Sager. For more information, contact Library Director Kim Shipala at kshipala@sailsinc.org or 508-384-5440.

Silk Painting Workshop: Colors & Flowers

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

New Norfolk Fire Station Opens

The new Norfolk Fire Station is now open. The building replaces an outdated and under-sized station that did not meet the community's overall needs. In a released statement, Fire Chief Erron Q. Kinney, the Norfolk Fire Department and the Select Board thanked all community stakeholders who made the new station possible.

"We are excited to announce that the Norfolk Fire Department has fully moved into the new station," Chief Kinney said. "We're grateful to be operating out of this new facility, as the larger space and resources will help our firefighters to keep the community safe. We would also like to thank community members for their support throughout this process."

The new station, located at 117 Main St., opened on Sept. 15. As construction continues on-site, visitors with official business may use the temporary entrance on the right side of the building. Utilize the call box and someone will come and assist you.



The Fire Department asks visitors to utilize the call box pictured, and someone will come and assist you. Photos courtesy Norfolk Fire Department.

The old fire station, which stands next to the new building, started undergoing abatement and demolition in September.

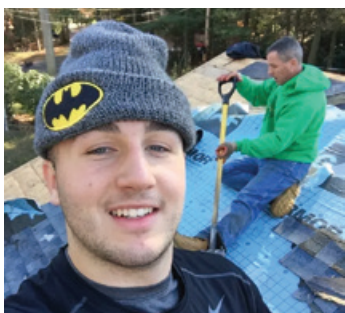
"This project is important for the Norfolk community, and we're grateful to the fire station building committee members for their work throughout this project," said Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis. "They will continue to meet regularly

and be active during this period until the project is completed. It's wonderful to see the Norfolk Fire Department up and running in the new station."

An open house and a ribbon-cutting ceremony are expected to take place at the new fire station in the coming months and will be announced to the public when a date is determined.



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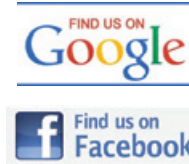
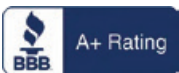
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General Election Set for Nov. 5

By JOE STEWART

This year's general election is on Tuesday, November 5. In addition to voting for electors to name a president and vice president, registered voters will elect a US Senator, US Representative, Governor's Councilor, State Senator, State Representative, Register of Deeds, and Clerk of Courts.

Voters will also decide five ballot questions. According to the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University, these questions can be summarized as:

- 1: Should the state auditor audit the legislature?
- 2: Should the MCAS graduation requirement be eliminated?
- 3: Should there be a union for rideshare drivers?
- 4: Should psychedelic drugs be legalized?
- 5: Should tips count towards the minimum wage?

Both Carol Greene, Norfolk's Town Clerk, and Cindy Thompson, Wrentham's Town Clerk, encouraged voters to read the state's "Red Book" to learn about the ballot questions. The Red

Book provides the precise wording of the questions as well as summarized arguments authored by proponents and opponents.

Citizens may register to vote online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>, via mail, or in person until October 26, the last day to register.

In an effort to increase voter turnout, the Commonwealth sends every registered voter a Vote by Mail application; this year, the applications were mailed about September 21. Voters who request mail-in ballots should receive them in early October. Those ballots may be mailed back, dropped off at the Town Clerk's office or dropped off at the secure drop box at Town Hall. For a vote to count, the ballot must reach the Town Clerk's office or be in the drop box at Town Hall by close of polls on November 5. If mailed and postmarked by November 5, a ballot must reach the Town Clerk by November 8.

In **Norfolk**, in-person early voting is held at the Town Clerk's Office, Norfolk Town Hall, 1 Liberty Lane on the following days and times: Oct. 19 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 20 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 21 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Oct. 22 from 8

a.m. to 6 p.m.; Oct. 23 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Oct. 24 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Oct. 25 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 27 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 28 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Oct. 29 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Oct. 30 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Oct. 31 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

In **Wrentham**, in-person early voting is held in the 2nd floor conference room at Town Hall, 79 South St. on the following days and times: Oct. 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Oct. 21 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Oct. 22 from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 23 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Oct. 24 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 28 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Oct. 29 from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 30 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and Oct. 31 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

In separate interviews discussing elections, Town Clerks Greene and Thompson shared observations about the primary on September 3 and elections in general. Both noted that this year's primary had few contested races which likely contributed to the low turnout. Thompson remarked that this was the first election in recent memory for which there were no write-in votes for either Bill Belichick or Tom Brady.

Details of the primary election in Wrentham, such as results by precinct and party and including the write-ins, are listed in the "09-03-24 State Primary - Minutes" available at <https://www.wrentham.gov/264/Election-Results>. Norfolk's results are summarized at https://norfolk.ma.us/departments/town-clerk/election_resources.php.

In discussing election security, Greene encouraged anyone with concerns to come to the Town Clerk's office and ask. One quick example relates to mail-in ballots. Thompson shared that voters sometimes come to the Town Clerk's Office saying they never requested a ballot; when presented with the application bearing their signature, their concerns are addressed.

Both Greene and Thompson encouraged everyone to vote, noting "your vote counts."

For more information, visit norfolk.ma.us/departments/town-clerk or wrentham.gov/257/Town-Clerk.

Guest Column

Democracy's Achilles' Heel

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

The election is on our doorstep. Many of us have tried to distance ourselves from the bitterness of the campaign, sick of hearing the rant of extremist groups spouting groundless conspiracy theories on social media. Your writer has encountered numerous citizens who voiced the opinion this election does not deserve their vote. Neither of the candidates measure up.

Those who aspire to wipe democratic government from our country rely heavily on this type of thinking. Apathy is their greatest weapon and if we yield to its temptation, the battle will be lost.

Those of us who still believe democracy is the guiding light for effective governance must escape the clutches of apathy's whirlpool and stand up for liberty.

Recently, your writer traveled to Concord, Massachusetts to

experience a celebration of the 200th anniversary of Lafayette's return tour of America. What a festive occasion it was, as the Marquis was carried into Concord center in a glorious horse-drawn carriage where he was greeted by the waiting crowd in front of the historic First Parish Church. The enthusiasm was contagious. Hard won liberty in the spotlight!

Advocates of authoritarianism rely heavily on the passive attitude of those who seek to avoid painful controversy. And painful it has been. But now is the time to summon the courage needed to once and for all demonstrate to the world what America stands for. Make your voice loudly heard!

Vote and vote with pride!

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

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Pumpkins Needed for the Haunted Train Ride

Put your carving skills to work and make a pumpkin for this year's Haunted Train Ride!

Lots of jack o' lanterns are needed to fill the pumpkin patch and create a spooky atmosphere as the train departs. Everyone is welcome to carve a pumpkin and contribute to this event, which raises money for the community.

Pumpkins can be dropped off from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, October 19 at the Holmes Bus Company in Norfolk. Put your name on it so you can easily find it if you want it back.

Please pick up your pumpkin by 11 a.m. on Sunday, October 20. Any pumpkins not picked up by noon will be discarded.

The Norfolk Lions and the Norfolk Community League, organizers of the Haunted Train Ride, thank pumpkin carvers in advance for adding to the spirit of the evening.



Your Money, Your Independence

Open Enrollment: Medical Plans & Health Savings Accounts (HSA)



Glenn Brown, CFP

Open enrollment is a pivotal time to reassess and select the benefits that best suit your needs.

Among the key benefits you'll choose are insurances (i.e. medical, dental/vision, life, AD&D, disability), services (i.e. legal), tax benefit programs (i.e. dependent care, commuter) and retirement plan participation (i.e. 401k).

An area perplexing many is analyzing High Deductible Health Plans (HDHP) and their tax savings counterpart, Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). Understanding these options can help you make informed decisions.

Choosing the right medical plan.

When it comes to selecting a medical plan, a few ground rules take precedence.

First, a medical plan is a personal choice, and you need to be comfortable with the care received "in-network". Second, need to understand of your his-

torical annual medical bills and expect consistency moving forward.

Case for High Deductible Health Plans (HDHPs).

Cost Structure: HDHPs feature lower monthly premiums but higher deductibles. You pay all costs up to the deductible before your plan starts covering expenses.

Financial Management: While HDHPs can have higher out-of-pocket costs, the lower premiums and tax advantages of an HSA can offset these costs.

Health Savings Account (HSA) Eligibility: Selecting a HDHP is required to participate in a HSA.

HDHPs are often beneficial if you are healthy, don't anticipate high medical expenses, and want to take advantage of the HSA's tax benefits.

Health Savings Account (HSA).

Only during Open Enrollment or Life Event can you Opt-In to an HSA with a HDHP and \$ amount to contribute. You can change the \$ amount later, but not the ability to Opt-In.

Key HSA facts:

- In 2025, an individual can contribute \$4,300 and a family up to \$8,550.
- If over 55, contribute an additional \$1,000.
- All contributions are tax-free - federal, state, and FICA (Social Security and Medicare).

- No federal taxes on HSA funds spent on qualified health care expenses.

- Excess HSA funds can be invested for tax-free growth to compound for years.

Thus, unlike any other tax-advantaged savings plan, HSA can offer "triple tax benefits": tax-free contributions, tax-free earnings, and tax-free distributions.

Free money.

Shockingly, over 50% of eligible Americans decline to participate in an HSA. Unbelievable considering most employers put \$500-\$2,000 each year into an HSA. In theory, \$1 per pay period could return \$500-\$2,000 per year from your employer - take it!

Furthermore, "health rewards" programs can earn deposits into HSA by doing preventative care activities. Examples like \$400 deposited when each spouse had an annual physical.

Get the tax savings.

Consider a family in 24% tax bracket averaging \$4,000 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. HSA tax-free contributions would provide them tax savings of \$1,466 (\$960 federal 24% + \$200 state MA 5% + \$306 FICA 7.65%). A family in 32% bracket can max out 2025 contributions and gain tax savings of ~\$3,817.

Leverage tax-free growth for retirement.

Gaining momentum is a financial planning strategy of avoiding withdrawals from HSAs and pay medical expenses from free cash flow. This allows for investment in funds/ETFs to grow tax-free for years before using in retirement for eligible expenses like Medicare premiums, vision, dental, hearing aids, nursing services, long-term care premiums, and medical expenses.

Retire Early crowd please note, while HSAs cannot be used to pay private health insur-

ance premiums, they can pay for health care coverage purchased through an employer-sponsored plan under COBRA, which may be a desired option leaving a company and maintaining 18 months until reaching Medicare eligibility.

Learn more by connecting with your benefits coordinator or 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 Plan-Dynamic, 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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Wrentham Senior Center Art Show

The Wrentham Senior Center will hold an art show at the Norfolk Public Library during the month of October, in the library's Community Room.

An artists' reception will be held on Saturday, October 12

from 1 to 3 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. Cards and artwork will be available for purchase. All are welcome to meet the artists and view their work.

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Local Firefighters Graduate from State Firefighting Academy



Thirty-four firefighters graduated from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program on August 30.

Norfolk firefighters Ian Marland and Samuel Brady were among the graduates.

“Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today’s graduates are needed now more than ever,” said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. “The hundreds of hours of founda-

tional training they’ve received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

The graduating firefighters of Class #323 represent the fire departments of Andover, Attleboro, Belmont, Devens, Dudley, Fitchburg, Maynard, Methuen, Norfolk, North Andover, Northborough, Orleans, Revere, Salem, Shrewsbury, Tewksbury, and Westborough.



Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

Career Recruit Class #323 Graduation • August 30, 2024

Norfolk firefighters Ian Marland, left, and Samuel Brady.

 **CONGRATULATIONS!**

Upcoming Events at Gilly’s House

Gilly’s House in Wrentham, a sober home for young men, plans two events this fall.

Giggles for Gilly’s

The annual comedy show will be held on Saturday, November 2 at the BSV German American Club, 8 County St., Walpole. Doors open at 6 p.m. The event will include a dinner buffet, raffles, an auction, and door prizes.

Tickets are \$50 before October 7 and \$60 after. Only 200 tickets will be sold. The show has sold out each year, according to organizers. Visit www.gillyshouse.com to purchase a ticket.

Comedian Michael Petit is the show’s headliner. Petit, a Gilly’s House supporter, has been sober for 34 years. He has performed comedy shows across the country and on cruise ships.

“I’m an entertainer, and I’ve never felt more purposeful in my career than right now, making people laugh,” he said. “As someone who walks the walk, I know there’s hope for people who struggle with addiction or mental health issues. The ability to make someone laugh, especially someone who might be suffering, is my gift and a way to give back. I am a proud friend of Gilly’s.”

Visit petitproductions.com to learn more about Petit.

Mother’s Luncheon

Women who have lost a child due to any circumstance are invited to a free luncheon on Monday, November 18 at the Chabad Jewish Center, 34 Cedar St., Milford. The event starts at noon. Pat



Michael Petit will headline Giggles for Gilly on Nov. 2.

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Elsberry, author of “Beautifully Broken: Finding Hope During Loss,” will be the guest speaker.

Register at www.gillyshouse.com to save a space for this event. Questions? Email maureen@gillyshouse.com.

October 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.

Thursday, October 3 at 1 p.m. **Horror Films in New England** Film lecturer Frank Mandosa will discuss horror movies set in/filmed in New England. RSVP required.

Saturday, October 5 from 8 to 10 a.m. **Senior Center Open House** Drop by the Senior Center, learn about the programs, and meet the director and Council on Aging board chair. Coffee and donuts will be served.

Tuesday, October 10 at 10 a.m. **Fire Safety Talk** October is Fire Prevention Month! With the cold weather coming, Cap-

tain Findlen of the Norfolk Fire Department will talk about fire safety tips within the home and the importance of checking smoke and CO detectors. RSVP requested.

Friday, October 11 at 2 p.m. **Deb Squared Mocktail Friday** Join Debbie Grover and Debbie Sand in a fall mocktail hour. Learn how to make and try samples of fall flavored nonalcoholic cocktails. Cider donuts and pumpkin muffins will be served. Limited to 15 people. RSVP required.

Tuesday, October 22 at 10 a.m. **Fuel Assistance Q&A** Outreach Coordinator Becky Poynot will discuss income guidelines, the application process, and how the program works. Becky is always available to answer questions. RSVP requested.

Tuesday, October 22 at 1 p.m. **Music with Tom Cleverdon** Norfolk resident Tom Cleverdon has played guitar and sung for more than 40 years at church, benefits, weddings, and family gatherings. His music focuses on folk, country, pop and classics by various artists from the Kingston Trio and Glen Campbell to Simon & Garfunkel, Jimmy Buffett, Willie Nelson, Neil Diamond, and Lee Greenwood. Enjoy some great music and sing along if you wish! RSVP requested.

Wednesday, October 23 at 1 p.m. **Vampires, Madmen & Monsters with Paolo Di Gregorio** Celebrate Halloween with this colorful exploration of the historical inspirations behind some of the most popular horror stories of all time. From Transylvanian tyrants and Egyptian

incantations to Victorian era scientists and Romantic period writers, this talk will shed light on the dark origins of some spooky stories. RSVP requested.

Friday, October 25 at 11 a.m. **Health Plan Options by BCBS of MA** Are you Ready for Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment October 15-December 7? Have questions about your health plan or available plan types? Learn the differences between Medigap and Medicare Advantage plans and when you can switch plans. All are invited to attend regardless of insurance coverage. (No product information is presented). RSVP requested.

Tuesday, October 29 at 1 p.m. **Live Game Show & Halloween Party** Kevin Richman from It's the Music Entertainment will produce a "live" TV-like game

show (think Jeopardy, Family Feud, Wheel of Fortune). This program is filled with laughter and nostalgia as you get to be the stars of the show! Bring your quick-thinking friends with you. Halloween costumes are optional. We will be serving Halloween desserts and snacks. RSVP required.

Thursday, October 31 at 11 a.m. **Fears and Phobias: The Brain's Attraction to Spooky Things** Whether it's watching a horror movie, visiting a haunted house, or telling ghost stories around a campfire, many of us seek out experiences that give us a good scare. But why is that? With neuroscientist Kymberlee O'Brien, we'll look into the brain to find out. RSVP requested.

October Events at the First Universalist Society in Franklin

Sunday, Oct. 20: LGBTQIA+ Service

Join the Welcoming Congregation Initiative Team at 10 a.m. for their annual Fall Service, which explores timely and important LGBTQIA+ topics.

Saturday, Oct. 26: "The Belle of Amherst"

FUSF will present "The Belle of Amherst" by William Luce at 7 p.m. A Tony Award winning, one-woman play, it's based on the life of Emily Dickinson and stars Kathleen Mary Mulligan, a professor of voice and speech at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. She is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional stage actors. Acting credits include The Acting Company (national tour), American Repertory Theater, The Huntington Theatre Company, and PCPA Theatrefest in Santa Maria, CA. She has performed "The Belle of Amherst" in Lebanon, Laos, and across northern India while on a Fulbright-Nehru grant in 2023.



Ticket prices are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students 18 and under or with a valid student ID. Tickets will also be sold at the door. Accepted payments include cash, check, or credit card.

An artist "talk-back" will follow the performance.

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

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Jumpstart Your Cosmetology Career with b.LUXE Hair and Makeup's Premier Apprenticeship Program

By GINA WOELFEL

Are you an aspiring beauty professional eager to establish yourself in the field of cosmetology? Consider the exceptional apprenticeship opportunities offered by b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, MA. As the state's top Google-rated salon and a two-time Salon Today 200 Honoree, b.LUXE is renowned for its commitment to excellence in the beauty industry. They're now opening their doors in collaboration with the Massachusetts State Board of Cosmetology to the next generation of beauty experts through their apprenticeship program, designed to provide hands-on experience, top-tier education, and an accelerated path to licensure.

The Apprenticeship Advantage

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio, owned by industry veteran Heather Cohen, is more than just a salon. It's a training ground for future beauty professionals. "I work closely with our apprentices to ensure they receive a complete education that builds off what they've learned from cosmetology school. We employ a director of cutting, Sandra Wilkey, and a director of color education, Andrea Rees, to further mentor our apprentices and junior stylists. Our staff is also incredibly supportive, and work as a team to bring the next generation

through successfully," Heather explains. "Early in my career, a well-known Boston salon owner took me under their wing and shared their talent and business knowledge. I received such well-rounded training. I love sharing what I learned." The studio offers comprehensive apprenticeship programs in collaboration with the Massachusetts State Board of Cosmetology. These programs allow participants to gain real-world experience, refine their skills, and earn up to 400 hours towards their 1,000-hour licensure requirements while still in school.

The b.LUXE Apprenticeship Program caters to the education and career of future cosmetologists, providing three distinct paths to success.

1. MA Cosmetology Apprenticeship Program

For current students enrolled in a Massachusetts State Board of Cosmetology accredited beauty school, this program is a game-changer. By working at b.LUXE, students can earn up to 400 hours towards their licensure, bridging the gap between classroom learning and professional practice. This time-saving opportunity not only accelerates the journey to becoming a licensed cosmetologist but also ensures that students gain invaluable hands-on experience in a real salon environment.

Scan Here to Visit Our Careers Page



bLUXE.com

2. The Shop Employed Student Program

Balancing school and work can be challenging, but b.LUXE makes it easier for students to do both. This program allows students to work at the salon after school, offering real-time client interactions, ongoing education, and hands-on training. It's the perfect way for students to apply what they've learned in school while continuing their formal education.

3. b.LUXE Apprenticeship Program

Designed for recent graduates, this program offers a seamless transition from the classroom to the salon floor. Participants can build on the knowledge they've gained in school by working at b.LUXE in a structured, supportive environment. With one-on-one training from industry leaders and access to the best educational resources available, graduates can elevate their skills and grow their careers in a setting that nurtures creativity and expertise.



Why Choose b.LUXE?

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio stands out not only for its accolades but also for its dedication to fostering the next generation of beauty professionals. The studio's commitment to education is evident in its weekly training sessions, hosted by leading experts in the industry. Apprentices at b.LUXE benefit from personalized guidance and a comprehensive training program that prepares them for success in the competitive world of cosmetology.

As Heather Cohen, the owner of b.LUXE, explains, "Our unique learning opportunities are designed to help students thrive during their school years, after school, or post-graduation. We're excited to collaborate with cosmetology schools and help shape the future of talented cosmetologists."

Take the Next Step in Your Beauty Career

If you're currently enrolled in a board-accredited cosmetology school in Massachusetts, or if you've recently graduated, the b.LUXE apprenticeship program is your chance to gain the experience and education you need to succeed. With a reputation as the best in the state, b.LUXE offers an unparalleled environment for aspiring cosmetologists to grow, learn, and excel.

Whether you're still in school or just starting your career, b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio is the place where passion meets professionalism. Embrace this opportunity to transform your cosmetology dreams into reality with the guidance and support of the best in the business.

Visit bLUXE.com to learn more about the program and take the first step towards a bright future in the beauty industry.

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Wrentham Receives National Honor for Excellence in Budget Presentation

The town of Wrentham has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for its Fiscal 2025 budget.

The award is a significant achievement in governmental accounting and financial reporting. The GFOA judges budgets on four criteria:

- As a policy document
- As a financial plan
- As an operations guide
- As a communications device

This is the first time Wrentham has received this award.

“It is an honor to be recognized nationally for creating a transparent, easy-to-follow budget document,” Town Manager Kevin Sweet said in a statement. “Thank you to Finance Director Michael King, Town Accountant Christine Dupras and Assistant Town Accountant Emily Kelly for their hard work in developing timely budgets that reflect fiscal reality and the Town’s vision for success.”

“Receiving the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the GFOA is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting,” Finance Director

King said. “This award reflects a commitment to sound financial practices and is a testament to our efforts to continually improve upon Wrentham’s budgeting process.”

The GFOA established the Budget Awards Program in 1984 to encourage and assist state and local governments to prepare budget documents of the very highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and the GFOA’s best practices on budgeting and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

About the GFOA

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), founded in 1906, represents public finance officials throughout the United States and Canada. The association’s more than 20,000 members are federal, state/provincial, and local finance officials deeply involved in planning, financing, and implementing thousands of governmental operations in each of their jurisdictions. GFOA’s mission is to advance excellence in public finance.

Franklin Newcomers and Friends Craft Fair set for November 9

The 49th annual Franklin Newcomers Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, November 9 at Tri-County High School, 147 Pond St., Franklin. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The juried craft fair features hand-crafted items from artists throughout New England. A large selection of items will be available, including items for the home, gifts, and specialty foods.

The entry fee is \$3 for ages 12 and older. Donations for the Franklin Food Pantry will be accepted at the door.

Funds raised from the craft fair are used to support organizations and causes in the area. Last year, \$6,000 was dispersed to ten different organizations.

Volunteers are needed to assist crafters to set up and take down booths. High school students from area towns in need of community service hours are encouraged to help. Email franklin-craftfair@gmail.com for more information.

Follow the Newcomers on Facebook and Meetup.

King Philip DECA Updates

It is a new year with new beginnings for KP DECA, the high school’s internationally recognized student business and entrepreneurship organization.

Last year was a huge success for the KP DECA chapter, and this year, the chapter is recruiting all grade levels, which means more exciting things are ahead.

The chapter’s senior officers for the 2024-25 school year have been announced. They are:

- President Madison Asprelli
- Vice President of Marketing Caitlin O’Brien
- Vice President of Development Addison Lewis
- Vice President of Competitive Events Charlie Morris
- Secretary Shelby Konosky
- Treasurer Gavin Hickey
- Store Manager Emily Heslin

KP DECA hosted an orientation at King Philip Regional High School on Sept. 3 to meet members and their families. Senior officers, DECA Market-

ing Coordinator James Dow, parents, and alumni presented an overview of the year ahead.

On Oct. 9, KP DECA members will attend the high school’s annual open house to showcase their 2024-25 mini-mall and sell cookies to visitors.

On Dec. 4, KP DECA will hold its annual breakfast and installation ceremony, officially starting the season. Parents and students will come together to celebrate the induction of new members and senior officers, and projects will be showcased to parents.

Lastly, the chapter will continue the KP DECA tradition of organizing and holding a Credit For Life Fair on Jan. 13 at King Philip Regional High School. This fair will be offered to all juniors.

About King Philip DECA

King Philip DECA is a high school business organization. The group is part of a larger network of over 250,000 high school students worldwide. DECA prepares young leaders and entrepreneurs in high schools and colleges globally for marketing, finance, hospitality and management careers. Students will participate in three competition rounds — Districts in Mansfield, SCDC in Boston and ICDC in Orlando, Florida.

Norfolk and Wrentham Residents to Participate in Jimmy Fund Walk

Fourteen residents from Norfolk and thirteen residents from Wrentham will participate in the Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai on Sunday, October 6.

They will join thousands of other walkers in the iconic annual event that will unite the community to raise funds to support all forms of adult and pediatric care and research at the nation’s premier cancer center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The Jimmy Fund Walk has raised more than \$176 million for Dana-Farber in its 35-year history, raising a

record-breaking \$9.4 million in 2023.

“For 35 years, the Jimmy Fund Walk has continuously supported lifesaving research and cancer care at Dana-Farber. Our goal is to build off of the momentum we’ve established throughout that history, and in 2024, aim to surpass our total from last year by raising \$9.5 million,” says Caitlin Fink, assistant vice president of event fundraising. “Fighting cancer is what we do. The Walk unites our community under a common goal —to defy cancer together.”

Norfolk walkers: Brenda Barton, Laura Fixico, Larissa Hewitt, Cheryl Hogan, Elizabeth Manning, Paul O’Connor, Theresa O’Connor, Laura Sarkar, Regan Sharkey, Kristie Sullivan, Tim Sullivan, Brian Sweetman, Gayle Sweetman, and Samantha Sweetman.

Wrentham walkers: Hannah Balquist, Jeff Calligan, Samantha Calligan, Renee Chase, Erin DeSimone, Nicole Maguire, Christine Morander, Kyle Morander, Andrea Murphy, Ellen Ross, Jody Sears, Trish Vickery, and Ruthann Wright.

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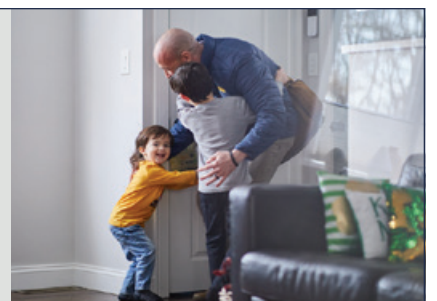


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What is College Demonstrated Interest?

As students begin to narrow down their college list to their top 8-12 choices, the question of what is demonstrated interest frequently arises. The best analogy we've heard is that it's similar to social media - colleges love getting likes! When a student shows demonstrated interest, it helps college admission counselors identify those who are genuinely interested in attending their school. If the student fits the school's academic profile, demonstrating interest in a college can increase their chances of acceptance and often lead to higher merit scholarship awards. Demonstrated Interest can help the student stand out in a crowded applicant pool.

Another way of understanding demonstrated interest which is a bit more relatable is to imagine you're a new student at school and in your history class. You meet Rachel and Tom - both are nice and bright. Rachel has gone out of her way to introduce herself, inviting you to join her study group, and sharing her notes with you. Tom, on the other hand, hasn't made any effort to connect with you. Naturally, you would most likely choose Rachel as your study partner because she has shown more "demonstrated interest" in you!



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

Here are a few ways for students to show demonstrated interest:

- 1. Attend an in-person College Information Session and Tour:** Taking the time to visit the campus shows real commitment and helps you determine if the college is the right fit for you.
- 2. Participate in a Virtual Info Session and Tour:** If the college is too far from home, virtual sessions are just as valuable in demonstrating your interest.

- 3. Participate in Virtual Events:** Colleges offer various informative webinar events focusing on majors, academic programs, financial aid, and admission details. Make sure to register!
- 4. Be Strategic with the "Why Essay":** This essay is often ranked above the personal statement in importance. Treat it as a love letter to the school by doing your homework and being very specific.

5. Attend Local College Fairs: Sign up for college fairs at your high school or in your community. Introduce yourself, ask thoughtful questions, and follow up with a thank-you email if you engage in a conversation with a representative.

6. Contact Your Regional Admission Counselor: Reach out with questions that aren't easily answered on the college's website. This will ensure the conversation is productive.

7. Plan Ahead with Questions: Prepare questions to ask during a tour, at a college fair, or when speaking with a college admissions representative. For sample questions, email tracy@mycollege101.com for a free resource.

8. Sign Up for Optional Interviews: If the college offers optional interviews, make sure to sign up!

9. Submit Online Request Forms: Request information from colleges you are interested in by searching the college name along with the phrase "request for information."

10. Open Emails: Colleges often track which emails are opened, the links clicked, and the time spent on their website.

11. Connect on Social Media: Following a college on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter shows interest and helps you learn more about their activities.

12. Apply Early: If possible, apply early to show your top colleges that you are serious about attending.

13. Use a Consistent Email Address: Using the same email address throughout the college search process makes it easier for colleges to track your interest.

There are several ways to determine if the college places importance on demonstrated interest in their application review process. One effective method is to consult the college's *Common Data Set*. To do this, search the specific college name along with the phrase "Common Data Set." Once you find it, locate section C7 which lists all the factors the college considers important when making admission decisions.

Remember that showing demonstrated interest in a college has a dual purpose - it not only shows your top colleges that you are seriously interested in them, but it also helps you gather valuable information about the college to determine if it is the right fit for you!

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

College 101 Admissions Consultants LLC.
Website: www.mycollege101.com.
Email: tracy@mycollege101.com.
Phone: (508) 380-3845.

Attention: If you are interested in a free information session about the college admission process, I will be speaking at The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham on October 9th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

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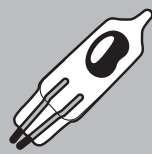
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Sara Allegretti Appointed as Acting Director of Religious Education at FUSF

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) welcomes Sara Allegretti as the new Acting Director of Religious Education (DRE).

“We are delighted to have Sara join FUSF as our Acting DRE,” said Caitlin MacDonald, President of the Board. “Sara is a highly-qualified professional who values collaboration and creativity in her work, and cares deeply about the children of our congregation. In this role she will provide age-appropriate curriculum and experiences which emphasize our UU values of justice, equity, transformation, pluralism, interdependence, generosity and love.”

Ms. Allegretti has been a UU for her adult life, a member of FUSF for 4 years and a licensed educator of children, aged 1.5 to 15, for 14 years. She most recently served as an Educational Interventionist in the Franklin School system and, prior to that, led a Tinkergarten program in Franklin from 2019 to 2022. (Tinkergarten was a program designed to provide joyful, play-based outdoor classes for children and their caregivers.) Ms. Allegretti holds a Master of Education from Lesley University and Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and Mathematics from Stonehill College.

In addition to her professional experience, Ms. Allegretti served as Chair of the FUSF Welcoming Congregation Initiative and secretary of the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance. Ms. Allegretti resides in Franklin with her family.

FUSF invites all families to visit FUSF and participate in the fall 2024 religious education programs. Pre-registration is not required. Classes take place during service on Sundays at 10 a.m. Families are invited to the sanctuary for the beginning of service,



then the children and teachers transition to their classrooms until the end of service.

FUSF provides children and youth an opportunity to explore, reflect, and learn in a nurturing spiritual community. The Unitarian Universalist religious education programs inspire:

- Ethical growth – internalizing enduring values like justice, equity, and generosity, and gaining tools to act on them in everyday life.
- Social growth – connecting with peers and people of all ages on a deeper level. Finding acceptance among people who see beyond the superficial.
- Spiritual growth – feeling a connection with the sacred within, among, and beyond us.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin MA. For further information about FUSF and its religious education program please explore our website at fusf.org or contact Sara Allegretti, Acting DRE at 508 528-5348 or dre@fusf.org

School District Releases 2024-2029 Strategic Plan

King Philip Regional School District released its Strategic Plan for the 2024-2029 school years.

The district has been developing its new strategic plan since the early spring of 2024 which included a significant amount of public input from a broad cross-section of the community, including school committee members, parents, students, teachers, and principals. Over 1,000 community stakeholders’ feedback was taken into account.

“I would like to thank all staff, students, alumni, parents/guardians, community leaders and tri-town community members who took our strategic planning survey last spring, which provided valuable feedback to help KP’s Strategic Planning Committee craft this plan,” said KP Superintendent Rich Drolet in a statement. “Our strategic plan contains our mission, vision, core values and four strategic focus areas. This plan will be updated annually as we strive to work toward initiatives, meet objectives, and monitor progress.”

The strategic plan was presented and approved at the School Committee meeting on July 22, 2024.

The strategic plan features the district’s theory of action, which reads:

“If we ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment to support the varied academic and social-emotional needs of our students and staff, and establish increased communication channels to promote understanding and increase involvement and support for our regional school district, then we will be able to foster personal and academic growth while cultivating hardworking, resilient, and empathetic learners, who are positive contributors to the tri-town KP community and the world.”

The strategic plan, which will be worked on over a five-year period, focuses on four strategic

objectives to provide the best educational opportunities for students: (1) Teaching, Learning, and Leading for All; (2) Communication and Community; (3) Finance, Facilities and Human Resources; and (4) Culture and Wellness.

The four strategic objectives focus on the following:

- Teaching, Learning, and Leading for All: Support the varied needs of students and staff through improved practices while promoting innovation and an aligned curriculum.
- Communication and Community: Foster effective two-way communication channels among students, staff, administration, families and the broader tri-town community to promote collaboration, enhance understanding, elevate family involvement and provide clarity and transparency.
- Finance, Facilities and Human Resources: Provide adequate funding for staff retention, recruitment of a diverse staff, maintenance and enhancement of facilities and long-range capital improvements.
- Culture and Wellness: Provide a safe and inclusive environment to support social, emotional, and personal growth.

To achieve these objectives, the district will undertake a wide array of initiatives and will closely examine its current curriculum, programming, procedures and areas of improvement.

The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan is a living document that will be reviewed at least annually and modified to continuously meet the needs of the King Philip Regional School district.

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Living Healthy

The Future of Eye Care: A Revolution in Ophthalmology

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

Ophthalmology, the medical field dedicated to eye health, has witnessed remarkable advancements in recent years. These innovations are reshaping the landscape of eye care, offering patients improved outcomes and more accessible treatment options. With the increasing prevalence of eye disease driven by factors such as aging populations, lifestyle changes, and technological advancements. These breakthroughs are also crucial for addressing global eye health challenges.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

One of the most significant developments in ophthalmology has been the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine

learning. These technologies are revolutionizing eye diagnosis by providing faster, more accurate, and often more objective assessments. AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, such as retinal images, to detect early signs of diseases like diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration. This early detection allows for timely intervention, potentially preventing vision loss. For instance, Google's DeepMind has developed an AI system capable of diagnosing over 50 different eye diseases from a single OCT scan.

Gene Therapy for Inherited Retinal Diseases

Gene therapy, a technique that involves introducing functional genes into cells to treat genetic disorders, has shown great promise in ophthalmology,

particularly for inherited retinal diseases. These conditions, often caused by genetic mutations, were once considered incurable. However, advancements in gene therapy have opened new possibilities for restoring vision or halting disease progression. Luxturna, approved by the FDA in 2017, was the first gene therapy for an inherited retinal disease, offering hope to patients with Leber's congenital amaurosis. Researchers are now exploring gene therapies for other retinal diseases, such as retinitis pigmentosa and choroideremia, expanding the potential benefits of this technology.

Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS)

Glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness, is characterized by increased intraocular pressure.



Traditional surgical treatments for glaucoma often involve invasive procedures with long recovery times. Minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) has emerged as a less invasive alternative, offering quicker recovery, fewer complications, and improved patient satisfaction. MIGS devices, such as the iStent and Hydrus Microstent, are designed to enhance the eye's natural drainage pathways, reducing intraocular pressure without the need for large incisions. MIGS can often be performed in conjunction with cataract surgery, providing a comprehensive solution for patients with both conditions.

Advanced Intraocular Lenses (IOLs)

Cataract surgery, a common procedure to remove a cloudy lens and replace it with an artificial lens, has been transformed by advancements in intraocular lens (IOL) technology. Modern IOLs can now address a variety of vision problems, including astigmatism, presbyopia, and myopia. Multifocal and extended-depth-of-focus (EDOF) lenses allow patients to achieve clear vision at multiple distances without relying on glasses. Toric IOLs can correct astigmatism, reducing the need for corrective eyewear.

Corneal Cross-Linking for Keratoconus

Keratoconus, a progressive eye condition that causes the

cornea to thin and bulge, can lead to significant vision impairment. Corneal cross-linking, a procedure that strengthens the cornea using ultraviolet light and riboflavin, has been a game-changer for patients with keratoconus. By halting the progression of the disease, corneal cross-linking can help prevent vision loss and reduce the need for corneal transplants.

Teleophthalmology: Remote Eye Care Delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of telemedicine, including in ophthalmology. Teleophthalmology, which allows for remote eye care consultations and follow-ups, has become an essential tool for ensuring access to care, especially in underserved areas. Remote eye exams, coupled with home-based diagnostic tools, enable patients to monitor their eye health without frequent in-person visits. Teleophthalmology platforms, equipped with AI-driven diagnostic tools, can triage patients and prioritize those who require urgent in-person care, optimizing clinic resources and improving patient outcomes.

Conclusion

The future of ophthalmology is bright, with ongoing advancements in technology and treatment options. These innovations are not only improving the qual-

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Living Healthy

It's Not Just a Bump on the Head

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that affects your brain function. Concussions are usually caused by a blow to the head from contact sports, auto accidents or a fall. Some concussions cause you to lose consciousness, but most do not. Immediate symptoms can include headache, ringing in the ears, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, drowsiness, blurry vision, balance and coordination issues. Long term symptoms may include sleep disturbances, concentration and memory issues, sensitivity to light and noise, depression, irritability and issues with taste and smell.

Jack H. presented to our office after a collision on the football field. He hit his head pretty hard and was removed from the game pending an exam by the trainer. He was sent for a CT scan and was diagnosed with a concussion. Jack was told to rest, reduce screen time and stay in a dark room until he felt better. His mom became concerned when Jack's school work started to suffer and his focus and concentration started to fail. Over time he went to his PCP and was told that these things take time. Jack reported that he was having



Dr. Rochelle Bien & Dr. Michael Goldstein

trouble sleeping and complained of daily headaches which Advil did not resolve. That is when she decided to bring Jack in to our office to be evaluated.

Upon exam it was confirmed that Jack was still experiencing long term symptoms of his concussion. He was put on a program of care including chiropractic adjustments, NIS (neurological integrative systems) work, and supplements to reduce the inflammation in the brain and the body. Within a short time

Jack's symptoms started to resolve and within 3 months he was back to himself and back playing sports.

If you need help to recover from a concussion don't hesitate to call the Holistic Center at Bristol Square (508)660-2722, located at 1426 Main Street, Walpole, MA.

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The Norfolk Public Library will host Alison O'Leary, a lifelong hiker and Appalachian Mountain Club guidebook author, in this interactive program all about hiking.

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- Solos – resources for connecting with other hikers.
- Check lists to make sure you're prepared.
- A route-by-route plan to build skills.
- Suggestions for longer, more challenging hikes.

To register for this free program, visit norfolkpl.org/events/.

Flu Shots Available for Wrentham Residents

The Metacomet Public Health nurses have flu shot appointments available at the Nurses' Office, Town Hall, 79 South St., Wrentham for residents 18 years and older.

Appointments are available Mondays from 1 to 4 p.m., and Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Bring insurance card and wear short sleeves.

Call 774-847-5077 or email info@metacometpha.org for more information.

EYES

continued from page 16

ity of care but also making it more accessible and affordable for patients worldwide. As the field continues to evolve, we can expect to see even more groundbreaking developments that will revolutionize eye care and preserve vision for generations to come.

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Sports

KP Volleyball Team Aims For 11th Straight Playoff Berth



The 2024 King Philip volleyball team is aiming to continue the Warriors' lengthy streak of qualifying for the state playoffs.

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Kristen Geuss completed her first decade as coach of the King Philip girls volleyball team last fall and she finished with a perfect 10: that's 10 tournament berths in 10 years.

Can fans of Warrior volleyball expect more of the same this season as the Warriors battle against a plethora of formidable teams in the Hockomock League? Geuss certainly hopes so.

"We want to have a strong presence in the league, qualify for the playoffs and advance as far as possible," said Geuss, whose squad finished 12-8 overall last year and lost in the tournament's first round to Boston Latin School. "My goals are realistic as long as we take one match at a time, shore up any weaknesses and capitalize on our strengths."

KP's current edition has some admirable strengths, which no doubt will fully surface as the season moves along. In the early going, however, the Warriors

faced some powerhouse teams and were 2-3, losing to Franklin, Oliver Ames and Bishop Feehan.

"We've got six returnees with experience and we've got depth, a high volleyball IQ and athleticism," Geuss emphasized. "The girls are very coachable and their work ethic is strong."

KP's style is another reason why its sub-.500 start is a bit deceiving. They're aggressive and scrappy. "We've also got an experienced front row, our serving is strong and our back-row defense is solid," Geuss added.

Senior leadership is always a plus and the Warriors' captains personify that trait. They include Madison Asprelli (setter), Fiona Cailey (outside hitter) and Tamanda Clarke (middle hitter).

"They all lead by example and by being communicative and supportive," Geuss said. "They lead both on and off the court. Madison runs the offense, has strong instincts and sets the ball to the right hitters. Fiona is powerful, hits cross-court and down the line. She's also an ef-

fective server. Tamanda is a great blocker and she double blocks with the right side."

Senior Alex Pauline is a key contributor in her role as libero. "Alex takes control of the back row," Geuss said. "Scrappy and aggressive, she's in the right place at the right time."

Another senior, Avery Reda, is a very capable middle hitter. "Avery is strong in the middle, has improved a lot and has an effective blocking style," Geuss noted.

Two other seniors bear watching — outside hitter Jessica Hansen and right-side hitter Anna Vinson. "Both have a strong presence at the net and will be contributing as the season moves along," Geuss said.

Junior Cece Kilroy is a versatile competitor, able to play as a setter or a right-side hitter. "Cece is an experienced returnee and we expect her to score points," Geuss offered. Another junior — Cece Mullen — provides more depth at the setter slot. "She covers the court well, serves effectively, and is

athletic and instinctive," Geuss added.

Junior hitters Shayne Dugan (outside) and Alli Cleasby (right side) round out a group of strong front-row players. "They'll be ready to contribute when called upon," Geuss said.

Juniors Caleigh Shore and Mya McCormick will handle the duties of defensive specialists. "They're solid and will anchor our defense," Geuss said. "They see the court well."

Sophomore Amie O'Neil is an up-and-coming middle hitter. "Amie shows potential in her hitting and blocking ability," Geuss said. "Each day she takes steps to improve."

Assisting Geuss will be Haley Dennis, the junior-varsity coach, and Cam Corey, who's taken the reins of the freshman squad. "Both are very supportive, helpful and knowledgeable," she noted.

Geuss' athletic philosophy focuses on improving daily, making sure her players reach their potential and develop their skills. "Life lessons my players can

learn from volleyball are how to work as a team, how to set goals, how to be leaders and how to overcome adversity and become resilient," she emphasized. "I also want our players to set good examples and be quality people on and off the court."

Last year, KP finished with a 12-4 record in the league's Kelly-Rex Division. And, although Geuss didn't mention the division title as part of her goals this year, she firmly believes her squad will be in the mix of that pennant race. "Franklin and Oliver Ames are traditionally strong," she said, "and we hope to be a contender, too."

KP isn't far removed from its best season during Geuss' tenure at the helm. In 2022 the Warriors completed their regular season with an 18-2 record, advanced to the state final where they lost to Westboro and ended that campaign with a 22-3 record.

The coach isn't sure where or how her current contingent will finish this season but it seems likely that KP will be in the playoffs for the 11th straight time.

Sports

Warrior Youth Field Hockey: Building Confidence, Skills, and Community



Calista Manuzza, former Brown University starting keeper, joined by aspiring Warriors.

By JOE STEWART

In an exciting new venture, Warrior Youth Field Hockey is offering young athletes in Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham more than an introduction to field hockey—they're learning life lessons, developing leadership skills, and building self-confidence that extends far beyond the field.

Founded by a local educator and coach, Veronica Gonzalez, in collaboration with other area field hockey enthusiasts, Warrior Youth Field Hockey began as a long-held vision. Reflecting on her early days balancing a teaching career, coaching, tutoring, and personal training, Gonzalez recalls the joy of helping young people grow academically and

physically.

"I always wanted to create a program that combined the best of both worlds—academic achievement and physical fitness—to help kids build their self-esteem," she shared. "It took 20 years, three kids, and several career moves, but finally, Warrior Youth Field Hockey was born."

Warrior Youth Field Hockey, a registered USA Field Hockey team, aims to provide a safe and inclusive environment where young athletes can thrive, not just in their hockey skills but as individuals.

"We want to teach our players more than just how to handle a stick—we want them to build friendships, foster leadership, and grow mentally and physi-

cally stronger. These are the skills that will help them excel both on and off the field," Gonzalez explained.

With a rapidly growing roster of 105 players, spanning grades 1-8, and eight teams for the fall season, the community has shown incredible support for the program. Generous donations from local businesses have already helped cover the costs of essential equipment, including balls, goals, and goalie gear. The community's enthusiasm was on full display at a recent car wash fundraiser held at Delaney Elementary School, where the organization raised over \$1000.

Games are on Saturday and Sunday while practices are Monday and Wednesday afternoon, all at their home field,

Wrentham's American Legion field. The program will hold a "Warrior Day" on Sunday, October 6 at the Wrentham American Legion and, as the program continues to grow, they plan to establish a scholarship fund for graduating seniors who have participated in the program and exemplified its core values.

"We have a long way to go, but we're building toward something really special," Gonzalez said.

To learn more about Warrior Youth Field Hockey or get involved, visit their website <https://warrioryouthfieldhockey.com/>.

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Saturday Sessions Among FSPA's Instrumental Programs

Step inside the Franklin School for the Performing Arts (FSPA) on a Saturday afternoon and you're likely to find music students of all ages and instruments jamming to varied genres of music with Rich Labeledz and Jeffrey DiIorio—in-demand New England musicians and educators. Faculty members Labeledz and DiIorio lead Saturday Sessions at FSPA, providing young instrumentalists with a unique opportunity to play alongside the two and other special guest musicians throughout the year.

In addition to Saturday Sessions, Labeledz (saxophone) and DiIorio (guitar, ukulele, and bass) are private instructors at FSPA. DiIorio's popular ukulele program offers both private and

group instruction.

Saturday Sessions are just one of the many ways to explore instrumental music at FSPA. Violinist Irina Fainkichen and pianist Ida Zelman bring international training, teaching and performance experience to equip FSPA students with a strong foundation in classical technique. For the youngest music students, FSPA features the innovative Little Music School, teaching children as early as 18 months to play the piano, as well as programs, geared to children ages 1 through 5.

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classes and ear training enhance musicality and support students' interests in music genres ranging from classical and jazz to contemporary pop and rock. Student recitals enable young musicians to apply what's learned in the studio or classroom and gain increased confidence and enjoyment performing.

Registration is ongoing. For more information or to receive a course catalogue, call (508) 528-8668 or visit www.fspaconline.com. The Franklin School for the Performing Arts is located at 38 Main Street in Franklin, MA.

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Broadway's Liam Fennecken to Star in *School of Rock* at FPAC

The Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) will open their 2024-25 Season with *School of Rock - The Musical* starring Broadway's Liam Fennecken October 18-27 at THE BLACK BOX in downtown Franklin, MA. Fennecken will play Dewey Finn, a role he played on the Broadway Tour of *School of Rock*. 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.

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 find-

ing out? With its sensational live kids' rock band, *School of Rock - The Musical* is a loving testimony to the transforming power of music.

Liam Fennecken recently starred in Broadway's *Chicago* as Amos Hart. He recently toured the US and South Korea in *School of Rock*, and has toured North America with *Once*, *American Idiot*, and *Peter Pan 360*. He is a member of the viral a cappella sensation "T.3" with whom he performed on America's Got Talent.

Fennecken is joined by NYC actress Ali Funkhouser as Principal Rosalie Mullins and Boston's David Livingston and Anissa Perona as Ned and Patty. A cast of talented young local actor-musicians have been selected to play Dew-

ey's "band": Scotty Kippenhan as Zack on guitar, Colette Lelievre as Katie on bass, Owen Charles as Freddy on drums,

Portraying the other musical students of Horace Green in *School of Rock* are Hayley Pezza, Matthew McGuirl, Hel-

liams, Bella Pereira, and Rowan Vadenais.

Rounding out the adult cast are NYC, Boston, and local performers as well as Musical Theater majors from Dean College: P.T. Mahoney, Melissa Baratta, Michael Baratta, Elijah Bondar, Jessica Cain, Kim Frigon, April Lissette, Connor Meehan, Nick Paone, Kylie Parsons, Kellie Stamp, and Isis Wilson.

Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) is an Actors' Equity Association Small Professional Theater. Each season, FPAC produces musicals, plays, ballets, and more featuring Broadway stars, professional and regional performers, and emerging artists. 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.



Grayson Kerrigan as Lawrence on keys, and Aida DiChiara as Summer the band manager.

ena Cornwell, Baree Frigon, Hailey Hulbig, Ani Corkran, Liam Kerrigan, Whitney Wil-

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Strong Showing for Norfolk County Real Estate Market in August

Norfolk County recordings for the month of August 2024 indicate an increase in overall real estate activity, with increases in the total number of deeds and mortgages recorded as compared to August 2023.

The Registry of Deeds recorded 9,367 documents in August 2024. This was 14% more than in August 2023, and a 5% decrease compared to July 2024.

“Lending activity, real estate sales, and transfers make up a majority of the documents recorded at the Registry of Deeds and August showed some significant increase in both categories,” noted Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O’Donnell.

“The rise in recorded documents indicates a healthy level of real estate activity. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues into the fall.”

The total number of deeds recorded for August 2024, which reflects both, was 1,500, up 19% from August 2023 and down 1% from July 2024. However, looking at just home sales from last month, August 2024 saw a 20% increase compared to last year.

“The substantial increase in the number of property sales compared to August 2023 is a good sign that the real estate market is thriving, and we are seeing pockets of the market here in Norfolk County that are seeing

growth and stability, particularly in certain neighborhoods and property types,” said Register O’Donnell. “It will be important to monitor if this positive trend persists in the coming months.”

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties for August 2024 rose to \$1,267,950, a 14% increase compared to August 2023 and an increase of 31% from July 2024. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is also up, increasing by 36% from last year and up 23% from last month.

“While we are seeing an increase in the number of property sales I think many would agree that it is a difficult market for buyers, especially first-time homebuyers, due to the limited inven-

tory of available property and an increase in property prices compared to previous years,” stated O’Donnell.

In August, lending activity increased compared to the same month a year ago. A total of 1,450 mortgages were recorded in August 2024, up 17% from August 2023 and exactly the same number recorded last month.

“This rise in lending activity may be a result of the increase in property sales and would indicate that those who bought property financed it through a lender. We will need to wait and see if a future decrease in mortgage interest rates encourages more individuals to secure mortgages for new homes,” said the Register.

The Norfolk County Reg-

istry of Deeds has been closely monitoring the foreclosure market. In August 2024, there were 10 foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, more than the 3 recorded in August 2023. Additionally, in August 2024, there were 34 notices to foreclose, the first step in the foreclosure process, more than the 22 recorded in August 2023.

For the past several years, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has partnered with Quincy Community Action Programs (617-479-8181 x376) and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (508-587-0950) to help anyone facing challenges paying their mortgage. Another option for homeowners is to contact the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Consumer Advocacy and Response Division (CARD) at 617-727-8400.

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

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Real Estate Corner

Treasurer Goldberg Announces Latest Release of Unclaimed Property Listings

Over 50,000 Names Added to Unclaimed Property List since February

State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg has announced the latest grouping of names added to the state's list of unclaimed property owners. Over 50,000 new properties worth millions of dollars are owed to individuals and businesses throughout Massachusetts.

"1 in 10 people have unclaimed property, and one of them could be you," said State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg. "Claiming property is fast, easy, and free, so check the list, go online, or call our office to search for your name and begin the process today."

The Unclaimed Property Division currently holds over \$3.4 billion in unclaimed property, including forgotten savings and checking accounts, un-cashed checks, insurance policy proceeds, stocks, dividends, and the contents of unattended safe deposit boxes. Most accounts are considered abandoned and are turned over to the state after three years of inactivity. Last year, Treasury processed over 148,000 claims and returned

\$185 million in property to its rightful owners.

This newly released list includes only individuals and businesses with unclaimed property over \$100. Treasurer Goldberg urges all citizens to check the comprehensive list for all amounts at www.find-massmoney.gov or call our live call center at 1-888-344-MASS (6277).

The full list of the new individuals and businesses added to the unclaimed property list was published in the Boston Globe on September 8 and in the Boston Herald on September 15. In addition, the list of names will be published in over 30 regional and local papers in following weeks.

The Treasurer's Office releases an updated list of unclaimed property assets every six months as the new accounts are turned over to the Commonwealth. There is no time limit for a person to claim this property and, in many cases, claimants will receive interest.



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