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Gerlovin Eagle Scout Project Brings Recycling To High School

Nathan Gerlovin is a Senior at Ashland High School and a leader in Ashland Boy Scouts Troop 232.

He recently completed an Eagle Scout community service project that he worked on for more than a year. It took about 150 hours of his time, used about 60 volunteers, and all of volunteer time spent on the project totaled close to 500 hours!

The project involved building a mobile two-bin recycling structure for Ashland High School's cafeteria and gymnasium, which previously lacked any recycling receptacles.

Nathan saw the need for recycling in his high school and worked with the school principal (Kelly St. Coeur) and Ashland's Sustainability Coordinator (Samantha Riley) to come up with a plan to improve the school's sustainability.

He then needed to get the



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AHS Hosting Wrestling Tournament Dec. 14

Ashland High School is hosting one of the earliest in the season tournaments on Dec. 14 at Ashland High School.

It has grown over the years; this year is up to 11 schools who will be participating.

Ashland Wrestling team itself is a great group of kids who has been working very hard the past few years, winning Tri-Valley League many times, the girls won the state championship last year, and the varsity team has won a number of state championships.



With help of wrestling these kids are getting into colleges

WRESTLING
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WRESTLING

continued from page 1

and overall it's a great sport that helps kids to create timeless bonds with coaches, teammates and the community.

The public is invited to come and cheer for their local athletic team, ranked #2 in Division 3 and #10 in All State.





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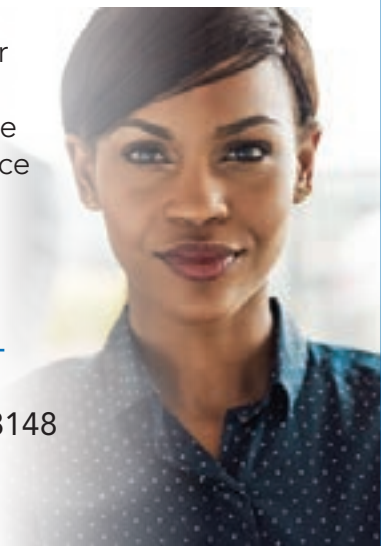
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EAGLE

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project approved by both the School Committee (which did not initially approve it but ultimately approved it with the condition that it be built with composite materials) and also by Boy Scout Council.

There was then a massive fundraising effort as the structure required more than \$2500 of materials! Local businesses and families generously donated materials and funding for the project, and Ashland Boy Scouts constructed it over four separate building sessions requiring more 30 scouts as well as help from family and friends!

Needless to say, it was very exciting when Nathan was able to deliver the recycling structure to Ashland High School last month!

It has been well-received by students and faculty alike.

The recycling structure will be emptied on a regular basis by the school's student-run Environmental Action Club.



Nathan would like to thank the local sponsors and helpers of his project, which include Ashland Lumber, TLC Painting, Lowe's Milford, Monnick Supply and the Witte and Gerlovin families, by holding a "rib-

bon cutting ceremony" by the recycling structure at Ashland High School and inviting them, along with Ms. St. Coeur, Ms. Riley, and his Boy Scout troop leaders.

31 Local Firefighters Graduate from Firefighting Academy

Graduates of Class #325 Represent 18 Massachusetts Fire Departments

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy leadership today announced the graduation of 31 firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

Graduate Anthony Rossini will join the Ashland Fire Department.

"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 Davine. "The hundreds of hours of foundational training they've received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely."

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

The graduating firefighters of Class #325 represent the fire departments of Amesbury, Ashland, Burlington, Concord, Lynn, Maynard, Medford, Melrose,

Nantucket, Needham, Newton, Northbridge, Reading, Somerville, Stow, Wakefield, Wellesley, and Westborough.

The Richard N. Bangs Outstanding Student Award, which is presented to one recruit in each graduating career recruit training class, was presented to Firefighter Eric Frechette of the Maynard Fire Department. The award is named for the longtime chair of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and reflects the recruit's academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the 10-week program.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional

GRADUATES
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Susanne Odell Farber

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sue@sodellconsult.com

Advertising Director

Jen Schofield

508-570-6544

jenschofield@localtownpages.com

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Michelle McSherry

Kim Vasseur

Wendy Watkins

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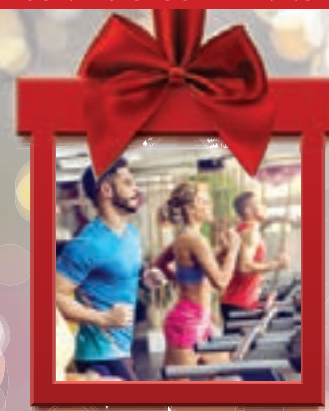


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It's the most wonderful time of the year to use Affordable Junk Removal

BY LINDA CHUSS

With so much to do around the holidays, give yourself the gift of space by using Affordable Junk Removal to help prepare your home for the season. "Life is hectic, we are all so busy in our daily lives that we don't notice how quickly we are being overrun with junk" said Jason Schadler, who founded the business in this area 20 years ago. "It's nice to park your car in the garage during the cold months, but maybe you need to make room there first, and we can help with that."

With Affordable Junk Removal, you can rent a dumpster or have their Junk Removal Professionals come to haul away items that have been gathering dust and taking up precious space. Setting an end-of-year or New Year's resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. You can even put a dumpster rental on your gift list. Sometimes the biggest

challenge is not knowing where to begin, and that is where Affordable comes in.

"You can load your own dumpster or have our truck guys do all of the work for you," Schadler explained. "And rest assured, we don't just take everything to the landfill. We try and recycle as much as possible. Clothing and household items are donated to local organizations that help our friends and neighbors. We also take some items to Resellables secondhand store in Bellingham. That keeps them out of landfills, gives them a new life, and helps us keep our prices down. We're always looking for ways to be more cost effective because customers appreciate our reasonable prices."

Changes in legislation have made it increasingly more difficult to dispose of certain items, like mattresses, for example. It is now state law that most textiles and mattresses must be recycled. "Finding places to take mattresses is a challenge and



the fees for disposal have gone through the roof," said Schadler. Items like these carry a separate recycling fee that the commercial transfer stations charge because of how labor intensive that recycling is. "People are usually shocked at the cost, and we find ourselves educating the customer as to why these fees exist. Here at Affordable, we view ourselves as an avenue our clients can turn to when they have these items and want them disposed of legally, safely and properly."

Affordable has many repeat customers. "When people call, they reach me, not some automated corporate call center," he said. "They know me and the crew and trust us. We do a good job, are fast, efficient, and reliable. We come when we say we



will and if anything unexpected comes up, we communicate. We live here too, we are your friends and neighbors, we sponsor your little league teams and run into you at the grocery store. We are your local guys." A quick look at the many years of positive on-

line reviews attests to this.

For more information, visit AffordableJunkRemoval.com. For an estimate or appointment, call or text 774-287-1133.

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Community Menorah Lighting Dec. 29

BY SUSAN MANNING

Join us for a fun community gathering led by Sha'arei Shalom Rabbi Craig.

We'll say the Hanukkah blessings & sing some traditional songs as we light the menorah.

The synagogue purchased a menorah several years ago and have been hosting this community menorah lighting every year in Montenegro Square in Downtown Ashland.

The event will take place Sunday, Dec. 29, at 6pm,

Montenegro Square, Downtown Ashland.



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Your Money, Your Independence

Holiday Cheer and Roth Conversions: A Gift to Your Future Self



Glenn Brown, CFP

Instead, they build spreadsheets, search IRS interpretations, and obsess about miscalculating their household adjusted gross income (AGI) and threshold \$ amount to convert to a Roth IRA. Then when the time comes to execute the conversion, there is a feeling of dread. Like that of being outside in the freezing cold and “tripled dog-dared” to stick their tongue to a metal pole.

Let’s discuss a better (and safer) way.

What Is a Roth Conversion?

At its core, Roth conversion is like wrapping up retirement savings into a tidy, tax-advantaged gift package. You take funds from a traditional IRA or 401(k) — accounts taxed when you withdraw in retirement — and convert them into a Roth IRA. In doing so, you pay taxes on the converted amount now at your income brackets.

However, once in a Roth, it gifts:

- Tax-free growth
- Tax-free withdrawals in retirement
- Removal of Required Minimum Distributions
- Tax-free distributions for non-spousal beneficiaries

Make Modeling a Roth Conversion Joyous.

Just as giving perfect holiday gifts require planning, so does Roth conversion.

In working with clients, ideally we build or update their Roth conversion model in February or March using prior year data with intentions of waiting until December to run again with actual tax data and execute.

Beyond the adage “measure twice, cut once” and making it less stressful during the holidays, this provides readiness for opportunities. One such example is converting in a steep market decline during the year. If you’re going to hang onto the same security/strategy, why not convert some at a lower value (equals less taxation) and allow for time to bring price recovery inside the Roth IRA instead?

How You Model Makes a Difference

Modeling a Roth conversion is like preparing a delicious holiday feast - attention to detail and coordinated foresight can make all the difference. Beyond current tax situation, age, goals, and cash to pay taxes, there are several future questions to answer in analysis.

In the near-term, will future years have lower taxable earnings to more favorably convert? Will your state of residence change and if so, does your taxation change? What are projected growth rates for Roth, are they more aggressive? Should they be?

For retirement, have you projected RMDs at age 73 (75) and resulting new tax bracket? Does conversion help or hurt Social Security and Medicare taxation? What’s your expectation of future taxation by governments? What are your estate planning wishes?

What are your estate planning wishes?

What are your estate planning wishes?

What are your estate planning wishes?

Respect The Grinch

The pro-rata rule. When converting, the IRS combines all traditional IRA balances and asks about nondeductible contributions, as this portion is not taxable. Understand the IRS doesn’t allow for conversion of just after-tax money.

It is what it is. Once a Roth Conversion is done, it’s done, as IRS no longer lets you unwind (recharacterize).

Not all-or-nothing. You can develop a plan to spread conversions over several years, even skip a year or two as needed pending AGI levels and ability to pay the IRS with non-IRA assets.

The Gift of Time and Independence

Consistent and well-timed Roth conversions can be the gifts that keeps on giving — tax-free growth, tax-free withdrawals, and the peace of mind that comes with control.

May the holiday season bring you good cheer and health throughout the coming year.

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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Community Center News

Grant News From The Department of Prevention & Human Services

The Department of Prevention & Human Services is excited to announce that the Town of Ashland was recently awarded a SAMHSA STOP Act grant to help prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth and young adults ages 12-20.

STOP is a competitive grant which involves a comprehensive application process. Only 35% of this year's grant submissions were funded. Formally known as the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act Grant, the funding award - \$240,000 over four years - will assist Decisions at Every Turn (DAET)

with addressing norms regarding alcohol use among youth; reducing opportunities for underage drinking; and reducing negative consequences associated with underage drinking. Further, the STOP project will elevate efforts to develop strategies to support students who are at a greater risk for alcohol use and misuse.

As part of the 4-year STOP Strategic Plan, DAET will prioritize Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and conduct an audit of its processes and programs; implement a community-wide alcohol prevention campaign; build prevention capacity among stakeholders

and residents; deliver student and adult prevention education; and look at policy as a protective factor for preventing alcohol use.

There will be opportunities for public involvement! These initiatives will welcome (and require!) parent, caregiver and other community adult participation in a variety of ways including focus groups, volunteer working groups, listening sessions, and more. Prevention requires local solutions - and you are the experts on what we need as a community to keep our kids and teens safe and healthy.

Watch for more information on how to get involved soon. You can also email Kristin French at kfrench@ashlandmass.com to express your interest.

MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau announces grant program

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) recently announced its annual mini grant program is now accepting applications.

Designed for marketing and advertising projects that will promote tourism in MetroWest, grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each are available. The MBVB will consider applications for projects devoted to marketing a MetroWest event, attraction, restaurant, shop, or cultural or recreational offering. The applicant does not need to be a 501(c)3 charitable organization, but must be based in one of the 19 towns that comprise MetroWest or be devoted to attracting potential visitors to those 19 towns.

Eligible projects include brochures and other printed collateral; print, TV, radio, outdoor or online advertising; and websites. Advertising in the Bureau's co-op advertising program is also eligible. The marketing project must be targeted, at least partially, at potential visitors who live more than 50 miles from the event or business location.

Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for 25% of their campaign, up to \$10,000.

For-profit businesses are eligible to apply for 10% of their campaign, also up to \$10,000.

Grant applications can be submitted at www.bit.ly/FY25mini-grant and will be reviewed on a rolling basis from now until Dec.

1. Awarded grant funds must be spent prior to June 30, 2025. For questions, or to discuss your project idea prior to submitting an application, please contact MBVB Executive Director Stacey David at sdavid@metrowestvisitors.org

The MetroWest Visitors Bureau promotes travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region: Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough. For more information, please visit the MBVB website at www.metrowestvisitors.org.

GRADUATES

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Qualifications, and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

Today's Firefighters Do Much More than Fight Fires

Modern firefighters train for and respond to all types of hazards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental

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

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, recruits learn all these skills and more, including the latest science of fire behavior and suppression tactics, from cer-

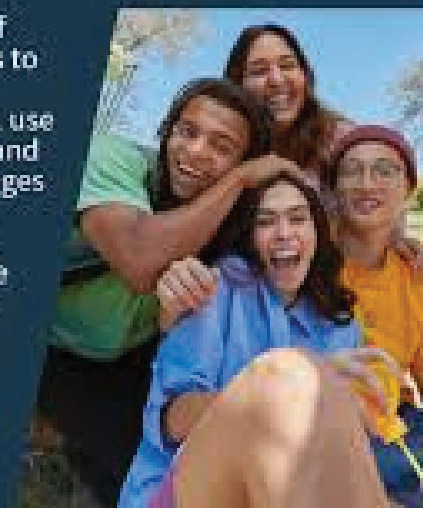
tified fire instructors. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, and self-rescue techniques. The intensive, 10-week program involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

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

Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act Grants

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- The purpose of this program is to prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth and young adults ages 12 to 20 in communities throughout the United States.



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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

WE'VE GOT THE GIFTS!

BY GINA WOELFEL

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio is your holiday headquarters this year! Move over, Santa—b.LUXE is “sleighbing” the holiday season with the gifts everyone secretly (or not-so-secretly) wants!

Ah, the holidays, where the only thing more tangled than that string of lights is our to-do lists!

Well, think of b.LUXE as your festive fairy godmothers! With just the click of a button, our Holiday Gift Card Packages simplify your shopping and take the hassle out of your holiday hustle.

This season's Gift Card Packages add a touch of magic to every holiday wishlist. Treat your loved ones (or yourself!) to an experience not soon forgotten. This year, b.LUXE offers a specially priced **Luxury Hair Treatment Package for \$100**, a **Scalp Spa Package for \$100**, and our **Ultimate Facial Package for \$150**. These aren't just gifts—they're the moments of relaxation and beauty we all need.

Still undecided about a gift? Let your loved one choose their

own service with a **Custom Gift Card!** We offer options to fit every style and budget, and our gift cards can be purchased in any amount. This year, skip the crowded malls and long lines and give the gift of glamour. After all, nothing says “Happy Holidays” like looking and feeling your best!

Each gift card purchase includes an entry into our **Weekly \$100 Spa Gift Card Giveaway!** Starting November 30th, one lucky winner will be drawn each week for a chance to win! So grab your gift cards today. (Last drawing on December 21st!) b.LUXE and our merry little elves have wrapped this season in beauty and style! So, stay cozy, and let us make this your easiest holiday season ever!

The b.LUXE Team wishes you a joyful and healthy holiday season surrounded by family, friends, and peace.

We look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

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- Heather Cohen, Owner b.LUXE



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Consider these year-end financial moves



Mark Freeman, CEPA

FINANCIAL FOCUS®
Provided by Edward Jones

As we enter the holiday season, your life may well become busier. Still, you might want to take the time to consider some financial moves before we turn the calendar to 2025.

Here are a few suggestions:

- **Review your investment portfolio.** As you look at your portfolio, ask these questions: Has its performance met my

expectations this year? Does it still reflect my goals, risk tolerance and time horizon? Do I need to rebalance? You might find that working with a financial professional can help you answer these and other questions you may have about your investments.

- **Add to your 401(k) and HSA.** If you can afford it, and your employer allows it, consider putting more money into your 401(k) before the year ends — including “catch-up” contributions if you’re 50 or older. You might also want to add to your health savings account (HSA) by the tax-filing deadline in April.
- **Use your FSA dollars.** Unlike an HSA, a flexible spending account (FSA) works on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis, meaning you lose any unspent funds at the end of the year. So, if you still have funds left in your account, try to use them up in 2024.

(Employers may grant a 2½ month extension, so check with your human resources area to see if this is the case where you work.)

- **Contribute to a 529 plan.** If you haven’t opened a 529 education savings plan for your children, think about doing so this year. With a 529 plan, your earnings can grow tax deferred, and your withdrawals are federally tax free when used for qualified education expenses — tuition, fees, books and so on. And if you invest in your own state’s 529 plan, you might be able to deduct your contributions from your state income tax or receive a state tax credit.
- **Build your emergency fund.** It’s generally a good idea to keep up to six months’ worth of living expenses in an emergency fund, with the money held in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund in place, you might be forced

to dip into your retirement funds to pay for short-term needs, such as a major car or home repair.

- **Review your estate plans.** If you’ve experienced any changes in your family situation this year, such as marriage, remarriage or the birth of a child, you may want to update your estate-planning documents to reflect your new situation. It’s also important to look at the beneficiary designations on your investment accounts, retirement plans, IRAs and insurance policies, as these designations can sometimes even supersede the instructions you’ve left in your will. And if you haven’t started estate planning, there’s no time like the present.
- **Take your RMDs.** If you’re 73 or older, you will likely need to take withdrawals — called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — from some

of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA. If you don’t take these withdrawals each year, you could be subject to penalties.

These aren’t the only moves you can make, but they may prove helpful not only for 2024 but in the years to come.

Contact Mark today to discuss this topic or any of your financial goals.

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

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A Special Thank You to Our Ashland Business Sponsors

The Friends of the Ashland Council on Aging (COA) is a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to financially supporting the Ashland COA. They provide various services to seniors aged 60 and older who participate in activities at the Ashland Senior Center, located at 162 West Union Street in Ashland, MA. This support is made possible through memberships, fundraising events, memorial donations, personal contributions, and business sponsorships.

Following their second annual Business Sponsorship initiative, the Friends of the Ashland COA wish to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the Ashland businesses whose generous contributions will help maintain our mission of supporting educational and social programming for seniors at the Ashland Senior Center.

In addition to monetary donations, some businesses provided gift cards for raffles at our culminating Wedding Murder Mystery dinner party, held on November 8, 2024.

We appreciate that they have trusted in our organization and invested in what we stand for. We can never fully express how much their assistance means to the Friends.

Special thanks go out to the following businesses:

Ashland Mini Storage, Ashland Lumber, 126 Self Storage, Worcester Air Conditioning, Tommy Auto Body, Minucci Auto Body, Stumpy Tree Service, Excell Auto Service, Gina Bella Wellness Service, Sophia’s Nail Salon.

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Senior Community Center Activities for December 2024

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

Dec 2nd at 12:00 - NEW!!! Lunch with Holiday & Seasonal Readings by Former Librarian Russell Pollard

Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the

Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person. Due by Nov. 26th at 11 AM.

Dec 3rd at 11:00 - NEW!!! "How to De-Stress & Enjoy the Holiday Season" w/ Anne Fitzgerald, RN, MPH & Public Health Nurse, Town of Ashland.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 4th & 18th 9-11:30 - Veterans Office Hours with Richard Sabounjian

Appointments recommend. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

Dec 4th at 10:00 - Computer Class: "Entering Emergency & Health Information in your Cell Phone" Registrations Requested. Walk Ins also welcome.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 5th at 9:00 - FREE Breakfast sponsored by Ashland Lions Club

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 5th & 21st 10:00-1:00 - SHINE In Person Appointment w/ Fran Bakstran

Call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 5th at 10:00 - Ashland Council on Aging Meeting Public Invited.

Dec 5th at 10:30 - Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 3, Episode 2

Tea and coffee provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 5th at 12:00 - Friends of the Council on Aging Meeting Public Invited.

Dec 6th at 10:00 - Craft w/ Elissa: Make a Cookie In A Jar Gift

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 9th at 12:00 - Lunch and a Seasonal Trivia Contest

Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the

Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person. Due by Dec. 5th at Noon.

Dec. 11th - CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM HAND OUT (Daytime)

Dec. 11th 5:30-7:00 - NEW!!! Holiday Party Sponsored by FOACOA (Evening)

An Evening of Dinner, Music and Dancing with DJ Vic.

Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat.

Cost \$15 per person. Reserve by Dec 5th.

Dec. 12th 10:00 - NEW!!! White Elephant Gift Exchange

Join us for light refreshments. Bring a wrapped new item from home that you never used as an exchange. Call 508-881-0140 x1 to reserve your seat.

Dec 13th 10:00-11:30 - Legal Phone Consultation with Arthur P. Bergeron

Call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1

Dec 13th at 10:00 - Pins & Needles Sewing Class w/ Tobi - Cloth Gift Bag(s)

Bring your own sewing machine. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 16th at 10:30 - FREE Hearing Aid Cleaning w/ Hopkinton Audiology

Dec 16th at 11:00-1:00 - NEW!!! Jewelry Sale by Friends of Ashland COA

Proceeds support programming at Ashland Senior Center.

Dec 16th at 12:00 - NEW!!! Holiday Lunch w/ Ugly Holiday and Winter

Sweater Contest plus Live Music by Steve Rudolph

Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. Cost \$5 per person. Due by Dec. 12th at Noon.

Dec 17th at 1:00 - NEW!!! Adventures in Nova Scotia: Exploring History and Nature, and Nova Scotia's ties to New England

Visit the historic port and homes of Yarmouth & learn about the "Age of Sail" & the role it played in the 18th and 19th century. See birds and butterflies in ancient fields & seals and seabirds along the rugged coast. Enjoy an intriguing virtual visit while listening to an in-person speaker Joy Marzolf.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 18th at 10:00 - Town Manager's Coffee Hour. All are welcome!

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1. Drop ins welcome.

Dec 18th at 12:00 - Offering an Added Lunch supported by the Ashland Lions

Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat.

The cost is \$5 per person. Due by Dec. 12th at Noon.

Dec 19th at 1-3:00 - NEW!!!! Intergenerational Cookie Decorating & Hot Chocolate Social

Plus bring a family recipe to share, if you wish!!!!

Seniors and Recreation Dept. preschool kids will decorate cookies, listen to holiday music and drink a little hot chocolate together.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Dec 20th - CLOSE AT 11:00 PM FOR EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION EVENT

Dec 23rd - 27th - SENIOR CENTER CLOSED FOR ANNUAL CLEANING. No activities

Services or programming during this week.

Dec 31st - CLOSE AT 12:00 PM FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

WEEKLY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

* Note: All classes are a suggested donation of \$4 per person * Unless otherwise noted.

Monday Lunches at 12:00 pm weekly, except holidays. Reservations must be made by Thursday before the scheduled lunch. Please use the payment slip and locked box located outside of the main office to reserve your seat. Cost pp is \$5 unless otherwise noted.

LUNCH MENU (\$5 per person, reservations required)

Dec 2nd Italian Wedding Soup in a Bread Bowl from Marathon Deli

Dec 9th - Patty Melt on Marbled Rye w/ a Cup of Soup from 2Mauro's Café

Dec 15th Beef Stroganoff on Pasta from TJ's Restaurant

Dec 18th Homemade Ham, Mac & Cheese from Ashland Lions & Greater Ashland Lions

Bingo - First and Third Tuesdays of the month at 1 pm

Bowling - Tuesdays at Ryan's Amusement in Millis at 9 am

Blood Pressure Check FREE!!! - Wednesdays at 10:30 am

Canasta - FREE!!! Wednesdays at 1 pm

Chair Volleyball - FREE!!! Thursdays at 1:30 pm. Beginners Welcome!

Chair Yoga - Wednesdays at 1 pm

Chess - FREE!!! Mondays at 1:30 pm

Craft Class FREE!!! - First and Third Fridays of the Month at 10 am

Cribbage - FREE!!! Thursdays at 12:30 pm

Exercise with Joni - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30 am

"DROP IN" Knitting Group - FREE!!! Second and Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 am

Intermediate and Advanced Watercolor Class - Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 9:30 am

Line Dancing with Lisa - Thursdays at 12 pm

Mahjong - FREE!!! Fridays at 10:30 am for all levels

Mindfulness & Meditation - Thursdays at 11 am with Mary Green

Parkinson's Boxing - First & Third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 pm

Pins and Needles FREE!!! Sewing Class- Second and Fourth Fridays of the Month at 10 am

Pitch Card Game - FREE!!! Mondays at 1:00 pm

Tai Chi - Tuesdays at 11:45 am with Jon Woodward

Veterans Office Hours - FREE!!! Every other Wednesday from 9 -11:30 am. Check Calendar for Dates.

Zumba Gold with Kellie - Tuesdays at 10 am

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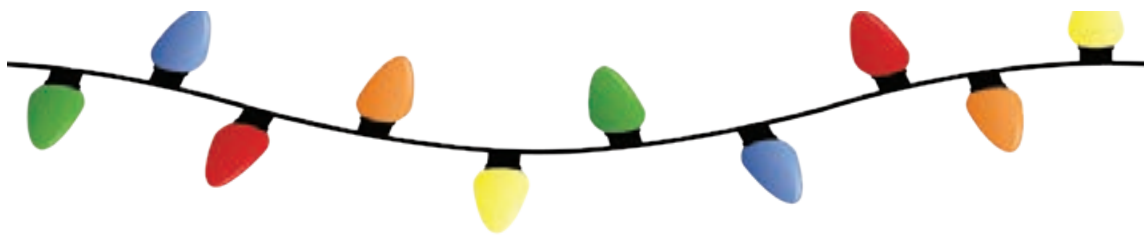
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Snow and Ice Safety

Snow and ice contribute to an increased risk of falls in the winter. Falls can be life-altering and can be prevented through preparation and remaining mindful when outdoors.

Fall-related Emergency Department visits in the United States result in an estimated 860,000 hospitalizations each year and nearly 17,000 people die each year from falls on snow or ice.

Environmental controls involve removal of snow and using salt or sand to manage icy conditions. Be conscious of melt and refreeze cycles including drainage areas in parking lots, areas with large piles of snow where melting and refreezing can continue over

days or weeks, and areas where snow melts from eaves and overhangs and then refreezes as the melted water lays on the ground. Ensure that you keep your hands free-don't walk and text!

Use caution when exiting and entering your vehicle-the areas between parking spaces can be slippery and we often have items in our hands at this time. Try to always have one hand on the car to stabilize yourself.

Wear shoes with good traction, and if you exercise outdoors, you may want to use additional traction devices that can be worn over shoes and boots. Make sure you are visible to others when walking outside in the low winter sun, wear reflective strips or a clip-on

light so drivers see you clearly.

Remember that shoveling snow is heavy exercise-stay well-hydrated and take frequent breaks. If you have cardiac, back, or shoulder issues, talk to your doctor about whether you should be shoveling or if it is time to delegate that task to someone else. Dress in layers and be mindful of the risk of hypothermia if you are out for an extended period. Wear a hat, scarf, gloves, and mittens. Your outermost layer should be windproof and water-resistant.

Know the symptoms of hypothermia, which include:

- Shivering
- Slurred speech or mumbling
- Slow, shallow breathing

- Weak pulse
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Drowsiness or very low energy
- Confusion or memory loss
- Loss of consciousness

Treatment for hypothermia can be tricky. Victims require gentle handling as cardiac issues can occur. If altered mental status is present, EMS should be alerted.

If a severe storm is forecast, ensure that you have all the necessities for yourself and family, including pets:

- Medication
- Non-perishable food

- Clean Water
- Flashlights/batteries
- Fully charged phone, tablet, laptop
- Have a full tank of gas
- Call 2-1-1 to obtain shelter locations and other disaster information or go to:

<https://www.ashlandmass.com/714/Extreme-Cold>

Lastly, be a good neighbor. Check on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly, folks who live alone, those with medical conditions, and those who may need extra help.

Please feel free to reach out to the Ashland Board of Health at 508-532-7922 if you have any questions or concerns.

Ashland Welcomes 3 New Businesses

We celebrated the opening of three new businesses in town last month. If you haven't checked them out be sure you do!

Chase Bank opened at 316 Pond Street. Chase serves millions of people with a broad range of products. Chase online lets you manage your Chase accounts, view statements, monitor activity, pay bills or transfer funds securely from one central place. In March 2024 the Planning Board granted site plan approval for Chase to move forward with this new location. They began construction shortly after and are now open!

Future Masters Chess Academy opened at 200 Homer Avenue. Future Masters Chess

Academy was founded in 2016. Owner, Lawyer Times achieved the rank of Chess Master after only five years of tournament play and has maintained that rank for over 30 years. His knowledge for the game has allowed him to create an unmatched chess curriculum. Future Masters Chess Academy teaches beginners and advanced players alike. They assist kids across the state in using chess principles to master chess and life. They will be teaching students beginning at 4 years old in their new Ashland location!

Clover Road Brewing opened at 151 Main Street after months of renovations and preparation. We are thrilled to see the old

Ashland Fire Station restored to accommodate a new use. Clover Road has been a great partner with the Town, they will be providing a wonderful gathering

space for residents and visitors. They provide community events such as open mic night's yoga, trivia, and live music. This is a great place to enjoy a good

beer or glass of wine right in the heart of downtown!

Stay tuned for more new businesses coming soon!

Shop Local Campaign Concluded

Shop Local campaigns have always been dedicated to the month of November. Here in Ashland we love to highlight businesses throughout the year but place a special focus during the Shop Local campaign that is recognized by the State. In November the Town highlighted businesses through the Ashland Biz Buzz social media sites.

We highlighted a business in town almost daily trying to market their business and encourage consumers to support them. Be sure to check out the Ashland Biz Buzz page and support these businesses all year long! <https://www.facebook.com/ashlandbizbuzz>

Share the Joy
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Our Abbey Candy Shop is now open from 10:00 am – 6:30 pm.

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Ashland Lions Club December 2024 Update

Lions Christmas tree lot now at the Ashland Farmers Market!

The Lions Christmas Tree lot is now in its new location at the Ashland Farmers Market, 125 Front Street. We will be open weekends 9a-8p, and weekdays 3p-8p, until we sell out (follow our Facebook page for changes in hours). Big thanks to the Boy Scouts Troop 232, AHS Leos Club and AHS Football team for getting us up and running and helping us sell trees.

Please consider buying your fresh Christmas tree or wreath from the Ashland Lions this year and donate to a great cause. We now accept cash, credit cards and Venmo for payment!

Remember, Lions give back 100% of profits from all fundraisers to our local community, Lions Club International charitable causes and to Mass Lions Eye Research, who works toward preventing and curing blindness.

Again this year, the Ashland Lions are proud to support our town holiday lighting ceremony at the holiday stroll with cookies for all, alongside Connect Church who be bringing the hot cocoa.

Ashland Lions Meat Raffles

Ashland Lions has kicked off another great year of meat raffles! Our raffles are held on the



Ashland Lions Christmas Tree lot at the Farmers Market location on Front Street offers fresh trees and wreaths

first Saturday of each month @ 12pm, at TJs Food and Spirits in Ashland, and continue throughout the winter. As always there will be great food, fun people and great meat to choose from. See you there!

Coats for Kids and Families

Ashland Lions Club is partnering again with Anton's Cleaners for the Coats for Kids and Families Drive. We are collecting warm winter coats for adults and children. CFK&F accepts warm

winter coats that are gently used, good quality and all sizes. Coats should not have rips, tears, broken zippers or permanent stains. They will be cleaned by Anton's Cleaners and made available to local nonprofits, social service agencies and schools to ensure that the coats are given to those who really need them, free of charge. Coats may be dropped off in Ashland at Focus on Fitness (290 Eliot St.), Cleaner's Choice and Tailor (193 Main St.) and at the Public Safety Building (12 Union Street).

Eyeglasses and Cellphone Collection

Eyeglasses and cellphone collection is a year-round project with collection of used prescription and nonprescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, hearing aids and cell phones. We just contributed 900 pairs of collected glasses for cleaning, measurement and distribution to people in need.

Collection boxes are located at:

Ashland Post Office
Ashland Senior Center
Old train station - Ashland
Moody Optical - Ashland
Middlesex Bank - Ashland
Fayville, MA Post Office
Studio Optics - Framingham

Southborough Senior Center
Southboro Post Office on Rt.85
TJ's Food and Spirits
The Residence at Valley Farm

Join the Lions and help your community

Do you love the feeling of helping out people who need it? Want to participate in service to the community while meeting some great people and having some fun? If you're interested in becoming a member of the Ashland Lions, please reach out to us via email at membership@ashlandlions.org for details, or message us on Facebook! You're also welcome to stop by our Christmas Tree lot and talk to any of our members.

Stay up-to-date on Lions happenings

To see the latest status of our events, please visit our Ashland Lions Facebook page. Click the Like button and you will be automatically notified of changes or cancellations. While you're at it, be sure to follow Ashland Town News too!

LION DAN MITCHELL
ASHLAND LIONS CLUB

Pet of the Month: Meet Josie, watch her video

Josie is a 3-year-old cat who came to us as a pregnant, friendly stray. She is the purrfect cat for someone looking for a low-key, low-maintenance furry partner. She'd do best in a home without other cats, dogs, or small children. While Josie might be a little shy at first, she warms up to become super-friendly. And when she does, get ready to hear her sweet little meow! She loves laying on the bed or the couch, chasing sunbeams across the house. She isn't crazy about being picked up, but will tolerate it for a bit, especially as she feels closer to you. She's not a lap cat, not yet at least, but she will love curling up right next to you for some company.

Josie likes to do her own thing and keep to herself sometimes, but she can also get the zoomies and play with toys, racing from room to room. A consummate lady, Josie might be a tad overweight (but who wouldn't be after having 3 kittens as a young girl?). She loves a good brushing, a chin scratch, and chatting with you in her adorable meow. Josie is a little sweetheart looking for her perfect forever family, who will be lucky to adopt this lovely cat.

To learn more about Josie, please view her video on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/pH7Nrp-pojAQ>

As we are closed to the public, adoptions are by appointment only. If you have an interest in meeting Josie, please use this link to find additional information about her. You can also see all our currently available Adoptable Cats here, and fill out our online adoption application:

<https://metrowesthumanesociety.org/adoptable-cats/>

We will review all applications and make appointments for those applicants we feel would provide a good and loving home.



Keep an Eye Out For Signs of a Rodent Infestation This Fall

WPC Pest and Termite Control and the National Pest Management Association are sharing the top seven signs that rodents have taken up residence in your home

PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS

It's that time of year again — football season, trips to your local farm, and crisp, fall weather.

But before you break out your favorite pumpkin spice-flavored treats, it's important to remember to keep alert for uninvited guests looking to join in on the fun. As temperatures begin to cool,

WPC Pest and Termite Control, in partnership with the National Pest Management Association, is sharing signs homeowners should look out for that could signal a rodent infestation.

"Disgusting odors that permeate from insulation in attics and basements are a sure sign that rodents are present," said Jim Mazzuchelli, owner of WPC. "While rodent infestations are common throughout the year, they are particularly troublesome as colder weather arrives and food sources diminish. These stark changes to

their environment make homes the ideal spot for them to hide out in.

Rodents are able to transmit more than 35 diseases to humans, posing a serious health threat to you and your family should they find their way into your homes insulation. Contamination from urine and droppings will cause serious respiratory issues, such as the deadly **Hantavirus**.

To help keep your family protected this fall, WPC is offering **FREE** rodent inspections and suggestions on decontaminating your home.

WPC and the NPMA have identified the following top seven telltale signs of a rodent infestation:

- **Droppings:** Finding droppings in the home is one of the most common signs of a rodent infestation. Homeowners often find these where food is stored, such as kitchen cabinets or pantries,

as well as under sinks, inside chewed cardboard boxes and along baseboards.

- **Gnaw marks:** Rodents will chew through almost any type of material to obtain food or water, causing serious damage to a home. Rats are also known to gnaw on wires behind walls, potentially resulting in dangerous house fires.
- **Nests:** Rodents prefer to hide in dark, secluded areas of the home and will use any materials available to build their nest. If you see items such as paper products or cotton strewn about, it might be a sign of a rodent infestation.
- **Tracks or rub marks:** As rats follow a trail between their nest and food sources throughout a home, they will often leave dark grease or dirt marks along walls and floorboards.



- **Strange noises:** Hearing strange noises at night could be attributed to a family of mice scurrying about the house, between the walls and up in attics and crawl-spaces.
- **An actual rodent:** Mice are known to reproduce quickly, as a female house mouse can give birth to a half-dozen babies every three weeks or up to 35 young per year. Chances are, if you see one mouse in the house, there are more hidden behind the walls!
- **Contamination:** Odors and staining of ceiling tiles and basement insulation is a sign of what could be droppings and urine caused by nesting rodents having their young.

For more information about rodent infestations, visit www.nobugsnopests.com or CALL 508-435-2211 or contact a licensed pest control professional.

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Tree Lighting

The fun continues at the Annual Downtown Tree Lighting! Ring in the holiday spirit with carolers, photo ops with the gingerbread man and snowman, hot chocolate sponsored by Connect Church, cookies provided by the

Ashland Lions and of course a special guest star..Santa! The fun begins at 4:00pm following the Holiday Stroll. The tree will be lit to guide the way for Santa at 4:30pm and then plan to stick around for a visit with the big

guy in his Santa shed at Montenegro Square. This will be the jolliest Saturday in Ashland full of shopping, treats and holiday cheer – we can't wait to see you there!



Ashland Tree Lighting
 Saturday Dec. 7th | 4 - 5 p.m.
 Come on down to Green Square on Main Street for hot cocoa, cookies, caroling, and the annual tree lighting ceremony! Santa will be attending so don't miss out! The tree lighting will happen at 4:30 p.m.

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December 2024 at the Ashland Library

ANNOUNCING - We will have a new calendar in January! Stay tuned for new links!!

The Library will be closing at 1pm on Tuesday, December 24th and is closed on Wednesday, December 25th for Christmas.

The Library will be closing at 1pm on Tuesday, December 31st.

Adult:

Visit our Website Calendar for Additional Info & Registration links:

<https://tinyurl.com/apl-calendar>

VIRTUAL: JOB SEARCH HELP - How To Create A Standout Resume

Monday, December 2 @ 2pm
This session will cover current resume best practices, including tips about what information to include, what to leave off, as well as formatting and content guidelines to give your experience more impact.

Virtual - More Holiday Romance Book Recommendations with Booklist Reviewer, John Charles

Monday, December 2 @ 7pm
With the holidays right around the corner, take a minute (or an hour) to relax and find some good holiday romance reads! John Charles will give us his "best of" list of 2024 that will have your TBR pile tipping over and your holidays spent cozying up to a good book (bring your own hot toddy!).

VIRTUAL Front Street Readers Book Club

Tuesday, December 3 @ 7pm
Read "A Job You Mostly Won't Know How to Do" by Pete Fromm

Virtual- Seventy-Five Minutes with Mark Twain with Bill Thierfelder

Tuesday, December 3 @ 7pm
A gifted raconteur and irascible moralist, Twain transcended the apparent limitations of his humble Missouri origins to become one of America's best and most beloved writers.

Paint Night with Ashwini Chitnavis

Wednesday, December 4 @ 5:30pm

We welcome Ashwini Chitnavis to host this session where you learn to paint on canvas. No art experience necessary, just an open mind and a can-do attitude.

Virtual - Environmental Book Club

Wednesday, December 4 @ 6:30pm

Read "Tales of Two Planets: stories of climate change and in-

equality in a divided world" edited by John Freeman.

VIRTUAL: Ashland Adult Book Club

Wednesday, December 4 @ 6:30pm

Read "Small Mercies" by Dennis Lehane.

Virtual- Robin Williams - The Man of a Thousand Laughs & Tears

Wednesday, December 4 @ 7pm

Anyone who has seen just five minutes of footage of Robin Williams performing can attest to his frenetic, warm-hearted zaniness. For every minute of laughter, he successfully delivered one of tears. Enjoy a look at the life and a career of this beloved Academy Award-winning actor and comedian.

Virtual- The Art of Storytelling - What Does The Art On Your Walls Say About You?

Thursday, December 5 @ 10:30am

During this workshop, you'll learn a 5-step storytelling framework and use it to create a short story for fun or work. Have a piece of art on hand to use as the inspiration for your story.

Virtual - Romance Book Club

Thursday, December 5 @ 6:30pm

Read Icelandic Romances

Virtual- Declutter series with Jamie Novak: What to Tidy When Company is On the Way

Thursday, December 5 @ 7pm

Learn what company notices first about your home. And see how to make the most of your efforts. Plus, during the program, you'll be guided through a tiny task.

Virtual- Eisenhower & The Media with the Eisenhower Presidential Library

Friday, December 6 @ 2pm

Learn about how the Eisenhower presidency changed the relationship between the media and the White House and gave the public far more access to the president than ever before.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion

Friday, December 6 @ 7pm
Watch "Le Samourai" (Kano/French)

Virtual: African Art Series: Learning to Look: Forms and Materials

Sunday, December 8 @ 2:30pm

The African art that is most familiar in the west are carvings, 2-D design was equally important. It took the form of wall-painting, textiles, and body decoration.

Card Making with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, December 9 @ 6:30pm

Jan will teach embossing, die cutting, proper stamping, and use of equipment individually and group techniques of creating unique cards.

Virtual - Q&A with Author Nicole Tersigni: "Cat People To Judge In Art And Life"

Monday, December 9 @ 7pm

Against the backdrop of fine art, Nicole delves into the minds of our feline companions and the people who serve them. As cat AND art lovers ourselves, we're just completely tickled by this :)

Virtual- Explore Presidential Landmarks In New England

Tuesday, December 10 @ 2pm

Take a trip through 200 years of the U.S. Presidency, focusing on the native New Englanders who called the White House home. Visit most of the sites in New England dedicated to our Presidents, including birthplaces, homes, libraries, and even bars.

Virtual - Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer Jody Blanchette aka @redreadreviews

Tuesday, December 10 @ 7pm

Not sure what to read next? Join Jody for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - with a bent towards horror and thrillers and a few other genres thrown in!

Virtual- Garden Layout and Design

Tuesday, December 10 @ 7pm

Paul Split presents low tech garden layout and design. He will present options for developing a garden space from the foundation up. He will also cover the principles of mixed garden designs including the layout, site evaluation, light, soil profiles, irrigation, plant selection, maintenance and budget.

Bio/Memoir Book Club

Wednesday, December 11 @ 11am

Read "The ride of her life: the true story of a woman, her horse, and their last chance journey across America" by Elizabeth

Letts.

Celebrate Taylor Swift

*For Adults Only
Wednesday, December 11 @ 4-7pm

Taylor Swift is not just for kids and teens! Adults 18+! Let's celebrate TayTay's birthday with an evening of fun activities that will fill your Swiftie souls :)

Virtual- A Path Forward For Sub-Saharan Africa

Wednesday, December 11 @ 7pm

Author Masachs Boungou will discuss his new book, "Shared Prosperity: A Path Forward For Sub-Saharan Africa".

In Person - Women's Wisdom Circle: The Four Pillars of Wellness

Thursday, December 12 @ 6pm

For this session registered dietitian Janel Funk will give an overview of the four pillars of wellness - nutrition, sleep, movement and stress management - and their impact on health, mood, hormones and more. Participants will have a deeper understanding of how these four pillars interconnect and practical tools to enhance their wellness and wellbeing.

Virtual - Q&A with author Kristie Frederick Daugherty: "Invisible Strings 113 Poets Respond to the Songs of Taylor Swift"

Thursday, December 12 @ 7pm

Swifties will experience the profundity and nuance of Swift's lyrics through this anthology of brand-new poems inspired by Taylor Swift songs, while having fun matching the poems to songs from all of her eras—vault tracks included!

Virtual- Porcupines Don't Shoot Their Quills

Thursday, December 12 @ 7pm

Come join Jane Newhouse as she discusses what wildlife rehab is all about, and shares fun facts about opossums, porcupines, beavers, raccoons and foxes. Learn the do's and don'ts of helping injured and orphaned wild animals in an emergency.

Mystery Book Club

Friday, December 13 @ 12pm
Read "The Silent Patient" by Alex Michaelides

Virtual: Armchair Travel To Greece (Corfu) With The Traveling Librarian

Friday, December 13 @ 2pm

Travel to Corfu, a jewel in the Ionian Sea which offers a blend of history, natural beauty, and vibrant culture. Explore the charming streets of Corfu Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and marvel at its Venetian architecture.

Virtual- JOB SEARCH HELP -- Find Your Next Job With The BRIDGE Method

Monday, December 16 @ 2pm

To combat the increased competition for every job opening, Career-Life Coach Dawn Quesnel developed the B.R.I.D.G.E. methodology, a job search method featured on the news, and published by Self-Growth.com "101 Great Ways to Enhance Your Career."

Make Your Own Wrapping Paper with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, December 16 @ 6:30pm

Did you know that most wrapping paper is not recyclable? It's true! So, come join us for an evening of learning how to make your own wrapping paper with Jan. We'll use stamps, colored pencils, and other organic materials to make your wrapping paper beautiful and earth friendly!

Virtual- Lorelei of Lorelei's Lit Lair discusses Looking Back at Favorites Romance Books in 2024 and What To Look Forward to in 2025

Monday, December 16 @ 7pm

Lorelei will be chatting about her "best of" 2024 - books she's loved through the year and think would make great additions to our TBR piles. And, then, she'll recommend some books that she is looking forward to in early 2025.

Virtual: Armchair Travel To Paris (A LIVE Walk Highlighting Christmas In Paris)

Tuesday, December 17 @ 11:30am

French tour guide Patrick Herpe returns to give viewers a live tour of Paris. He'll be walking while ZOOMING with us to show live video of Paris decorated for Christmas. He will visit the Galleries Lafayette Department Store to show us their famous animated window displays. If weather permits, Patrick will take us up on their roof terrace to see Paris

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from above, where we'll get a view of the dome of the galleries and the city's big Christmas tree.

Cookbook Club & Kitchen Gadget Exchange

Tuesday, December 17 @ 5pm

We're so excited about our Cookbook Club and our second Kitchen Gadget Exchange! Cook from "Sea Salt and Honey: Celebrating the Food of Karamli in 100 Sun-Drenched Recipes: A New Greek Cookbook" by Chloe, Olivia and Nicholas Tsakiris. And, bring a wrapped kitchen item to exchange (must be less than \$10)

Virtual- Masters of Song Nat King Cole with Clint Edwards

Tuesday, December 17 @ 7pm

Explore the career of one of the most popular and memorable musicians of the 20th century (Unforgettable, Mona Lisa, etc.)

Virtual- Great American Unsung Heroes Who Changed The Course Of History -- Elizabeth Freeman

Wednesday, December 18 @ 7pm

Learn about Elizabeth Freeman, a little-known national hero, and a symbol of courage and spirit to all who cherish freedom. She was among the first slaves in Massachusetts to sue for and win her freedom, helping end slavery in Massachusetts.

Virtual- J.P. Morgan As An Art Collector

Thursday, December 19 @ 10:30am

Many of you know J.P. (John Pierpont) Morgan as a major American financier around the turn of the 20th century, but now explore Morgan as a collector of a variety of art objects including paintings, antiquities, and manuscripts.

Virtual- Snowy Scapes & Celebrations: The Artist's Holiday with Jane Oneal

Thursday, December 19 @ 7pm

Enjoy this special overview of the variety of ways artists have captured the magic of the season. This program includes works by Grandma Moses, Salvador Dali, and Andy Warhol.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion

Friday, December 20 @ 7pm
Watch "The Monk and the Gun" (Kanopy/Bhutan)

Adult Weekly:**Knit and Crochet Club**

Mondays @ 6pm
Walk-In

ESL Conversation Group

Mondays @ 6:30pm
Walk-In

Gentle Yoga

Tuesdays @ 6pm
Registration is required

Children: Special Programs:**Cookie Decorating**

Thursday, December 5 @ 4:30pm

Get in the holiday spirit with some festive cookie decorating! All supplies are provided, just come with your creativity. For kids ages 3 to 12. Registration required.

Taylor Swift Party for Kids

Saturday, December 7 @ 9am-12pm

We're celebrating Tay's bday all day with friendship bracelets, trivia, a special scavenger hunt and of course, a dance party! Register for trivia at 11am, prizes for the winners!

A Firehouse's Night Before Christmas author event

Saturday, December 7 @ 9:30am

Local author and Fire Captain Parr will share his new book, *A Firehouse's Night Before Christmas*, and then lead an Interactive lesson on important fire safety tips for children. Enjoy live music and a book signing as part of the festivities. For families. Registration required.

Chinese Storytime

Tuesday, December 10 @ 6pm

Bring the whole family to the library for engaging stories, familiar songs, a fun art project and a special scavenger hunt, all in Chinese! Registration is requested and all are welcome.

Stories, Songs, and Stretches

*for ages 4-7
Thursday, December 12 @ 6:30pm

Kids and their parents or caregivers are invited to play together through stories, songs and yoga shapes. No experience or equipment necessary! Registration is requested.

Clocktown Rockers!

*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Friday, December 13 @ 10:30am

A special Friday edition of this popular story time! Join Miss

Katrina for this new music and movement program! We'll dance to favorite kids' tunes, have fun with instruments and other props, and read a story, all while building your child's early literacy and executive function skills. For ages 2-5 with a caregiver.

Little Crafters

*for 0-5 with a caregiver
Monday, December 16 @ 10:30am

Come join the Ashland Mom's Club for this story time, where little hands get to explore big ideas! Start with a sweet and lively story time, followed by a simple craft that's perfect for curious minds. Bring your imagination, and let's make some colorful memories together!

Lego Club with Kim the Lego Lady

*Grades K-3
Wednesday, December 18 @ 4:30pm

Calling all LEGO masters! Join Kim the Lego Lady for an interactive building adventure! Afterward, your awesome creations will be displayed in the library until the next LEGO club!

Registration is required and space is limited.

La Hora del Cuento

*para familias
Spanish Storytime
*for families
Wednesday, December 18 @ 6:30pm

Los invitamos a disfrutar en familia de una sesión de cuentos en español en la biblioteca. Ofreceremos la oportunidad de sumergirse en historias cautivadoras, rimas divertidas y canciones alegres, ¡todo en español! Join us for a special story time, offering families the opportunity to immerse themselves in captivating stories, fun rhymes, and cheerful songs, all in Spanish.

Celebrate Hanukkah!

*for families
Saturday, December 21 @ 10:30am

Come join us to celebrate Hanukkah at the library! Together, we'll read stories, hear about special Hanukkah traditions, and learn how to play dreidel. All families are welcome. Registration required.

Winter Reading Launch Party

*for kids
Monday, December 23 @ 10am-8pm

Be a Reading Machine during our Winter Reading Challenge! Sign up for the challenge, make a coded bracelet or keychain, play



some reading games, and use our special capsule machine to get your startup goodies and book suggestions. For all kids! No registration required.

Noon Year's Eve

*for families
Tuesday, December 31 @ 11:15am-12:15pm

A New Year's Eve celebration for the littles! Enjoy stories and a craft before the countdown to noon and an awesome balloon drop! Registration required.

Little Picassos Club

*Grades 2-5
Tuesday, December 10 @ 4:30pm

Looking to create your next masterpiece? Join Miss Kayla for Little Picassos Club, ideal for kids in grades 2 through 5. Each week, we will learn about a different artist or art style and work on unique art projects, ranging from painting to sculpting and everything in between! Come ready to get your hands messy and let your creativity show! Registration required.

Coding Class For Kids

*for ages 5 and up
Saturday, December 14 @ 1pm
Saturday, December 28, @ 1pm

Gear up for a tech-tastic adventure with our Coding Class for Kids! Every other Saturday, kids from Kindergarten through grade 5 will dive into the thrilling world of coding, where imagination meets innovation. With hands-on projects and fun, interactive lessons, your child will master the basics of coding and create their own cool projects. Whether they're building games or solving puzzles, this class promises excitement and discovery at every turn. Join us for a coding journey that's out of this world! ??? Click here for more information.

Space is limited to 12 kids and registration is required.

NEW Book Clubs!

APL Kids 1&2 Book Club
Wednesday, December 11 @ 4:15pm

Calling all first and second graders for APL Kids book club! Each month we will introduce an exciting book series. The children will follow along with Ms. Ka-

trina as she reads the first book of the series aloud, then we'll discuss what we've read and do a fun craft or activity together! Copies of the first and second book in the series will be available for checkout after the meeting. Registration required.

Beginning Reader Book Club

Tuesday, December 17 @ 4:30pm

Calling all budding bookworms! Join us for the Beginning Readers Book Club, where stories come alive in the most magical way! Every month, kindergartners gather for a fun-filled, choral-style reading adventure. We'll explore new worlds, create themed art, and make new friends—all while having a blast with books!

Space is limited to 12 and registration is required.

Graphic Novel Book Club

Thursday, December 19 @ 6:30pm
*grades 3 thru 6

Dive into a world where stories jump off the page! Each month, you'll read an exciting graphic novel before our meeting, where we'll chat about the book, play awesome games, and unleash your creativity with fun art projects. Plus, you get to vote on what book we'll read next—so your voice truly matters! With new friends, thrilling stories, and endless fun, it's the ultimate way to bring reading to life. Don't miss out on the excitement—come be a part of our graphic novel gang!

Space is limited to 16 and registration is required.

Ashland STEM Club

Saturday, December 14 @ 11am
Please Register
*for kids in K-5

Join this exciting workshop, run by high school students, that ignites curiosity with hands-on experiments, new innovations and take-home activities.

Friday Free Play!

Build your child's social and motor skills and connect with other parents during this low-key library play time. An assortment

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of special age appropriate toys and activities will be available for children ages birth through 5. Drop in any time, no registration required.

Friday Free Play

*for kids 0-5 with a caregiver
Friday, December 6 @ 10am

Friday Free Play

*for kids 0-5 with a caregiver
Friday, December 20 @ 10am

Friday Free Play

*for kids 0-5 with a caregiver
Friday, December 27 @ 10am

Weekly Storytimes:

Clocktown Rockers!

*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Tuesdays at 10:30-11am
Join Miss Katrina for this new music and movement program! We'll dance to favorite kids' tunes, have fun with instruments and other props, and read a story, all while building your child's early literacy and executive function skills. Storytime Sprouts

* For ages 0-3 with a caregiver
Wednesdays @ 10:30am-11am

Join us for a fun and interactive story time filled with singing, reading, bounces, fingerplays, puppets, instruments, and more! This engaging program is designed to introduce young children to the joys of literature and music while promoting early literacy skills.

Saturday Stories

*for ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Join Miss Kayla for a new Saturday morning storytime! We'll read lively stories, do fun rhymes and movement activities, and work on simple crafts. For families with children ages 2-5. No registration required.

Saturday, December 14 @ 10:30am

Saturday, December 28 @ 10:30am

Project ABC Play, Learn, and Grow Group

*for Ages 0 to 5
Tuesdays at 11am
A parent and child group offered by the Metrowest YMCA and the Early Childhood Alliance of Ashland & Framingham. A structured program to help prepare children for socialization and a school experience.

Registration *IS* required for this program
December 3, 2024
December 10, 2024
December 17, 2024
December 24, 2024
December 31, 2024

Teen:

Taylor Swift: The Library Day

*for ages 12-18
Saturday, December 14 @ 11-3pm

Celebrate Taylor Swift's birthday (a day late!) at the library! We will have three main events and other drop in activities throughout the day.

Taylor Swift has taken the world by storm, and now she's taking over the library! Come in on Saturday, December 14th for a whole day of Swiftie-themed activities. The schedule of events is as follows:

- 12PM Warm-up Act: Taylor Trivia
- 1PM Opener: Swifties Sing Karaoke
- 2PM Headliner: Name-that-Taylor-Tune

All day: Friendship Bracelet Making and Design Your Own Heart-Shaped Sunglasses

Teen Makers Club

Thursday, December 12 @ 6pm
Join us for our new monthly club of teen makers!

Stitch, knit, crochet, and generally hang out with other crafty

teens the second Thursday of every month from 6:00PM-7:00PM. Bring, work on, and show off your latest projects, and maybe learn a few new tips while you're here! Registration is requested, but walk-ins are welcome!

Friends of the Ashland Public Library 2-Day Book Sale

Friday, December 6 @ 5:30-7:30pm (members only, join at the door!)

Saturday, December 7 @ 9:30am-4pm

The Friends of the Ashland Public Library invite you to their Big 2-Day Book Sale on Dec. 6th and 7th!

Customers for all our sales will find thousands of titles on the permanent sales shelves including hard and soft cover fiction (all alphabetized by author for ease of shopping), a wide selection of history and politics titles, health and family living books, plus memoirs, biographies, and loads of additional titles, all arranged by genre. An entire section of the Book Sale Room is arranged for children to browse and select from a huge collection of board books, picture books, easy readers, and chapter books.

To keep the shelves stocked with fresh selections, the Friends accept donations in the library parking lot of gently used books, audio books and DVDs. Friends volunteers will be available to assist donors during this time. There is also a cart in the mezzanine lobby for donations at any time during library hours.

Proceeds from these monthly book sales and all fundraising efforts made by the Friends fund 100% of children, teen, and adult programs, our wonderful Museum Passes, and so much more!

Greater Ashland Lions Club

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah and Kwanza

Lions are always busy. Either helping out where needed or having events to raise money for Eye Research or other organizations supported by Lions Clubs International. The club participated in the hurricane Helene relief effort to those in North Carolina.

Our annual Coat Drive is still running until January 2025. Please donate warm winter coats for children and adults. For Pickup: contact Lion Debbi at 508.728.4912 or visit these sites for drop-off: Town Hall on Main Street, Ashland Community Center (West Union Street) and Starbucks at Union and Summer Streets. In October we collected 91 coats.

Thank You to those that attended our Annual Porchetta. The meal was delicious and those that participated in the Basket Raffle got some great gifts.

Did you know that December is Youth month? We support young people so they can make positive choices, lead healthy and productive lives and become the next generation of service leaders.

Our club supports many groups and organizations including; the Ashland Christmas Gift Program, Friends of the Ashland Public Library, the Ashland Emergency Fund, the Learning Center for the Deaf, Senior Monthly Meals and Special Olympics Massachusetts to name a few.

Wanting to get involved in the community? We're a low-pressure group of service-oriented folks always looking for new members. If you'd like to learn more about the Lions and our club, please contact Lion Alexis at cvarnie@hotmail.com.

We are still collecting unneeded eye glasses and pull tabs from beverage cans.

For more club information, please check us out on Facebook: Greater Ashland Lions Club. #weserve #kindnessmatters.

We are the Lions in Purple. We Serve!

SUBMITTED BY:
LION ROSALIE PORTER, 2ND VP

Holiday Stroll

The Holiday Stroll is back again, each year getting better than the last. We are excited to invite you to stroll through Downtown Ashland on Saturday, December 7th from 12-4PM, stopping into our brick and mortar stores and local restaurants, Town Hall and even the library to shop from 25+ local businesses. Join us at The Corner Spot to roast marshmallows and sip hot chocolate plus

visits from special guests from The North Pole!

Vendors will be popped up inside Town Hall (2 floors), Sub Zero Ice Cream, Nick's Pizza, Crossroads Physical Therapy, The Bagel Table, Blush Bouquets. Do all of your holiday shopping as well as Ashland Reiki and Wellness, Photography from Bill Horseman, and Blush Bouquets for gifts and more.

This is a wonderful way to show support for all of our wonderful businesses downtown, eat and drink at the local eateries like Erica's Ristorante, Stone's Public House, Clover Road Brewing, The Bagel Table, Nick's Pizza, Pizza Mine. So much to enjoy in the festive downtown area!

The Tell-Tale Chart(s)

BY KEVIN KAM FOR ENERGIZE ASHLAND

A few months ago in this space we discussed the concept of the negawatt, which is the unit of energy that you don't consume, and that the negawatt—not solar, wind, hydro or nuclear power—is the cleanest unit of electricity.

Let's take the negawatt concept one step further by considering that not every negawatt has the same environmental value because timing matters, too. Here's a chart from the website of New England's electric grid operator, ISO-New England, showing the total grid-based electricity consumption for the 48 hours starting at midnight Monday June 17.

The weather that Monday was mostly sunny with a high of 82 degrees, while Tuesday was the first day of a heat wave with high temperature of 92 degrees. Just from eyeballing the chart, you can see that electricity consumption rose significantly with the air temperature: peak demand on Tuesday was about 26% higher than on Monday, 21,750 versus 17,250 megawatts.

To meet the daily peak demand on Tuesday, the electric grid called on additional gas-fired power plants to run (or for those already on to burn even more gas) and also for an oil-burning plant to come online. In grid-speak, oil and gas were the "marginal fuels," meaning each additional unit of electric use caused an equivalent increase in gas/oil consumption, leading grid-wide emissions to peak at 105 metric tons of CO2 per minute compared to about 66 metric tons per minute at the daily low. In contrast, the peak emissions on Monday were about 88 metric tons of CO2 per minute, and were 44 metric tons at the daily low. Notice that the emissions graph (the top line represents total emissions, the one slightly below represents emissions from gas plants) is essentially the same shape and magnitude as the power curve.

Imagine that these charts represented traffic on the Mass Pike, and you have a daily commute into Boston. All else equal, you would avoid the peaks as much as possible, right? Or, if commuting at peak hours were

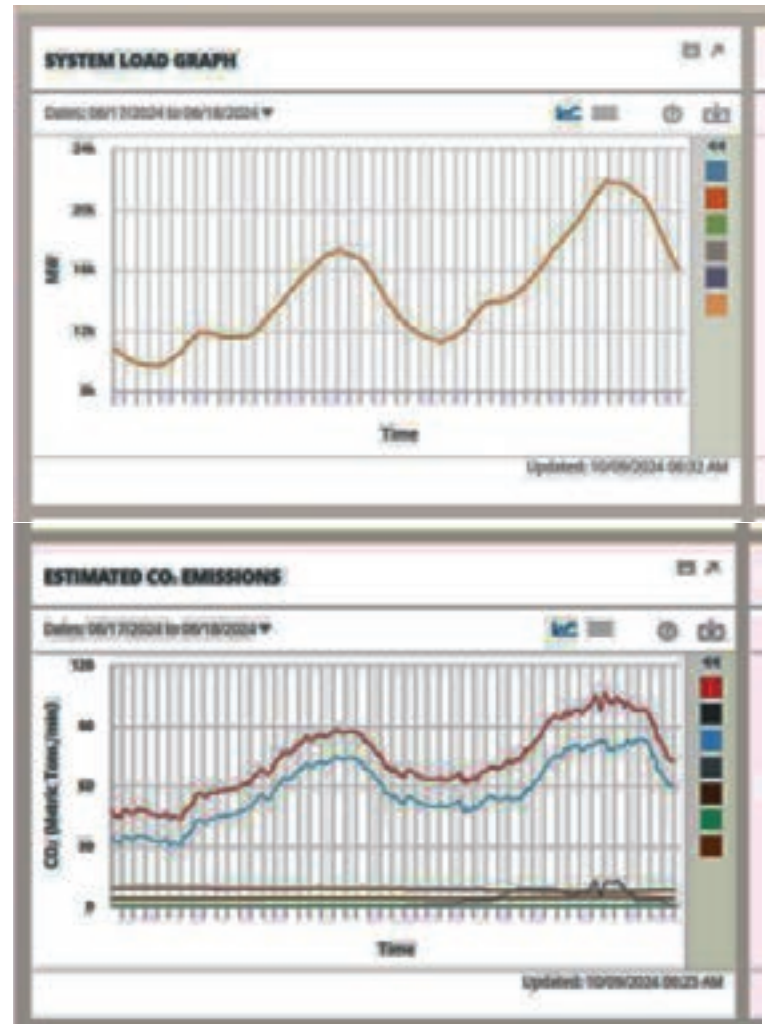


unavoidable, you would consider alternatives like the commuter rail or shared rides or telecommuting if possible, any way to avoid wasted time (or gasoline!) sitting in traffic.

Returning the conversation back to household energy, the suggestion here is to intentionally shift electricity consumption away from peak hours (or away from really hot days) by being flexible in running devices such as dishwashers, ovens, and washers/dryers, air conditioners/heaters and charging electric vehicles. As the emissions chart shows, a negawatt at peak hours results in about twice as much avoided emissions as an overnight negawatt on the same day, and potentially even more if you are able to shift consumption away from a heat wave.

While each of our individual actions has only a very small impact, intentional actions by a large group can make a difference; after all, what are these graphs but a real-time measure of the choices of our collective decisions to consume electricity?

I encourage you to check out



the Energize Ashland website (<https://community.massenergize.org/AshlandMA>) where you can learn more about small (and large) environmentally-friendly

actions you can take, see our list of upcoming events, and read testimonials about actions already taken by fellow Ashlanders.

Historical Society Hosts Author Of "Dry, Tinder"

Dry Tinder an historical novel based on the true story of the Towne sisters presented by writer Janice Thompson

Location: Ashland Historical Society, 2 Myrtle Street, Ashland, MA

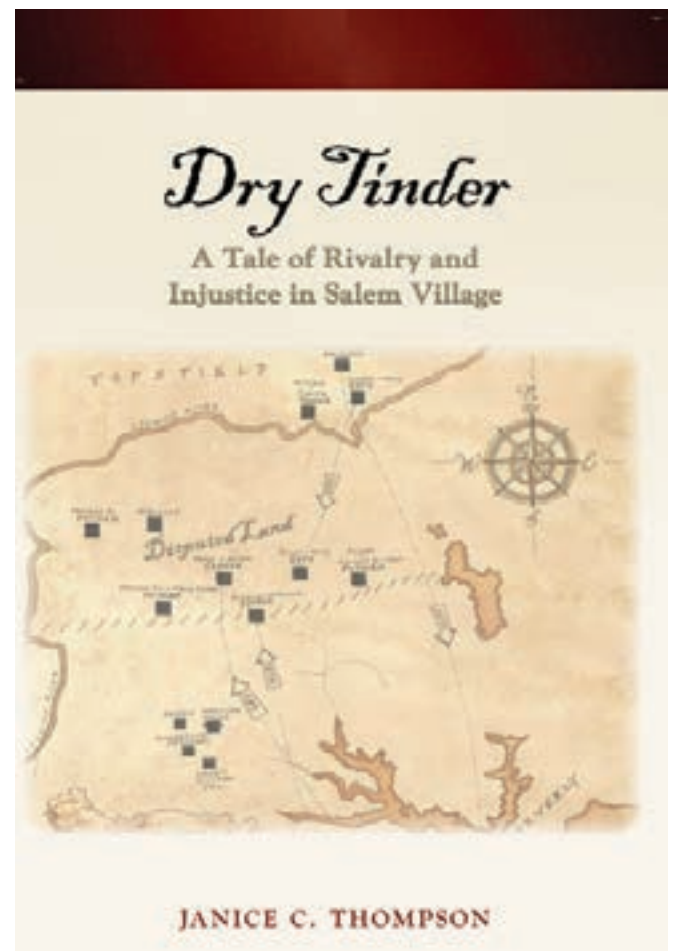
Free and open to the public


The Ashland Historical Society is pleased to have Janice Thompson talk about her book: Dry Tinder an historical novel based on the true story of the Towne sisters – three innocent, godly women who

are falsely accused of witchcraft in 1692. It offers a new perspective, as the narrative starts in 1670, a full twenty-three years before young girls begin accusing their elders of witchcraft. The trials are not a strange anomaly of history: Were the children possessed? Did witchcraft actually run rampant in Salem Village? Was it something strange that... happened? Instead, told through the perspective of Sarah Towne, the story becomes personal. The hysteria grows from

the extreme polarization and struggles of the Salem Village people at the time, including boundary disputes, the harsh judgment of their Puritan faith, wars with the native tribes and the sometimes troubled relationship between the Massachusetts Bay Colony and Mother England.

Like dry tinder to a carelessly lit match, the conflagration that follows should not be a surprise to anyone.





Janice Thompson is a writer and co-founder of Harpswell News, a new nonprofit launched in 2021 to publish the monthly Harpswell Anchor newspaper.

She is a lover of local history and fascinating, character-driven stories. She served as a board member and then president of the board of trustees at the Framingham History Center before moving to Maine in 2017.

Her day job is to run the Harpswell News nonprofit organization. She is a veteran fundraiser with 35+ years of experience at places like MIT, Harvard and the Boston Athenaeum. Before co-founding Harpswell News she served as Director of Development at the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust.

She first became intrigued with the true story of her Dry Tinder characters, the Towne sisters, in 2004 when she was living in Ashland, MA, a town that abuts the town of Framingham. She learned that the town of Framingham was founded in 1700 by these Salem witch trials refugees who were invited to the region by Thomas Danforth, the Deputy Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who was also the magistrate who sent Sarah Towne Bridges Cloyce to jail on accusation of witchcraft.

Sports

Three Years In The Making

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up, Adrian Guzman played soccer, but it wasn't a sport that seemed to resonate with him so he decided to try something else.

He had found an interest in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), but once his mother found out what it was and saw a match she told her son that she didn't want him anywhere near a fighting cage. With MMA behind him he thought hockey was another sport he could get into, but once again his mother squashed that idea as she didn't want her son to get hurt.

Eventually it was his mother who signed him up for wrestling, a sport that stuck with him. The funny thing about wrestling, that Guzman didn't find out until years later, was that his mother signed him up for the sport because she thought her son was too much of a wimp and needed a backbone. Thankfully it was a sport that he enjoyed and eventually became rather good at.

"With the approval of my mother, wrestling was something that I could get into," he said. "I could go out and throw people around while I was on the mat, but once the match was over I could make friends with them; that's just the type of person that I am."

Although as a young wrestler, Guzman never really thought that if he continued with the sport he would become some top-notch wrestler, he just enjoyed the sport. However, when

his coaches at the time (6th grade) asked him where he was going to high school he knew that he could possibly succeed in the sport. Guzman is originally from New Jersey, but his family had moved to Framingham when the coaches started asking him about high school.

"Framingham didn't have a youth wrestling program when I lived there so I joined the Ashland program," he said. "Eventually my mother moved us to Ashland so that I could go to high school there while hopefully wrestling."

While participating in the Ashland youth wrestling program Guzman always found himself watching the high school wrestlers and what they were doing. Along with his coaches help he started to incorporate those moves into his workouts to get better on the mat. With his focus on the basics, he started to see his wrestling techniques starting to improve.

Upon finally entering high school, the then freshman tried out for and made the varsity wrestling team. That year he put together a decent year for a first-year wrestler on the high school level and eventually found his way into the Division 3 State Tournament where he would finish third in the 152-pound weight class.

"The senior that I lost to that year was very good, but although I had lost it showed me how he was able to take me down and I would learn from that," Guzman said. "You can't stick to all that



you know, you need to keep fixing things as you go along if you want to get better."

As a sophomore the Clocker wrestler was ready to take on the wrestling world and found himself more than prepared to rise to the top of the charts and become a state champion. Although his mother would not stand in his way of greatness that year, an injury would.

"I was really ready for that season, I felt that I could have competed with anyone, but life was just not on my side that year," he said. "The pain hurt a

lot and I was stuck in a hospital bed instead of wrestling."

When he finally was released from the hospital Guzman knew that he had a high mountain to climb to get back to where he was just a year earlier. All of his opponents were still wrestling while he was laid up in that hospital and he knew that he would have to come back stronger than ever and needed to put in a lot of work if he wanted to resume his wrestling career.

Not only did Guzman put in all the work to get back onto the mat but he also rode that work ethic all the way back into the Division 3 State Wrestling Tournament. Once in the tournament along with 19 other wrestlers in the 157-pound weight class, the Ashland junior began dispatching of his opponents one by one until there was none left to earn his first ever State Championship.

"It was a really weird feeling, but one that I deserved as I felt that I was the top dog and could win it all," the then-junior said. "My final opponent was really good and once I finally won, I didn't want to celebrate in front of him. This championship was three years in the making and it

was well deserved with all that I had to do to get here."

Now as he gets ready to begin his senior season under Ashland Coach Peter Zacchilli he not only wants to repeat as the Division 3 State Champion but wants to advance further into the tournament; something he was unable to do last winter.

"I didn't do all that well last year after winning the state championship," Guzman said. "This year I am aiming higher; I want to do well in both the All-States and New England's."

In order to accomplish his next goals, the senior wrestler knows that he is going to have to work on his speed on the mat. He noted that strength can only get you so far, so you cannot continue to only rely on that one aspect of your game. Guzman is not only planning on improving his speed but want to bring a more technical aspect to his wrestling this, his final season for the Clockers.

If he is able to do all that Guzman firmly believes there is no doubt that he can capture back-to-back State Championships in addition to doing well in both the All State and New England Competitions.



Real Estate Corner

Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
11/15/2024	15 America Blvd.	\$715,000
11/15/2024	1 Baldwin Cir.	\$935,000
11/15/2024	10 Davis Farm Rd.	\$675,000
11/14/2024	355 Chestnut St.	\$600,000
11/08/2024	151 Leland Farm Rd.	\$444,900
11/08/2024	49 Hawthorne Rd.	\$540,000
11/08/2024	19 Summit Ln.	\$1.10 mil
11/07/2024	278 Trailside Way	\$478,000
11/05/2024	10 Barry Dr.	\$737,500
11/05/2024	35 Albert Ray Dr.	\$1.15 mil
11/01/2024	53 Kings Row	\$1.06 mil
11/01/2024	8 Greenwood Rd.	\$520,000
10/31/2024	82 Algonquin Trl.	\$535,000
10/31/2024	73 Half Crown Cir.	\$620,000
10/30/2024	62 Cedar Hill Rd.	\$480,000
10/30/2024	3 Willow Rd.	\$1.11 mil
10/30/2024	235 Meeting House Path	\$379,900
10/29/2024	110 Mountain Gate Rd.	\$420,000
10/28/2024	55 Cutler Dr.	\$660,000
10/24/2024	71 Pleasant St.	\$990,000
10/23/2024	54 Meeting House Path	\$425,000



The 8-bed, 4-bath, 3,832-square-foot home at 71 Pleasant Street in Ashland recently sold for \$999,000. www.zillow.com Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages

Holiday Cacti Add Weeks of Color and Enjoyment

BY MELINDA MYERS

Add weeks of colorful flowers and decades of enjoyment to your indoor plant collection with holiday cacti. Dress one up with a decorative basket, container, or foil wrap and give it to a favorite gardener or holiday hostess. You'll find a variety at your local garden center or florist.

The plant sold as a Christmas cactus may in fact be a Thanksgiving cactus. The true Christmas cactus blooms later and has small segments with rounded edges. The Thanksgiving cactus, though often sold as the Christmas cactus, has toothed or jagged segments and typically blooms earlier. To add to the confusion, there are hybrids of the two that bloom in between these.

Fortunately, their growing requirements and care are essentially the same, so the plants will do fine no matter the name on the label. Keep your flowering holiday cactus in a cool bright location to extend its bloom time for as long as four to eight weeks. Avoid hot and cold air drafts, moisture stress, and other environmental changes to reduce the risk of bud and flower drop.

These holiday cacti are epiphytes that naturally grow on trees in the rainforests of Brazil. They all prefer bright indirect light, high humidity, and thorough watering when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Don't overwater but don't let the soil dry completely. Water a bit more often when the plant is in bloom.

Grow them in an organic well-drained potting mix for best results. Water thoroughly and pour

off any excess water that collects in the saucer to avoid root rot. Reduce maintenance and improve the growing conditions with the help of gravel trays. Place a layer of pebbles, decorative stones, or marbles in the saucer or bottom of the foil wrap or basket. The pot will be elevated above any excess water collecting in the pebbles. As this water evaporates it increases the humidity around the plant.

Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering houseplant fertilizer once it finishes blooming and throughout spring and summer as needed. Grow your cactus in a north-facing window or back from an east- or west-facing window where it receives bright indirect light throughout the year. Too much sun turns the leaf segments dark red.

Don't be anxious to move these plants to a bigger container. They prefer to be somewhat pot-bound and can remain in the same pot for years.

Encourage a new flush of flowers with cooler night temperatures around 55 to 60 degrees and slightly drier soil. An uninterrupted dark period will also help promote flowering.

Next fall, start the dark treatment in early October to get holiday flowers. Cover the plants or move them to a location free of artificial light, indoors or outside, each night for 14 hours and provide bright, indirect sunlight each day. Any interruption in the dark period from outdoor, street, or reading lights can delay or prevent flowering.


Make this the year you add

holiday cacti to your indoor plant collection and consider purchasing a few for friends and family. These easy-care flowering beauties will brighten indoor holiday décor and everyone's mood.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.



Photo by Melinda Myers.



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Join the 2nd Annual Citizen Academy

Last January the Town launched its first Citizens Academy program to help connect our residents with firsthand knowledge about local government. We were really pleased with the response from the community and were able to deliver an engaging program to a great and dedicated group of 16 residents (first class pictured below).

This month we have opened up the application process for the 2nd Annual Citizens Academy. We hope you are interested in joining us. We aim to educate the new class on how our local government functions, increase transparency and build trust within our community as well as help foster future leaders in public service and volunteerism.

Last year's participants enjoyed their experience and felt that the commitment was worthwhile. Bob Rombauer

reflected on his experience by sharing that he was "amazed by the complexity of managing a small-town government. The dedication of the professionals in their respective roles, starting with the Town Manager, is impressive. If you have the opportunity to attend the academy next year, it will be well worth your time." And Megan Momtahreni felt that the program made her "feel more connected to Ashland, other residents, and those who serve it."

We have built off our program last year and plan to bring an interactive program to the participants. If you have interest in learning about the day-to-day operations of Town and about various roles, responsibilities and priorities of your Town departments this program would be great for you! We are planning a 10-week program and will meet



on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. You will receive presentations from our department heads and their staff, you will tour our new public safety

building and public works buildings and we will make sure you have plenty of time to ask any questions you might have about the inner workings of town gov-

ernment.

To apply go to: <https://ashlandmass.com/1103/Citizens-Academy> for more information.

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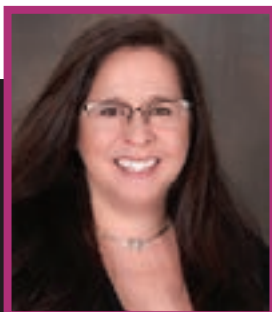


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