



# Bellingham BULLETIN

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December 2024

## Brian Rhodes Receives National PLTW Engineering Teacher of the Year Award

By JENNIFER RUSSO

When you meet Brian Rhodes, you are immediately struck by his friendly demeanor, humble nature, and winning smile. This passionate instructor clearly loves what he does for a living, teaching Engineering and Robotics at Blackstone Valley Tech and encouraging students to be their best selves and to love learning new things. His unique way of teaching recently earned him the 2024 National Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering Teacher of the Year Award, an accolade he received over 9,000 other PLTW instructors teaching the vocation in the United States.

A Bellingham High School graduate, Brian decided to enter the U.S. Navy, where he spent two years learning about engineering concepts and nuclear power theory, along with hands-on training on



**Blackstone Valley Tech teacher and Bellingham native Brian Rhodes recently earned the 2024 National Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering Teacher of the Year Award. Shown, from left, Dr. Matthew Connors, BVT Vocational Director, Dr. David Dimmett, President and CEO of PLTW, Aidan Doherty, District Director for MA Sen. Rebecca Rausch, MA Rep. Mike Soter, Brian Rhodes, with his family, MA Senator Ryan Fattman, and Anthony Steele, BVT Assistant Superintendent and Principal.**

how to operate the equipment utilized on nuclear submarines, cruisers, and aircraft carriers.

"This made the learning relevant and allowed me to

make immediate connections," shares Brian.

**AWARD**

*continued on page 2*



**The Blackhawks volleyball team celebrates qualifying for the Final Four after defeating Ursuline Academy in the Division 4 quarterfinal at Bellingham High.**

## Blackhawks Bow to Ipswich in Volleyball State Final

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Bellingham coach Steve Mantegani knew the Ipswich volleyball team was strong up front, had superb senior leadership and could rely on experience.

Those three elements surfaced in the Division 4 state championship at Billerica High School and were the keys for the

second-seeded Tigers as they rolled to a 3-1 triumph over the top-seeded Blackhawks. The title leaves little doubt about Ipswich's dominance. The Tigers now have won four straight state championships and have a 51-game winning streak, dating back to Oct. 28, 2022.

**VOLLEYBALL**

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AWARD

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Completing his bachelor's degree in Nuclear Engineering Tech shortly after his 6-year enlistment, Brian entered the private sector working with semiconductors and nanotechnology, where he was also tasked with training new personnel. He then decided to return to his original calling to pursue a career in public education.

"I specifically chose to work in a vocational technical high school, because the methodology of learning theory and concepts in a classroom followed by applying hands-on practical training is crucial," he shares.

"This goal to create graduates that are ready to enter the workforce with a skilled trade has met with resounding success. Vocational graduates also value training and become lifelong learners. I believe that learning in a vacuum without understanding the purpose or application of concepts makes it difficult for a teen to want to learn. Vocational education has found a way to engage our future generations."

In late October, BVT surprised Brian with an on-site ceremony attended by school administrators, instructors, students, PLTW organization leaders, Massachusetts state legislators, and Brian's wife and daughter. When he walked in, he was amazed at the crowd that welcomed him and sat smiling as speakers took the podium to share some words.

"BVT and PLTW have seen this community of educators expand significantly over the last decade. What started here as an elective class on the academic cycle has grown into a massive implementation, and none of this would have been possible if it were not for the passion and vision brought forth by Mr. Rhodes and his team," shared Dr. Matthew Connors, BVT Vocational Director.

"Mr. Rhodes encouraged me to join the Engineering program after the freshman exploratory. He helped shape me into the student I am today and gave direction but did so in a way where it still allowed me to learn everything on my own. He genuinely cares for the wellbeing of each one of his students and wants to see everyone succeed both inside and outside the classroom," said Gabrielle Gannon, class of 2026.

"Mr. Rhodes is more than just a great teacher, he is a coach, mentor, and role model to all of the students. I believe some people are just meant to be teachers, and he is absolutely one of those people," shared Caroline Gallant, Engineering and Robotics graduate of 2020.



"Mr. Rhodes is more than just a great teacher, he is a coach, mentor, and role model to all of the students. I believe some people are just meant to be teachers, and he is absolutely one of those people," - Caroline Gallant, BVT Class of 2020

Dr. David Dimmett, President and CEO of PLTW, shared the significance of taking a moment each year with these awards to celebrate great work, mentioning that Brian is not only a great teacher in his own right, but an outstanding resource for others in the profession.

Brian was then recognized by the state as Senator Ryan Fattman, Representative Michael Soter, and a representative from Senator Rebecca Rausch's office presented official citations extending congratulations for receiving the PLTW award, wishing him success, and reiterating the profound impact that teachers have on the lives of their students.

"The work ethic of our teachers here is beyond the norm. I would see Brian here at nights, weekends and even during the summer. He is that guy. When Brian took over the reins for this program, he continued to bring this shop to a whole new level and the popularity of it among the students continues to grow and grow. This is his life's passion, and it is more than evident," closed Anthony Steele, BVT Assistant Superintendent and Principal.

Brian encourages the community to support their local vocational technical high schools, to hear with an open mind the suggestions and advice given by our school leaders, and

to provide additional cooperative education opportunities for the programs offered there.

About how he felt about winning the PLTW award, Brian simply stated that it was "the most significant event or accomplishment in my entire career in any capacity. I was and still am in awe and amazement to have this honor bestowed upon me. The continuous support throughout our school from the top down is what makes it possible to have such success in the classroom. The award has also re-inspired me to be certain to give every student every opportunity to enjoy learning."

Congratulations Brian on your amazing achievement!

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# Celebrating a Prolific Career:

## BVT Superintendent Announces Retirement

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, a highly esteemed and nationally recognized leader in vocational-technical education, has been a cornerstone of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District since 1994, serving as the superintendent-director. His remarkable career, which includes significant advancements and achievements, has left a proud and profound mark. He



has announced his plans to retire at the end of the 2024-25 school year, marking the end of an era.

"Leading this incredible organization and serving our district's families and students has been

**BVT RETIREMENT**  
continued on page 4

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FOR UPDATES

# Town of Bellingham State Election

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Office & Candidates	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	Total
<b>ELECTORS OF PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT</b>						
AYYADURAI and ELLIS	11	15	9	12	9	<b>56</b>
DE LA CRUZ and GARCIA	5	5	3	4	3	<b>20</b>
HARRIS and WALZ	912	1034	1156	904	888	<b>4894</b>
OLIVER and TER MAAT	12	3	8	14	9	<b>46</b>
STEIN and CABALLERO-ROCA	6	13	16	14	6	<b>55</b>
TRUMP and VANCE	876	1002	1017	931	1043	<b>4869</b>
All Others	15	23	12	6	10	<b>66</b>
BLANKS	10	25	17	13	15	<b>80</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

## SENATOR IN CONGRESS

ELIZABETH ANN WARREN	846	976	1081	832	842	<b>4577</b>
JOHN DEATON	967	1083	1104	1024	1080	<b>5258</b>
All Others	33	3	1	5	4	<b>46</b>
BLANKS	1	58	52	37	57	<b>205</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

## REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS

JAKE AUCHINCLOSS	1247	1423	1547	1291	1294	<b>6802</b>
All Others	57	59	68	60	57	<b>301</b>
BLANKS	543	638	623	547	632	<b>2983</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

## COUNCILLOR

TAMISHA L. CIVIL	782	913	1001	825	775	<b>4296</b>
FRANCIS T. CRIMMINS, JR	887	991	1002	904	1020	<b>4804</b>
All Others	3	2	8	5	5	<b>23</b>
BLANKS	175	214	227	164	183	<b>963</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1845</b>	<b>2220</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

## SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT

REBECCA L. RAUSCH	855	984	1052	833	860	<b>4584</b>
DASHE M. VIDEIRA	854	954	1005	917	961	<b>4691</b>
All Others	3	1	5	3	3	<b>15</b>
BLANKS	135	181	176	145	159	<b>796</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

BVT

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# From the Town Clerk

## Federal/State Election

The 2024 Election for Federal, State and County offices is now certified and recorded. Over 10,000 Bellingham voters took part in this election, the results of which are printed in this newspaper. Modes of voting ranged from a two-week in person early voting period, to absentee and mail-in ballots, and finally ballots cast on November 5th, Election Day. We certainly had a very busy “election season” capping off a year with four elections. Thank you to my staff, the poll workers and the voters!

## Census/Dog Licenses

The 2025 census will go out to all households in Bellingham during the month of January. Please fill it out and return it as soon as possible. The annual census is important to the Town as it determines the amount of State funding to be received. It is also important as State Law requires the Town Clerk to inactivate any voters who have not responded to the annual census. Once inactive, a voter will be required to fill out an affidavit in order to vote in the future.

Don't forget to include your dog license applications and payment with the return of the census so you do not run the risk of incurring late charges or fines. Dog licenses are due on April 1, 2025.

## Farewell

This is the last article that I will be writing for *The Bellingham Bulletin* as your Town Clerk. I have met many wonderful people during my time in Bellingham and experienced a crash course in municipal government through the many boards and committees on which I have served. Leaving is bittersweet, but it is time that I move on to a new chapter.

My tenure as Town Clerk has also been a tumultuous time, with my first solo election taking place during COVID, the major labor-intensive changes in election and other laws, staff issues, and unfounded criticisms on social media. However, with the help of my current staff, Amy Bartelloni (FT), David Wyatt (PT), Nancy O'Rourke (PT), and Judy Morris (Tax Workoff) and the wonderful election workers, we have managed to meet the ever-changing challenges. I feel that I am leaving a very competent staff to continue on and wish them well. I will miss them deeply and they will forever be my friends. To all the people at Town Hall and throughout Bellingham who have supported and befriended me, I thank them and wish them the best always. With that, I will say, “Happy Holidays to all and to all a farewell!”

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## BVT RETIREMENT

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an honor,” Dr. Fitzpatrick said. “After more than three decades in a role I have profoundly enjoyed, it is bittersweet to share that this will be my final school year as superintendent-director. The decision to retire has been made collaboratively with our district school committee and with forward-thinking and advanced planning with our leadership team for continued success.”

Dr. Fitzpatrick became BVT's fourth superintendent on January 3, 1994. Previously, he was director of the Center for Vocational Technical Education at Fitchburg State College for four

years, the director of statewide curriculum projects at Westfield State College and Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District for three years, statewide conference coordinator for vocational-technical leadership personnel at Fitchburg State College and Westfield State College for 13 years and assistant superintendent at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District for 13 years.

During his tenure, voters approved bond issues, significant repair projects, a major expansion, and the opening of new vocational and adult programs. The school has received a Silver Award and was named Pacesetter Site for High Schools That Work program of the Southern



Regional Education Board in 1997, 2007-2010, and 2010-2013. The school was also named a Commonwealth Compass School by the state in 2003, one of six schools in the coun-

try to receive the 2004 National School Change Award from Fordham University, and earned designation as a 2005 Vanguard Model School by Mass Insight Education.

Dr. Fitzpatrick is the only superintendent in Massachusetts to have served as the president of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools. Additionally, he served on the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Executive and Governing Boards and as chairman of the New England School Development Council. Dr. Fitzpatrick was also named

Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year 2011 by MASS and AASA.

At Blackstone Valley Tech, as educators prepare students to take what they have learned and find their true passion and purpose in their professional careers, the district will celebrate Dr. Fitzpatrick's prolific career, which exemplifies this sentiment with planned events throughout the school year. His last day as superintendent-director will be June 30, 2025. This timely notice allows the District School Committee to prepare for a smooth transition in its search for its next superintendent.

## VOLLEYBALL

continued from page 1

Ipswich has now beaten the Blackhawks for the second straight time in the state final.

The Tigers won the first game, which was tied 17-17, by

going on an 8-2 run for a 25-19 victory. Bellingham bounced back for a 25-22 win in the second set. After trailing 11-9, the Blackhawks scored five points in a row to grab a 14-11 advantage to tie the match at 1-1.

The Tigers, however, took an early five-point lead in the third game that led to a 25-16 triumph before they wrapped up the contest with a 25-15 victory in the fourth set.

“We played too conservatively in the opening game, but our defense and our energy were great in the second set,” Mantegani said. “They got points early in the third game and built momentum as we struggled. The fourth set got away from us quickly, because we didn't dig in and fight back.”

Ipswich is a veteran well-oiled machine. They have eight seniors, six of whom are starters, while nine of Bellingham's 14 players are underclassmen.

Middle hitter Addison Pillis and outside hitter Claire Buletza were dynamic for the Tigers.

“They're strong, they put a lot of balls in play and their placements are really good,” Mantegani noted. “Both are all-stars at the state level.”

The Blackhawks' Val Nolan, a captain and an outstanding hitter, had high praise for both Pillis and Buletza. “They get awesome kills, they're powerful, and their return shots are tough to handle,” said Nolan, who finished with 9 kills and 10 digs. “Ipswich has super talent and they're the best team we faced all season.”

Two other Blackhawks who compiled impressive stats were outside hitter Mia Milani and libero Sophia Soto. Milani had 11 kills and 14 digs while Soto had 20 digs.

Mantegani, although disappointed, said he was proud of his players.

“It's tough to lose, but I'm incredibly proud of the girls,” he said. “It's hard to get to a state final. The season is long — we had 48 practices and 24 matches. There's no shame in losing to Ipswich. We were the two best teams in the division, and we were on a collision course.”

BHS finished its season with a 20-4 record overall. Ipswich was 23-0.

In the semifinal round, Bellingham posted a 3-1 triumph over No. 4 Millbury, which was 20-3. The Blackhawks got off to a rocky start, taking an 18-11 lead and letting it slip away. They lost the first set, 24-26.

“Losing that game was a wake-up call,” Mantegani said. “When you get to the Final Four, every opponent is capable and talented. They were scrappy, and they kept their mistakes to a minimum, but our offensive power and consistent defense carried us.”

Milani and Nolan led the offense. Milani registered 15 kills and 15 digs. Nolan had 12 kills and 23 digs.

The Blackhawks advanced to the Final Four by defeating South Hadley, Norfolk Agricultural and Ursuline Academy. All three triumphs were by 3-0 margins.

“Beating South Hadley was a great way to start the playoffs,” Mantegani said. “We played well and our energy level increased, especially in the third game.”

Eight-seeded Ursuline provided the most resistance among the Blackhawks first three opponents. The Dedham-based school almost forced a fourth set. BHS took the first two games (25-13 and 25-11), but the Bears relied on an aggressive, ultra-scrappy style in the third set. They jumped out to a 6-1 lead, but the Blackhawks rallied to tie the game four times. With the score knotted at 20-20, Mantegani challenged his squad.

“I stressed that we needed to play cleaner and lessen our mistakes,” he said. His players listened well. BHS scored twice for a 22-20 lead, clung to 24-22 advantage, then finished off the Bears, winning 25-23.

“Bellingham relies on solid defense and great hitters,” said Ursuline coach Kevin Goyette. “They excel on serve-receives and effectively get the ball to the hitters who know how to score. Nolan and Milani set the pace for them.”

The Blackhawks will have 11 of their 14 players back next season, and that gives returnees plenty of optimism for the future.

“We'll have more fight and we'll be hungry,” Nolan said. “We want to put the school's first state-title volleyball banner on the gym wall.”



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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

## Business spotlight

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](http://AffordableJunkRemoval.com). For an estimate or appointment, call or text (774) 287-1133.

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# Brush Fire Warning: State, Local Leaders Urge Caution Amid High Fire Risk

With active brush fires reported statewide, including a recent significant 12-acre Franklin brush fire near Populatic Street that required 12 mutual aid departments and took 9-10 hours to control, local and state officials are urging residents to use extra caution with any open flame or other heat source outdoors.

"That (brush fire) took us quite a while," said Franklin Fire Department Chief James McLaughlin in late November, "The important thing is nobody got hurt and no homes were affected. We kept it from spreading to the homes." He reminds local residents that no outdoor burning is permitted until January 15th and that if anyone sees an open burn to not be afraid to reach out before anything spreads.

While about 15 to 20 wildfires are reported statewide in an average October or November, this year, we saw 211 in October and 292 by mid-November, at which point 1,500 acres had burned since October 1, nearly the average for an entire year.

Representatives from the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security, Department of Conservation & Recreation, Department of Fire Services,

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, and Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts reminded residents that the ongoing weather conditions make dry leaves, dead vegetation, and other fuels extremely receptive to ignition.

"The dry, sunny, breezy weather ... means that any outdoor fire will spread quickly and become very difficult to manage," said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. "We're seeing preventable fires growing to dangerous sizes and drawing numerous resources, locally and regionally."

Based on the preliminary causes of recent fires, officials are asking residents to:

- Remember that open burning is prohibited statewide through January and in many communities year-round.
- Refrain from outdoor cooking and heating. Sparks and embers from chimineas, fire pits, and grills can easily ignite dry vegetation, debris, and overhanging branches.

## Reducing Pollution This Winter

What you can do to prevent stormwater pollution on your property

**1) Shovel as soon as possible after a snowstorm. As a result, less ice will form and you won't need to use as much salt or de-icer.**



**2) Use safe and effective alternatives to salt. Remember that salt is not effective below 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Sand or kitty litter will give you traction when it's too cold for salt.**



**3) Plant native species, that are salt tolerant, near paved areas. Not only will these species be able to survive despite the road salt, they will also act as a protective buffer for local waterways.**



**4) Make sure the storm drains closest to your property are clear of snow and other debris. Do not shovel snow into storm drains since they empty directly into local creeks.**



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**FIRE**  
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**BVT**

*continued from page 3*

**REPRESENTATIVE IN GENERAL COURT**

<b>MICHAEL J. SOTER</b>	1397	1593	1687	1510	1569	<b>7756</b>
<b>All Others</b>	38	50	45	28	34	<b>195</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	412	477	506	360	380	<b>2135</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**CLERK OF COURTS**

<b>WALTER F. TIMILTY</b>	1253	1423	1531	1305	1338	<b>6850</b>
<b>All Others</b>	46	47	61	45	49	<b>248</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	548	650	646	548	596	<b>2988</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**REGISTRY OF DEEDS**

<b>WILLIAM PATRICK O'DONNELL</b>	1258	1438	1547	1308	1340	<b>6891</b>
<b>All Others</b>	40	39	55	42	43	<b>219</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	549	643	636	548	600	<b>2976</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

<b>JOSEPH P. SHEA</b>	1097	1252	1346	1131	1135	<b>5961</b>
<b>RICHARD R. STAITI</b>	730	865	955	796	812	<b>4158</b>
<b>All Others</b>	61	54	73	55	58	<b>301</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	1806	2069	2102	1814	1961	<b>9752</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3694</b>	<b>4240</b>	<b>4476</b>	<b>3796</b>	<b>3966</b>	<b>20172</b>

**QUESTION 1 - State Auditor**

<b>YES</b>	1265	1420	1507	1279	1321	<b>6792</b>
<b>NO</b>	467	576	618	517	554	<b>2732</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	115	124	113	102	108	<b>562</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**QUESTION 2 - MCAS**

<b>YES</b>	1121	1307	1344	1121	1167	<b>6060</b>
<b>NO</b>	681	764	840	740	770	<b>3795</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	45	49	54	37	46	<b>231</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**QUESTION 3 - Transportation Network Drivers**

<b>YES</b>	863	917	1042	861	884	<b>4567</b>
<b>NO</b>	880	1086	1090	960	1014	<b>5030</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	104	117	106	77	85	<b>489</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**QUESTION 4- Psychedelic Substances**

<b>YES</b>	789	825	945	774	831	<b>4164</b>
<b>NO</b>	983	1220	1220	1079	1078	<b>5580</b>
<b>BLANKS</b>	75	75	73	45	74	<b>342</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

**QUESTION 5 - Minimum Wage**

<b>YES</b>	532	522	594	514	568	2730
<b>NO</b>	1259	1526	1582	1347	1357	7071
<b>0</b>	56	72	62	37	58	285
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>10086</b>

A true record.

ATTEST:

Lawrence J. Sposato, Jr.  
Bellingham Town Clerk

**FIRE**

*continued from page 5*

- Use caution with lawnmowers, leaf blowers, all-terrain vehicles, and other power equipment. The engines can become hot enough to ignite dry leaves and grass.
- Dispose of ashes from fireplaces and wood stoves in a metal can, douse them with water, and cover them with a tight-fitting lid.
- Extinguish smoking materials in a sturdy ashtray with water or sand. Never toss cigarette butts, matches, or other smoking materials over the edge of a balcony, stub them out on stairs or railings, or toss them in dry vegetation or debris.

Many local fire departments have imposed restrictions on any outdoor fires because of the severe fire risk right now. It's too soon to say whether that will have an effect on holiday lights, but it's always important to play it safe with the candles and decorations. Battery-operated candles are safer than the real thing, and

many models even flicker for a warm, homey effect and can be left on all night, unlike traditional candles that should always be extinguished before leaving the room or going to sleep.

Strings of Christmas tree lights should be limited to the number recommended by the manufacturer. Joining too many together can cause them to over-heat and potentially cause a fire. A dry tree will burn like a forest fire in your home, so always keep it watered and keep it at least three feet from any heat source such as a fireplace, heater, or candles. Keep your tree away from doors and windows so it doesn't block your escape route, and dispose of it promptly after the holiday.

Residents should monitor fire conditions closely and follow instructions from local public safety officials. Ensure that Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are enabled on your cell phone. If your community has a local alert system, sign up to receive local warnings.

Find more outdoor fire safety tips on the Department of Fire Services' website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-fire-safety>.

# Holiday Fun with BWOT

## Ice Cream Sundaes with Santa

Bellingham Women of Today will welcome Santa with Ice Cream instead of muffins this year on Saturday, December 14th from 12:30 – 2 p.m. at St. Blaise Church Hall, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham. You can make sundaes with lots of toppings and other treats. Food and beverage items are \$2.50 - \$4.00 each. Admission fee is \$5 per child with a maximum charge of \$15 per family. Children can meet Santa, give him their Christmas wish list while you are welcome to take your phone or camera photos. There will be free crafts and coloring pages for kids as well as raffle baskets and holiday items for sale. All proceeds will benefit local BWOT charities.

They are a great gift for children, seniors, college students and anyone young at heart. The cost is \$2 for each letter or three for \$5. We will be taking requests at Ice Cream Sundaes with Santa, December 14th, 12:30 to 2 p.m. at St. Blaise Church Hall in Bellingham or send the name and address of child/children along with your name and phone number, payment, and any information you would like added to the letter, to BWOT, PO Box 405, Bellingham, MA 02019 before December 15th.

## About BWOT

The BWOT is a nonprofit civic organization that has served Bellingham and surrounding communities for over 30 years. We would like you to join us as we continue to serve our community. We meet the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30, September through June, in the Police department's conference room on Blackstone St. Bellingham. Contact us at [bellingham-womenoftoday@gmail.com](mailto:bellingham-womenoftoday@gmail.com) and visit us on Facebook.

## Letters from Santa

Santa and his elves are so busy preparing for Christmas the Bellingham Women of Today will be helping him send personalized letters to anyone on your list.

# Simplify Home Realty Celebrates One-Year Anniversary with Night of Gratitude

Simplify Home Realty, a residential real estate company based in Bellingham, Massachusetts, marked its first year in business with a Night of Gratitude celebration, bringing together clients, friends, and community members to commemorate a year of growth and accomplishments. Founded by Broker Owner Tina Haynes, Simplify Home Realty has quickly established a reputation for simplifying the home buying and selling process, delivering personalized service, and building strong community relationships.

The event was held at The Bird & Bear Collective in Holliston, MA, where attendees enjoyed an evening of refreshments, networking, and a heartfelt message from Tina Haynes, who expressed deep appreciation for the support that has fueled the company's success. The celebration reflected on Simplify Home Realty's journey, highlighting memorable client stories and successful transactions that have made an impact on local families and the community.

Adding to the company's list of achievements in 2024, Sim-

plify Home Realty won a silver award in the "MyFM Quest for the Best" contests best Real Estate Company category. This prestigious recognition reflects the company's commitment to excellence and client satisfaction, as well as the trust placed in them by the local community. "Receiving this award in our first year is a true honor," said Haynes. "We are proud to serve our community and grateful for this acknowledgment of our efforts."

Tina Haynes, who brings years of real estate expertise to Simplify Home Realty, shared, "We are incredibly grateful to all our clients and partners who have placed their trust in us this past year. Simplify Home Realty was founded on the idea of making the real estate process easier and more accessible, and we are thrilled to see that vision come to life with the support of our community."

Since opening its doors a year ago, Simplify Home Realty has become known for its client-centered approach and dedication to transparency, helping individuals and families navigate the complex real estate market with ease.



**Pictured Left to Right: Fran Brooks, REALTOR®, Tina Haynes, Broker Owner, Teagan Jones, REALTOR®**

As the company looks ahead, Simplify Home Realty is excited to continue serving Bellingham and the surrounding areas, helping more people achieve their real estate dreams in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and pro-

viding a new opportunity for real estate agents ready for change.

For more information about Simplify Home Realty and its agents, visit [www.simplifyhome-realty.com](http://www.simplifyhome-realty.com).

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**CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Norfolk Probate and Family Court 35 Shawmut Road  
Canton, MA 02021

**Docket No. N024P3086GD**

**In the Matter of: Dominic Alexander Perier of: Bellingham, MA:  
Respondent: Alleged Incapacitated Person**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Amanda L. Perier of Bellingham, MA** and **John A. Perier of Bellingham, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that Dominic Alexander Perier is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Amanda L. Perier of Bellingham, MA** and **John A. Perier of Bellingham, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **12/18/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.**

**WITNESS, Hon. Patricia Gorman, First Justice of this Court.**

Date: November 13, 2024

Colleen M Brierley, Register of Probate

## TAXES



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# Library Holds First Author Expo

By J.D. O'GARA

On Saturday, November 16th, The Bellingham Public Library held its first Bellingham Local Author Expo. The focus of this Expo was to highlight the works of authors from

Bellingham and our neighboring towns, as well as the work of the members of the Bellingham Writers Group. Authors displayed their books and took part in panel discussions, led by



Ted Reinstein, of WCVB's Chronicle, was keynote speaker at the Bellingham Public Library's first Author Expo. Photo by Jane Lebak



Photo by Jane Lebak

of WCVB's Chronicle, who also spoke about his most recent book,

Travels through the Heart & Soul of New England: Stories of Struggle, Resilience, and Triumph. Participating authors donated 10% of the proceeds from any merchandise they sold to the Friends of the Bellingham Library.

"I'm comfortable saying that the Expo attracted over 150 people," says Bernadette Rivard, Director of the Bellingham Public Library, adding, "So far, the feedback I have received from most of the participants is good, and the vast majority of them say they plan to attend next year."



Young authors, members of the "Write Stuff" Children's Summer Writing Club at Bellingham Public Library, presented their work at the recent Author Expo. From left to right, Amelia Bracey, Maya Delis, Mackenzie Novacek, Diane Nelson, Ibrahim Sezen, Sophie Miller, Jack Novacek, Odin Bracey. Missing: Siddhidatri Kalyan, Audrey Williams and Crosby Shumaker. Photo used courtesy of Bellingham Public Library.

Rivard notes that one highlight of the morning was the launch of the book written by the "Write Stuff" children's

Summer Writing Club. The project was facilitated by Library Assistant Diane Nelson.




Local authors participated in panel discussions led by the keynote speaker.

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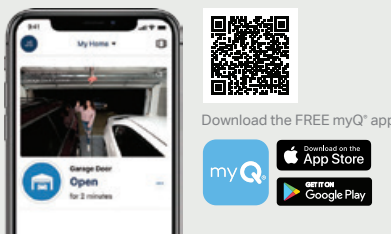


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Your Money, Your Independence

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



Glenn Brown, CFP

Ah, the holiday season... a time for joy, gratitude and (unfortunately) for some the ritual of cramming late nights to ensure they don't pay more in taxes than necessary now and in retirement.

Sure, they could be planning for family get-togethers, attending holiday parties with friends or enjoying eggnog by the fire. But no, that's all too festive and cheerful.

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?

### 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](http://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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# 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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## Get Ready for the Bellingham Lions 4th Annual Outdoor Holiday House Decorating Contest!

Show off your outdoor decorating skills and enter our Outdoor Holiday House Decorating Contest. Participation is open to all Bellingham residents and all holidays are welcome. The addresses of participating homes will be posted online for all to enjoy.

Displays must be visible between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Friday December 20, Saturday December 21, and Sunday December 22 for the judges to view your outdoor decorations. First, second and third place winners will be announced on Monday December 23.

Register your outside holiday display by Wednesday December 18 on <https://forms.gle/RvLx8zKAU6V1trco9>. Any questions, or if you see a house that should participate, contact Brian Salisbury at [bellinghamlights@gmail.com](mailto:bellinghamlights@gmail.com).

# 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 crawlspaces.

- **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](http://www.nobugsnopests.com) or CALL (508) 435-2211 or contact a licensed pest control professional.

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### WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY

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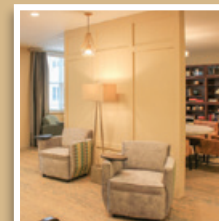
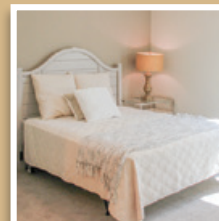
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# Government Oversight in Ensuring Ethical Referrals Between Optometrists and Ophthalmologists

Ethical referral practices between optometrists and ophthalmologists are vital to maintaining trust in the medical profession and safeguarding patient welfare. However, financial incentives, kickbacks, and other self-serving practices often threaten these principles. In such cases, government intervention becomes essential to uphold ethical standards and enforce legal compliance. High-profile cases, such as those in Rhode Island, Texas, and Louisiana, highlight the significance of government oversight in addressing violations and protecting patients.

## The Importance of Patient-Centered Referrals

Optometrists are ethically and legally obligated to prioritize patient well-being when making referrals. Considerations like quality of care, proximity, and insurance network compatibility should guide these decisions. Unfortunately, certain practices undermine this ethical standard:

## Referrals Outside the Insurance Network

Some optometrists refer patients to providers outside their insurance networks, leading to avoidable out-of-pocket expenses. When motivated by financial gain or kickbacks, such referrals prioritize profits over patient interests.

## Conditional Referrals Based on Financial Agreements

In some cases, referrals are tied to agreements where ophthalmologists return patients post-surgery, regardless of clinical necessity. Often, these arrangements include expectations of eyeglass purchases from the referring optometrist's office.

## Quid Pro Quo Referrals

Financial incentives between optometrists and ophthalmologists create biased referral patterns. These quid pro quo arrangements prioritize mutual financial benefit rather than the best interests of the patient.

## Referrals to Office-Based Cataract Surgery (OBS)

Optometrists sometimes refer patients to ophthalmologists performing surgeries in office-based settings instead of accredited centers. These office setups lack MD anesthesiologists, compromise emergency readiness, and charge extra fees not covered by Medicare. Patients are frequently unaware of these risks or additional costs, leaving them vulnerable to suboptimal care.

## Government's Role in Preventing Unethical Practices

To counter unethical referrals, federal laws like the Anti-Kickback Statute and the False Claims Act (FCA) play a crucial role:

### Anti-Kickback Statute

This law prohibits any form of payment or incentive to influence referrals. For example, in Rhode Island, Dr. Paul Koch faced allegations of accepting kickbacks for patient referrals. The govern-



ment's investigation resulted in a settlement, underscoring the importance of holding violators accountable.

### False Claims Act (FCA)

Referring patients out of network for financial gain can lead to fraudulent billing practices. In Texas and Louisiana, healthcare providers faced legal action for filing false claims tied to unethical referral arrangements, resulting in significant settlements.

### Education and Monitoring as Preventative Measures

Governmental agencies like the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and state Attorneys General must promote transparency in referral practices. Routine audits, mandatory reporting, and educational initiatives help identify and prevent unethical behavior. Collaboration between professional societies, licensing boards, and regulatory bodies can establish clearer guidelines and ensure widespread compliance. If you sense unethical referral by your optometrist you are encouraged to refer this optometrist to the OIG.

### Ensuring Ethical Referrals: Questions Patients Should Ask

Patients can protect themselves by asking critical questions when receiving referrals from an optometrist to a specific ophthalmologist and no one else:

- Why are you referring me to this specific ophthalmologist or surgeon?
- Why aren't you giving me a choice of multiple ophthalmologists/ surgeons so I can choose based on my best interest?
- Is the surgeon you're referring me to within my insurance network?
- Why not refer me to a local ophthalmologist who is closer and in-network?
- Does the surgeon perform surgeries in a licensed, accredited center or an office-based setting?
- Are there additional out-of-pocket costs for the recommended surgery in this ophthalmologist office-based surgery center?
- Is the surgeon local, or part of a distant franchise practice?
- Where will I be seen in case of an emergency—locally or hours away?
- My neighbors and friends had excellent results with local ophthalmologists—why not refer me to one of them?

Asking these questions empowers patients to make informed decisions about their care.

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## Ladies of St. Anne Christmas Gala December 12th



This meeting is always a favorite because of the teasing, twists and laughs. After a quick meeting, Mrs. Claus MC'd the Swap where over thirty Ladies chose gifts and often swapped gifts (not always willingly) but always with laughter.

The Ladies Christmas Gala will be held on December 12, 6 p.m., at the Bellingham Sportsman Club, 360 Lake St., Bellingham. The buffet menu includes beef, roasted chicken, pasta with sauce, roasted potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, rolls with butter, coffee, tea and dessert. There will also be bar service for those who wish to order and pay for other beverages. Cost for the buffet is \$32. and can be paid by

check or cash. Checks should be made to St. Blaise Church with LSA Christmas Gala on the memo line. Payment, either cash or check, can be placed in the collection basket at Mass but must be in an envelope marked LSA Christmas Gala, Ann-Marie or Monique. Last day to sign up and pay is December 1, 2024. We hope you will join us in celebrating Christmas.

## Bellingham Fire Department Firefighters/Paramedics Perform Life-Saving CPR

Chief R. William Miller is pleased to share that Bellingham Fire Department firefighters/paramedics recently performed life-saving CPR during a medical call.

On Saturday, Oct. 26, at approximately 1:30 p.m., Bellingham Fire was dispatched to Elvira Street for a medical call where a 50-year-old man was suffering from cardiac arrest. The person who called 911 to report the incident was actively performing CPR.

Bellingham Fire Lt. Zack Spencer and Firefighters/Paramedics Tim Cole, Johnathan Szerlag and David Howard responded to the home. The first arriving members found an unresponsive male in cardiac arrest with a family member performing CPR.

Bellingham Fire quickly took over compressions and applied a

cardiac monitor, which showed an indication to defibrillate. The firefighters/paramedics defibrillated the patient and immediately felt a pulse. The man was loaded into a Bellingham Fire ambulance, where he awoke and began talking.

The patient was transported to a local hospital, where he is expected to make a full recovery and be able to return home.

“This was an incredible effort by all of our members who responded to the medical call,” Chief Miller said. “Due to the family member who quickly called us and began CPR and the prompt actions of our firefighters and paramedics at the scene, we were able to save a life. This highlights the importance of knowing how to respond in these situations and being trained in CPR. We want to wish the affected patient a very speedy

recovery.”

Congress declared October Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Awareness Month in 2008. The month is designed to increase public awareness of the signs and symptoms of SCA, promote early recognition of SCA and encourage immediate action, educate individuals about the importance of learning CPR and using an automated external defibrillator (AED), and encourage research and advancements in the prevention and treatment of SCA.

According to the American Red Cross, more than 350,000 people experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the U.S. each year, and about 90% of them die. Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating normally because of abnormal electrical activity.

### EYES

continued from page 12

#### The Milford-Franklin Eye Center Difference

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Patients being referred for cataract surgery in office-based settings are advised to seek a second opinion. Always question what your optometrist recommends. If you have doubts, call us. We will answer your questions. At our center, you'll receive world-class care close to home. Our commitment to your safety and well-being is unwavering. You always come first.

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# Dinner and Death at the Bellingham Senior Center

BY DAVID DUNBAR

Let's talk about death (over dinner). More than just the title of a book, this is an invitation for readers to approach a sensitive subject in a setting that is safe and familiar.

Michael Hebb is the author of *Let's Talk About Death (Over Dinner)* and writes, "Given the right framing, a 'difficult' conversation does not need to be

difficult. It can be liberating. It can even be transformative."

At the Bellingham Senior Center last month, this book was the subject of a two-hour discussion led by Cheryl Botieri, MS, an End-of-Life Educator, Family Support Specialist, and End-of-Life Doula who provides education, guidance and support.

"My goal is to help people get information ... knowledge

is power, it gives us options... bringing us clarity and choice," according to Botieri, in order to compassionately and productively initiate end-of-life conversations with family and friends.

About 20 people were in attendance for the group discussion (sign-ups were capped). "Why did you come today?" asked Botieri. Comments included "preparation," "turning point," and one attendee offered that a recent passing in her family turned out to be a "disaster" and another was "a success because we were prepared." The book offers suggestions about how to be prepared.

In the U.S., 3,090,582 deaths occurred in 2023 according to government records. These include deaths caused by old age, disease, accidents, drug overdoses, and suicide.

The Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA) recently launched an initiative called "Strengthening End-of-Life Conversations" with Councils on Aging/Senior Centers across the Commonwealth. And the Bellingham Senior Center is one of the first to participate.

According to Bellingham's assistant director of the Senior Center Terri Graham, "Our session was therapeutic. It gave people a chance to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Many mentioned that they want to know how to talk to their loved ones about their wishes, so they'll know how to honor them when the time comes. Some were very open and vulnerable, and others were reserved and quiet."

In the book, author Michael Hebb reports that in the five years since it was published in 2018, more than 100,000 dinners have been held where strangers, friends, co-workers, and loved ones met to discuss an upcoming passing of someone.

He continues, "We are constantly seeking to be better, to do life better. We're a culture obsessed with transformation, and yet we fail to recognize that all transformation includes death."

"I am biased in favor to talking about death over dinner, as the dinner table is the most important crucible of culture we have as humans," observes Hebb.



Discussion facilitator Cheryl Botieri shares a passage from *Let's Talk About Death (Over Dinner)* and guides response from the 20 attendees at the Senior Center's first of three meetings on the subject of death.

At the Bellingham Senior Center, it wasn't dinner but lunch (generously provided to attendees for free by The Enclave of Franklin Assisted Living). Botieri was sharing ideas from the book while folks ate. "We're talking about death, but really, we're talking about living! I encourage you to think about what matters most to you."

As she talked, words that came to mind for attendees included "hope," "permission," "finding out," "share," "appreciation," and there were lots of smiles and nodding.

Much of the book was devoted to a section entitled The Prompts (conversation starters). There are 22 questions you could ask to start a conversation. They included "If you had only 30 days left to live, how would you spend them?" "Why don't we talk about death?" "Do you believe in an afterlife?" "How long should we grieve?" "What does a good death look like?" "Would you ever consider doctor-assisted suicide?" and "What song would you want played at your funeral?"

To that last Prompt, one attendee smiled and offered "We

gotta get out of this place" recorded in 1965 by the Animals.

There are two more book discussions planned: on January 14, the book to be focused on will be *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande, and on March 11, the book *A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death* by BJ Miller, MD, and Shoshana Berger will be used.

After the first meeting last month, attendees reported in their evaluations that they were "very satisfied" according to Senior Center Director Josie Dutil. "Our meeting was phenomenal, heart-warming," said Dutil. "We're excited that people are open to having these kinds of conversations."

For more about all this, check out <https://deathoverdinner.org/#about> that sparked the book *Let's Talk About Death (Over Dinner)* and <https://theconversationproject.org/> which has tools and guides to help you have a conversation about death. If you'd like to reach out to Cheryl Botieri, you can contact her at [cheryl@agingwithgritgraceanddignity.com](mailto:cheryl@agingwithgritgraceanddignity.com).

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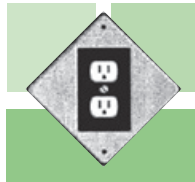
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# Bellingham Business Association to Hold Holiday Party December 11th

The Bellingham Business Association will hold its annual holiday party on Wednesday, December 11th at Savino's Pomodoro Italian Kitchen & Bar, 476 Rathbun St., Woonsocket, RI. BBA Members, employees and their significant others are welcome. The event is \$50 per person, which includes their meal, bingo ticket, and door prize.

Attendees are asked to please bring an unwrapped toy for Santa's elves.

RSVP by Dec. 9 to contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org.

For more information about the Bellingham Business Association or to join, visit [www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org](http://www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org).

# Practical Nursing Open House at BVT Tours Available December 2nd

Learn more about BVT's Moonlight Program in Practical Nursing (Post-Secondary) at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) for adult learners by registering to attend the Open House on Monday, December 2nd, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., 65 Pleasant St., Upton.

All interested applicants must take the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS), a requirement for the Practical Nursing program. The program administers the TEAS Entrance Exams to applicants and accepts TEAS

results from other testing locations.

"It is a good time to enter the nursing field because there's such a need for skilled nurses," said Practical Nursing Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA.

The affordable program offers small class sizes and accepts in-district, out-of-district, and out-of-state applicants. For more information about the program and to register for the Open House, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse).

# 2024 Results from the Bellingham Senior Men's Golf League

"It has been an enjoyable season," according to Ray Webb, League President, "and the weather was very good most of the summer. We played at Chemawa GC in North Attleboro, which is a fun and challenging course in excellent playing condition."

Here's how the players finished the season:

1st Place: Team of Butch Riendeau and Don Joseph with 41.75 points.

2nd Place: Team of Paul Robinson and Dennis Pinso-neault with 38.5 points.

3rd Place: Team of Jerry Smith and Roger Roy with 38.25 points.

4th Place: Team of John Larose and Bill Grady with 37.5 points.

Low Gross Score of 37 was shot by Charlie Martin and Low Handicap went to Norman Galipeau with a 7.491.

The season ended with an outing of golf at Chemawa and a chicken dinner. Here are the top four from the outing:

1st Place: With a score of 66 was Al Sarapas, Rocky Morse, and Wayne Elderkin.

2nd Place: At 68 was Jerry Smith, Charlie Martin, Walter Shipala, and Earl Sutherland.

3rd Place: At 73 (tie) was John Larose, Ramon Llamas, Steve Marshall, and Dennis Pinso-neault.

4th Place: At 73 (tie) was Paul Robinson, Jack Hamilton, and Ray Webb.

Closest to the pin winners were Dennis LeDrew, Jerry Smith, Wayne Elderkin, and Tony Cence.

"Congratulations to all," said President Webb. "And thanks to our league officers for their voluntary support and to all the players!" Webb says the 2025 season will continue at Chemawa and invites interested golfers to contact him at (508) 966-0857.

# Hanukkah Celebration December 28th

Join Temple Etz Chaim on Saturday, December 28th at 5 p.m. at Beaver Pond in Franklin to celebrate Hanukkah! Come light the menorah, enjoy tasty snacks, and help illuminate the

beachfront area with warmth and light. Bring your family and friends for a joyous evening of community and celebration

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# Time for the Best Christmas Fair Ever!

## St. Blaise Christmas Country Fair December 7th

St. Blaise Church is very excited and pleased to announce the Christmas Country Fair, on December 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Parish Hall at 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham. Several areas of the hall will be set as "store fronts" in the traditional New England country store layout with awnings decorating the entrances to the various sections of the store. There will be a variety of lovely items to purchase for your home or as gifts. Ready-to-make food items in Ball jars such as chili and soups (just add meat and water), cookies, and muffins are prettily packaged and ready for sale. Homemade cake pops, and Reindeer Chow will also be available. A unique Christmas gift that the kids can easily make for Mom and Dad or Grandma and Grandpa is the Family Tree with Heart that is customized with their fingerprints. You can buy jams, soup or cookie mixes, Christmas decorations, Christmas wreath bows, soaps, crocheted afghans, pillows, religious



items, or jewelry. Fair workers will be there to offer help if you need it, too. Bags filled with penny candy as well as other candy treats will be available in the candy store. Gingerbread Man kits can be purchased to decorate your own cookie for the holiday.

Our great kitchen volunteers will be on hand to serve delicious lunch choices like hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, dynamites, salad and other favorite foods and drinks. The cafe will be open from 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. A great opportunity to refuel yourself while enjoying our Fair. A variety of breads, muffins, cookies, cakes, and pies from the St. Blaise Sweet Shoppe will be ready to enjoy as dessert at the Fair or packaged to take as gifts or dessert at home.

At the Craft table, there will be many handmade items, like key rings, bookmarks, tissue holders, religious items, afghans, Christmas or winter centerpieces that make wonderful gifts for friends, teachers, family or yourself!



There will be old favorites and new kids' games, like Santa Putt-Putt, Reindeer Ring Toss, Snowman Knock Down, with prizes displayed in the Kids Zone and a table where kids can create their own Nativity scene to take home.

The Main Raffle table, Scratch Ticket raffle, Twisties and the adults' Card Game will also make their return. We will also be raffling off 2 tickets to a Bruins game with a signed picture from Jeremy Swayman, an air fryer and gift cards to Amazon and Market Basket. Tickets for the Money raffle, first prize \$500 with four other drawings for various amounts, to be drawn

on Sunday, January 12, 2024, will be sold.

Santa will arrive at the Fair at 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. to visit with all who have a Christmas wish list to give him. This year, he will be located in the Kids' Zone. And don't forget to take a picture with him!

Please mark your calendar for the St. Blaise Country Christmas Fair on December 7, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham. We're waiting to welcome you, help you with Christmas shopping and to enjoy good food and Christmas cheer with family, friends and neighbors.

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# Many Attend Most Bellingham's Recent Veterans Day Celebration

By DAVID DUNBAR

"Veterans Day is to thank and pray for vets because they are the reason you are free, and they are the reason we have hope." Words spoken to about 120 folks gathered at the Bellingham Library in celebration of Veterans Day 2024.

"Joining the military takes time, dedication, focus and passion. Vets have to be strong mentally and physically, they are very selfless to be potentially killed just for other people's freedom." Logan King was reading from his essay that was voted best of 77 entries at Bellingham Memorial Middle School.

The Keynote Speaker was Lt. Col. Philipp Rigaut of the U.S. Marine Corps. "Thank you for your service," he said to the veterans. "The qualities of those who serve are courage, resilience, sacrifice, and service." He noted that Memorial Day was set aside to honor those who



Speakers at the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Bellingham Library included (from left) Lt. Col. Philipp Rigaut, U.S. Marine Corps; Jim Hastings, Chairman of the Bellingham Memorial and Veterans Day Committee; Kevin Calnan, Commander of VFW Post 7272 in Bellingham; and Jay Gatto, U.S. Marine Corps.



State Representative Mike Soter delivered remarks before a crowd of 120 folks at the library on Veterans Day. "I want to salute Bellingham for the support it gives to its veterans," he said.

died in service to their country and that Veterans Day was to honor those who are alive.

Local VFW Post Commander Kevin Calnan remembered that he followed his father into service in the Army. He smiled and recalled that he "learned when to salute and how" from his dad. "When people say, "Thank you for your service, I respond with it's a privilege and an honor."

Jay Gato, a Marine Corps veteran, talked about his history in the service and ended with, "Veterans are the backbone of America."

State Representative Mike Soter said, "I want to salute Bellingham for the support it gives to its veterans." But, he added, "There is so much more that must be done for vets. Particularly Vietnam vets. They should be honored, not ignored. All vets protect our democracy and freedom."

This current annual celebration at the library was one of the largest attended. And it was filmed by Cable 8, ABMI, which you can review by going to its website, <https://abmi8.org>.



The top three winners of the Bellingham Memorial Middle School's Essay Contest were (from left) Danielle Simpson (#2), Logan King (#1), and Ariana Halloway (#3). There were a total of 77 essays submitted by students.

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# Bellingham Public Library News & Events for December

For updates, visit [www.bellinghamlibrary.org](http://www.bellinghamlibrary.org). Find the library calendar at <https://bit.ly/4eJRLSh>

## Holiday Closings for the Christmas & New Years Holidays

Closing at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, December 24th (Christmas Eve) and 31st (New Years Eve)

Closed Wednesdays, December 25th (Christmas) and January 1st (New Years Day)

## Highlighted Programs

**Friends of the Library Holiday Open House/Holiday Craft Workshop** – Tuesday, December 3rd from 6-7:45. Learn more about the Friends of the Library and the opportunity to join or renew your membership! Light refreshments will be served, and attendees will have the opportunity to create holiday ornaments, one for yourself, and others for the Friends to sell at their Annual Holiday Boutique. Drop in between 6 and 7:30! Registration is preferred but not necessary.

**Express Extravaganza** – Saturday, December 7th from 5-6:30

p.m. The Polar Express Extravaganza is back with the famous story, seasonal crafts, and visits from both Santa and the Grinch! For families. No registration required.

**Chat & Craft for Adults** – Monday, December 9th from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Come and make a holiday ornament! All materials will be supplied by the Friends of the Library and generous library patrons. Registration is necessary. Space and supplies are limited.

**Gingerbread Mania** – Thursday, December 19th from 10-11:30 am and 3-4:30 p.m.

Come decorate gingerbread people! We'll be using gingerbread, frosting, and an assortment of candies! For families - registration required.

**New Year's Eve Party** – Friday, December 27th from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a New Year's Eve party with music, crafts, a photo station, and celebrating as we send off 2024 and welcome 2025! For families - please register to help us plan.

## Ongoing Children's Programs

**The Baby Bunch** – Mondays at 9:30 a.m., no program on December 23rd or 30th. For infants 0-18 months and their caregivers.

**Ring a Ding** – Mondays & Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. through December 16th.

Read to Freedom the Reading Dog – Mondays from 5:30-7 p.m. No program on December 23rd. Check the calendar for details and to sign up for a 15-minute time slot!

**Sensory Story Time** – Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m., through December 17th. For children ages 2-5 of all abilities (younger siblings always welcome). Please register for each session.

**First Saturday Family Fun** – Saturday, December 7th at 11 a.m. Theme: winter animals! Drop in until 12 p.m.

**Adult/Child Book Club** – For kids in grades 1-3, 4-6 or 6-9 and an adult in their life who loves to read. Meets monthly. If you are interested in joining, those in grades 1-3 should contact Melissa Denham, [mdenham@cwmares.org](mailto:mdenham@cwmares.org), grades 4-6 should

contact Amanda Maclure, [amaclure@cwmares.org](mailto:amaclure@cwmares.org), and grades 6-9 should contact Diane Nelson, [dnelson@cwmares.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmares.org). Check the library calendar for details on December meeting dates and times.

## After School Programs

Registration is mandatory for children in grades 4-6 to attend the ASK program. Registration for new participants takes place each day after school between 2:30 and 4:45 p.m. Hours vary on early release days, so please check the library calendar. No afterschool programs on Friday, December 20th.

- ASK Program hours 2:30-4:45 p.m., <https://www.bellinghamma.org/288/Elementary-Middle-School>
- The Teen Room is open for grades 7-12 from 2-4:45 p.m., <https://www.bellinghamma.org/354/Programs>

## Adult Programs

**Book Discussion Group** – Generally meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. In person or on Zoom. Contact Cecily Christensen, [cchristen@cwmares.org](mailto:cchristen@cwmares.org).

Our upcoming titles are:

December: *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

January: *The Rescue* by T. Jefferson Parker

February: *Absolution* by Alice McDermott

**Yoga for the Seasons** – Yoga & Meditation for Winter, Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. Check the library calendar for details.

**Knitting & Needle Night** – Wednesdays at 6 p.m. All skill levels welcome. Please bring your own materials. No registration.

**Writing Group for Adults** – Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman welcome you to hear what local writers are working on and share what you are working on. Works of fiction or non-fiction are welcome. Reading limit is 9 minutes per reader, with a brief opportunity for positive, personal comments only. To participate contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at [marjorie@marjorie-turner.com](mailto:marjorie@marjorie-turner.com).

**Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting** – Tuesday, December 3rd, at 6 p.m. at the library as part of the Open House.

**Library Board of Trustees Meeting** – no meeting scheduled in December at press time. Next scheduled meeting is January 9th at 7 p.m. in the Conference Room at the library

**Virtual Ask-A-Lawyer Program with Attorney Brian T. Salisbury** – Monday, December 16th starting at 5 pm.

Free 20-minute appointments 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Local attorney Brian T. Salisbury of the law firm Doherty, Dugan, Cannon, Raymond & Weil, PC will meet with you through Zoom to discuss any legal questions you may have. Register to receive the Zoom link close to the appointment date. Please note: Unless otherwise agreed in writing, Attorney Salisbury will not provide legal representation in any legal matter discussed.

**Virtual Author Talks** – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellinghamma>

**Wednesday, December 4th at 2 p.m.** – Smithsonian Gem Collection with Dr. Jeffrey Post

**Wednesday, December 11th at 2 p.m.** – Virtual Conversation with Author Laura Dave

**Red Cross Blood Drive** – Friday, December 20th from 9 am to 2 pm. Register at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)



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## Franklin Town News

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Franklin Town News on Facebook to keep up-to-date with articles, events, giveaways and contest announcements for Franklin!



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## Auchincloss Establishes Priorities for Coming Term

Congressman Jake Auchincloss recently outlined his aims for his district in his coming term.

"I am honored to represent the District I grew up in, and I thank my constituents across the Massachusetts Fourth," said Auchincloss, noting that his priorities would be the following:

- Lowering the cost of living, particularly in healthcare & housing
- Holding accountable the social media platforms that attention-frack our youth

- Passing gun-safety measures that protect children from their leading cause of death
- Interdicting fentanyl exports from China, which poison 100,000 Americans to death annually
- Delivering infrastructure funding for the 35 cities & towns of the District
- Protecting democracy from autocrats at home & abroad.

## Join Speech Invaders Toastmasters & Work on Your Presenting Skills

Speech Invaders Toastmasters welcomes you to join our club or just attend a few meetings to help you become a more effective communicator, public speaker and presenter. We are a supportive (and fun!) club open to all who are interested in improving self-confidence, networking, or communication skills.

We meet every Thursday from 12 to 1 p.m., in-person at Waters Corporation, 5 Technical Drive in Milford, MA 01757, or virtually through Microsoft Teams. To see our club calendar and to get the meeting link to join virtually, visit <https://speechinvaders.toastmastersclubs.org/calendar.html>. For additional information, reach out to Abigail Epplett at [abigail\\_epplett@waters.com](mailto:abigail_epplett@waters.com).

## Bellingham Senior Center Highlighted Events for December

The Bellingham Senior Center is located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Reach them at (508) 966-0398 or online at [www.bellinghamma.org](http://www.bellinghamma.org).

**Annual Christmas Party:** Thursday, December 12., at noon. Santa and his elf will be there.

**New Year's Eve, Eve Party:** Monday, December 30, at 11:30 a.m. at the Bellingham VFW. \$5 per person. Includes pizza and veggie platters and a full bar available for purchase.

**Spiritual Book Club:** Meets via Zoom on Mondays at 9 a.m. And beginning December 16, discussion will be about *The Dalai Lama's Cat and the Four Paws of Spiritual Success*. Call host Josie Dutil at (508) 657-2705 to join.

**Coffee & Conversation:** Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m., and you are invited!

**Ugly Sweater Day:** Wear yours to the Senior Center on Wednesday, December 18! You might just win the Medal of Honor!

**Our Lady of Fatima Shrine:** Come walk with us on Monday, December 16 (rain date 12/18). We'll

meet at the Senior Center at 4 p.m., then make the short trip to Holliston. We have volunteer car drivers (no bus transportation is available). Contact Lisa Loo at (508) 966-0398 to reserve.

**Financial Goals Planning Event:** with Janet Childs, Realtor with Custom Home Realty, and Jason Factor, Senior Loan Officer from Movement Mortgage, Tuesday, December 3, at 11:30 a.m.

**Singer/Guitarist/Entertainer Robert Ledoux:** Interactive show features a variety of songs from the 1920's to the 1970's, from holiday and patriotic to Irish Folk, Sinatra and Simon and Garfunkel. Friday, December 13, at 1 p.m. and please call ahead.

**Pianist / Vocalist Patrick Durkin:** Alumnus of Berklee College of Music and published singer and songwriter will perform music from the 1900's to the present day, with a broad range of classical compositions, jazz standards, and Broadway show tunes. Friday, December 20, at 11:30 a.m.

**Bellingham Lions Thanksgiving Dinner:** Saturday, December 7, at noon.

## DESE Office of Public School Monitoring to Conduct an Integrated Monitoring Review at BVT

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Public School Monitoring will conduct an integrated monitoring review of Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) during the week of December 9th. Each school district, charter, vocational, and virtual school undergoes an integrated Monitoring Review every three years. The areas addressed are according to either Group A Universal Standards or Group B.

BVT will undergo a Group B monitoring review that addresses licensure and professional development for special education teachers and related service personnel, parent, student, and community engagement, including compliance with Child Find requirements, facilities and classroom observations, implementation and oversight of Individualized Education Programs, time and learning, and equal access. The review includes interviews with staff and administrators, policies and procedures, and school building visits. It may



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Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

also include parent/caregiver, student, and teacher focus group meetings to gather additional information. Interpretation will be provided if needed.

BVT will host an orientation about the review process in collaboration with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council. The Department will also send a survey, in multiple languages and formats, as needed, to parents/guardians of special education students to gather key information on the special education processes and procedures.

Parents/guardians and other stakeholders may call Moses Nduati, Monitoring Review Chairperson, at (781) 338-3767 to request a telephone interview. If anyone requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the

Department will make the necessary arrangements.

Approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the Chairperson will provide the school with an informational report that may require further actions. A public report will be accessible at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html>.

www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills. For more information about the school, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us).

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## Charles River Chorale & Children's Choir Concert Dec. 8

The Charles River Chorale and the Charles River Children's Choir are pleased to present their Winter Concert on Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. at the Medway High School Auditorium. Doors open at 1:30 p.m.

The theme of this season's concert is Let It Snow! The concert will include winter standards like "Sleigh Ride," "Winter Wonderland," and "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow," as well as more modern pieces, like "It Feels New" by Pinkzebra and "Amid the Falling Snow" by Enya. The choir will be accompanied on some songs by a bassist, a cellist and a percussionist.

Under the leadership of director Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the Charles River Chorale is celebrating 40 years as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Membership is at an all time high of over 100 dedicated singers, who hail

from Millis, Medway, Norfolk, Medfield, Holliston, Walpole, Foxboro, Franklin and other neighboring towns.

Visit <https://our.show/charlesriverchorale> or use the QR code for ticket information.



## Representative Soter Supports Bill Authorizing MA Courts to Honor ICE Detainers

State Representative Michael J. Soter, R-Bellingham, is co-sponsoring legislation that would authorize Massachusetts courts to honor detainer requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials for individuals arrested for violent crimes who might otherwise be released from custody.

Senate Docket 3490, *An Act to enhance the authority of courts to protect public safety*, was filed on October 21 by the Massachusetts House and Senate Republican Caucuses to address a critical gap in current state laws by specifically allowing the courts to keep dangerous criminals who are considered removable aliens by ICE in custody for up to 12 hours if the individual is subject to an ICE detainer and is deemed to pose a threat to public safety. Representative Soter noted the bill focuses on those individuals who are convicted of serious crimes such as

murder, rape, domestic violence, and narcotics or human trafficking.

The filing of the bill comes after two recent media reports involving non-citizens who were subject to an ICE detainer but were not held by the courts. One case involved a 38-year-old Guatemalan national who was in the country illegally but was released by a Middlesex Superior Court judge after being arraigned on charges of aggravated rape of a child with force and attempted rape of a child by force. The second case involved another non-citizen from Guatemala who was convicted in Gloucester District Court for indecent assault and battery on a child under 14 and assault and battery.

According to Representative Soter, Senate Docket 3490 directly addresses a deficiency in state law highlighted by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) ruling in the 2017 case of *Lunn v. Commonwealth*. The SJC determined that cur-

rent state law does not provide the authority for court officials to honor ICE detainer requests for individuals otherwise entitled to release, leaving it up to the Legislature to provide and define such authority.

Senate Docket 3490 would require Massachusetts judges to take into consideration any detention requests received from ICE when setting bail for an individual. If ICE provides a written request stating probable cause that the individual is a removable alien and is the subject of an arrest or removal/deportation warrant, the judge may withhold bail until ICE acts on the request.

Representative Soter noted that the bill would require any judge who denies an ICE detainer request to file a written explanation with the court clerk detailing why they denied the request. This written decision would be considered a public record, but the bill would allow for the redaction of the names of victims or minors.

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from our families to yours!

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**Municipal Spotlight:****Lots Of Christmas Activities on Tap in Bellingham**

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

The Christmas season has arrived and that creates activity at the municipal level in Bellingham, from the Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Town Common to Santa Clause's three-day Bellingham Lions ride through town, assisted by Police and Fire Departments. The Bellingham Police Department holds a toy drive, and the town's four churches also have events leading up to the Christmas holiday. See below.

\*\*\*\*\*

Several years after the Town Common was dedicated in 1992, its Board of Trustees started the tree-lighting ceremony, which has always been a well-attended event, including Santa Clause.

The Parks Department decorated poles, lanterns, lawn ornaments and the gazebo, where a large Christmas tree was placed, ahead of the November 30th ceremony. Retiring Town Clerk Larry Sposato was honored as the individual to light this year's tree.

The program included Christmas Carols by school choirs and the well-known Oliver Brothers (Joe and Robbie). Santa Clause arrived in a fire engine to a special seat in the gazebo, where he handed out candy canes to the children. Hot chocolate was available for all.

For the first time in the event's history, Mrs. Clause was in attendance, accompanied by an elf.

"It's a wonderful event," Sposato said. "It brings the community together and gets people into the holiday spirit. I'm pleased that the Town Common is the place where the Christmas season gets underway."

\*\*\*\*\*

The Bellingham Lions have helped Santa visit the town's neighborhoods for more than 35 years.

"We've been doing our best to let people know when we're arriving by putting the routes in The Bellingham Bulletin and on our Facebook page," said Elena Rosemere, the Lions Club president. "While we can no longer visit every street in town, we do our best to cover every neighborhood area.

"We also want residents to know that we take donations during the rides for the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry. Every year, we're able to donate between \$800-\$1500 to the food pantry from our ride. Buckets on the sleigh enable residents to donate. The Lions also donate to the food pantry, exclusive of the Santa ride."

Rosemere also noted that the Lions' Senior Luncheon is scheduled for the Senior Center on Saturday, Dec. 7, at noon. The Lions will be serving a full turkey dinner to about 100 senior citizens, who can sign up at the senior center. The luncheon has been an annual event for more than 20 years.

\*\*\*\*\*

The police have linked a giving tree to their toy drive this year. Here's how that works:

Police will post information on their Facebook page that will inform participants, who must be Bellingham residents, how to proceed. Residents can also call the station, providing their name and phone number. The giving tree is only for children aged 15 and under.

Tags will be placed on the tree and will reveal a child's age and gender and the top three gift requests. Members of the community will come to the station by December 11th, take a tag, and buy a gift. When gifts are brought to the station (no later than December 16th, please), they will be distributed on Dec. 20.

The toy drive, which involves two cruisers, was held on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 at Walmart. These gifts are "stuffed" into the cruisers, returned to the station, and become presents associated with the giving tree.

The officers who've devoted time for this event, include Nicole Sandell and Scott Provost (School Resource Officers) and Lieutenant Steven Daigle.

"The reward for us is seeing firsthand the positive influences, interactions and contributions we are doing for our Bellingham Community," Sandell said.

Children are also welcome to join Bellingham Police for the annual Munchkins with Santa event at 10 a.m. on December 7th. The event will include a free professional picture with Santa



**Bellingham police officers who've devoted time to the Christmas giving tree project are Scott Provost and Nicole Sandell. Lieutenant Steven Daigle (not pictured) also has participated.**

from Heather Best Photography and munchkins for kids, courtesy of our local Dunkin'.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Bellingham Bible Baptist Church will present a Christmas Cantata on Sunday, Dec. 22, at 11 a.m. The program, which will feature soft Christmas music and Christmas carols, will precede a spiritual message by Rev. Michael Carrier, the church's pastor. "Although we've had a Christmas Eve service for the last two years, we decided to leave that night for our church members to enjoy time with their family and friends," Rev. Carrier noted.

The church will also conduct a toys-for-children program that will have 150 toys available for three age groups — up to age 3; 4-6 years old; and 7-12 years old. Fifty toys in each of the three categories will be presented (25 to girls and 25 to boys).

"Families can contact the church by email (pastor@bellinghambbc.com)," Rev. Carrier said. "The toys will arrive at the church in mid-December and be distributed on a staggered basis.

A variety of events have been planned at St. Brendan Church.

- A Novena (nine days of prayer) is scheduled from Nov. 30 to Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. with different priests officiating each evening.
- A Christmas pageant re-enacting the Christmas story conducted by children is scheduled for Dec. 15 during the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

The schedule of Masses at St. Blaise Church for Advent, Christmas and New Years includes:

During Advent, Nov. 30, Dec 1; Dec. 7 and 8; Dec. 14 and 15; and Dec. 21 and 22, weekend Masses are Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 7:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.

- Dec. 24, Christmas Eve Mass, 4 p.m. Children's Pageant will be during the Mass.
- Dec. 24, Christmas Eve Mass – 10 p.m. (choir/concert at 9:30 p.m.)
- Dec. 25, Christmas Day Mass – 10 a.m.
- Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 28 and 29, Feast of the Holy Family, Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday 7:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.
- Jan. 1 – Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, Mass at 10 a.m.

The church will also provide a giving tree where families can help other families. Last year 150 children received gifts, but this year the need is expected to be closer to 200. Drop-off of gifts is Monday, Dec. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the church. Giving trees with tags specifying gift ideas will be located at St Blaise Church and the Bellingham branch of Dean Bank (411 Pulaski Blvd.) until Dec. 7.

Sue Durkin, the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry Director, is grateful to church parishioners, community members, community organizations, Bellingham Public Schools students and staff, and businesses for their continued support. For any questions, email Durkin at sdurkin@saint-blaise.org.

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# Sen. Ed Markey Visits SAFE Coalition

## Discusses Substance Use Crisis & Response

On Oct. 27, Senator Ed Markey visited SAFE Coalition in Franklin to discuss the state of substance use and mental health crises in the area and the organization's proactive response strategy. State Representative Jeffrey Roy, a founding SAFE board member, also attended.

SAFE, a nonprofit founded to combat the rising threat of opioid addiction and overdose in southeastern Massachusetts, hosted Markey for an in-depth discussion, exploring topics like the role public perception plays in access to substance misuse and

mental health support.

"The link between addiction and mental health must be destigmatized before people can get help," Markey said. "No one can will their way out of it."

The conversation highlighted SAFE's initiatives, including regular Narcan trainings at Dedham Jail, early intervention educational small groups for local children, and support groups for individuals and families affected by substance use. SAFE's approach to community-wide, wraparound care was notable for Senator Markey.



# SAFE

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"I understand the mission," Markey said. "Because if one person suffers, everyone suffers."

The nonprofit's CEO Jen Levine said SAFE helps many people who arrive at the office on one of the hardest days of their lives.

"We are also here for them long before then, in small and straightforward ways," said Levine, "so that if their worst day ever arrives, they know where they can turn."

Many are first introduced to SAFE through services like the organization's free diaper and car seat bank or community events like medication takeback and CPR trainings.

Markey has championed substance use intervention at the state and national levels throughout his political career. His first encounter with SAFE was at the 2015 National Prescription Drug and Heroin Summit in Atlanta, which he attended with President Obama.

SAFE now serves over 37 towns across the state with recovery and support groups, referral services, one-on-one nonclinical recovery support, resource connection, community trainings, educational programming for adolescents and schools, events like film screenings and talks, sober art and music nights, and trauma-informed yoga. SAFE also voluntarily advises opioid abatement funding boards in municipalities across the state.

For more information on SAFE's services or collaboration opportunities, contact SAFE at (508) 488-8105 or [info@safecoalitionma.org](mailto:info@safecoalitionma.org).

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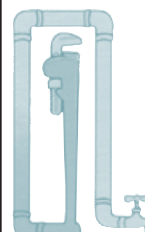
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## Dean College Announces New Board of Trustees' Leadership

**Jay Leiendecker Appointed Board Chair; Beth Rossi Joins as New Trustee**

Dean College, in Franklin, proudly announces that Jay Leiendecker has been appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees; and Beth Rossi, a Franklin-based Realtor®, has been elected as a Trustee.

Jay Leiendecker has a long-standing and committed association with Dean College, having served as vice president of enrollment services from 1997 to 2010. In this capacity, he oversaw admissions, financial aid strategy, marketing, communications, public relations, and professional and continuing studies. Additionally, Leiendecker held the position of head golf coach at the College from 2011 to 2019 and was an adjunct instructor from 2013 to 2014.

"Jay's passion and commitment to Dean is unparalleled," said Stephen Lincoln, Chair of the Dean College Governance Committee. "His deep knowledge of enrollment and retention make him an ideal person to lead the Board during the changing landscape of higher education."

Leiendecker has held several leadership positions in higher education including roles at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, New Jersey; Xavier University and College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati, Ohio; Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois,

and Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio. He received his M.Ed. from the University of Pittsburgh and his undergraduate degree from Marietta College.

"Dean has always held a special place in my heart, and I am thrilled to now serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees," said Leiendecker. "At my first Board meeting as Chair, I was honored to welcome Beth Rossi to the Dean family."

Rossi is a highly specialized residential Realtor® with Coldwell Banker Realty in Franklin. She offers more than 37 years of expertise in real estate to the Board and holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Psychology, as well as an MBA from Boston College. Throughout her distinguished career, Rossi has managed Classic Properties, published the Boston Edition of Broker Agent Magazine, and served on the Board of Directors at Mercymount Country Day School. Renowned for her outstanding service, in-depth market knowledge, and unwavering client dedication, Rossi is a leading producer in her field. Her commitment to excellence and active community engagement will be a tremendous asset to Dean College.

## Exsultet Winter Concert December 14th & 15th

Ring in the holiday season with the beautiful sounds of **Exsultet** as elite singers from local towns present their annual winter concert. This year's performance, "**Best Time of the Year!**" was curated to celebrate the season's joyful moments. Join us on Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational

Church, 725 Washington Street, Holliston, MA and on Sunday, December 15, 2024 at 2 p.m. at Allin Congregational Church, 683 High Street, Dedham, MA for an evening of music, nostalgia, and the magic of Christmas!

Visit [www.exsultet.us](http://www.exsultet.us) for more information.

## Norfolk County Register of Deeds Toy & Food Drives

Believing that the true spirit of the holidays lies in giving rather than receiving, Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell is sponsoring the Registry's 17th annual U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive. Donations of new toys and games can be brought directly to the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds building, located at 649 High St. in Dedham, through Tuesday, December 10th, at 10 a.m. A marked donation bin will be set up in the lobby, which is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Since 1947, the national program has delivered over 677 million toys.

Since 2007, the Registry of Deeds has collected over 1,700 toy donations for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program.

The Norfolk County Register of Deeds is also running a Holiday Food Drive at its location through December 19th.

"There is no doubt that Norfolk County is a desirable place to live and to work. However, there are people throughout the county who are facing difficult situations. This year, we, as a community, have seen a rising demand for food assistance, and it is crucial that we come together to support those in need," said Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell.

A donation bin for non-perishable food items will also be set-up in the Registry's lobby. Suggested donations include canned goods, breakfast cereals, pasta, sauces, toiletries, and paper products.

"We (Interfaith Social Services) are experiencing an 87% increase in the demand for food

assistance," said Rick Doane, Executive Director for Interfaith Social Services in Quincy. "We would be extremely grateful for any assistance that the local community could provide."

If you Can not get to the Registry of Deeds building to drop off food, you can check the Registry website at [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org) for a pantry location in your community.

"Working together, we can truly make a huge difference this holiday season," concluded Register O'Donnell. To learn more about Registry of Deed's events and initiatives, find us on social media. The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham. Find out more at [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org), call (781) 461-6101 or email [registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org](mailto:registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org).

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# Walk with The First Universalist Society in Franklin this December!

**December 14, 2024 - 10 a.m.- 1p.m.**

### 2nd Annual Cookie Walk

Come and stroll through the festively decorated Meetinghouse at 262 Chestnut St, Franklin, as you select from a delicious assortment of homemade treats provided by more than 30 bakers. You are sure to find the perfect confections for your holiday table, a hostess gift, or your next party.

Cookies will be available for \$10 per pound. Containers, decorated with your choice of holiday sticker, will be provided. Cash, check, or electronic payments accepted. Make this event part of your annual holiday fun!

**December 31, 2024 5-7 p.m.**

### New Year's Eve Labyrinth Walk

This annual free event offers an opportunity to experience a candlelit labyrinth in our sanctuary. Finger labyrinths will be available for people who want to experience the labyrinth but have mobility issues.

Labyrinths are found throughout the world with the oldest dating back thousands of years. In contemporary use, labyrinths provide an opportunity for personal reflection, spiritual practice, or the reduction of stress.

Please allow about 30 minutes to walk the 7-Circuit Petite Chartres Labyrinth. Socks are re-

quired for the walk. Booties that cover footwear will be provided for those who need shoes to walk.

Call Bobbi at (508) 446-5131 for more information about the New Year's Eve Labyrinth event. In the event of a storm, or unsafe driving conditions, the walk will be canceled, and a notice will be posted to the FUSF Facebook page.

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 these events please explore our website at [fusf.org](http://fusf.org) or contact our Interim Minister, the Reverend Beverly Waring at (508) 528- 5348 or [minister@fusf.org](mailto:minister@fusf.org)



## A Charlie Brown Christmas Returns to Circle of Friends



Heather Pierson returns to the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse on Saturday, December 7th at 7:30 p.m. with her fabulous Charlie Brown holiday show, always popular.

Pierson is a New Hampshire based singer/songwriter, pianist, song leader, and performer with a passion for cultivating joy, both onstage and off. Her trio, with Shawn Nadeau on bass/vocals and Craig Bryan on percussion/vocals, performs a rich variety of Heather's originals, jazz and blues standards.

The Heather Pierson Trio will perform the entirety of the 'A Charlie Brown Christmas'

album as recorded by the Vince Guaraldi Trio, as well as other Guaraldi compositions and holiday favorites. <https://heatherpierson.com/>

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin's First Universalist Society. Concerts are presented in a smoke free and alcohol-free environment at the Society's handicapped accessible Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin, and begin at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available. Please visit [circlefolk.org](http://circlefolk.org) for tickets and more information.

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# Quilt Guild Members Hail from 35 Southeastern Mass. Towns

The Rhododendron Needlers Quilt Guild (RNQG) exhibited its Raffle Quilt at Franklin Mill Store at 305 Union Street Franklin, for the month of November. The quilt is called

“Star Gazing” as it features the traditional Hunter’s Star Block. It is presented in beautiful shades of blue and white, measures 67 inches x 82 inches and was created by dozens of guild members. It was machine-quilted by Diana R. Annis, a guild member and nationally known long arm quilter.

The raffle proceeds support the guild’s mission of education and philanthropy.

RNQG has been in existence since 1983 and is currently 76 members strong, representing 35 towns around southeastern Mass. Guild meetings are the third Wednesday of each month from September through June at 7 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Walpole.

The guild’s philanthropy includes donating an average of 100 comfort quilts per year through local social service agencies such as the Home for Little Wanderers, as well as supporting the New England Quilt Museum, providing a scholarship to a graduating senior from a high school in our member network

and a donation to that senior’s public library for the purpose of purchasing materials about art.

Reference [rnqg.org](http://rnqg.org) for specifics and consider joining the guild as we wrap celebrating its 40th

year to start or continue your quilting journey.



The Rhododendron Needlers Quilt Guild (RNQG) recently raffled off this quilt, “Star Gazing.” The 40-year old group welcomes new members.

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# Sports

## Tourney Roundup

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

### SOCCER

The BHS girls' soccer program keeps improving and continues to head in the right direction after splitting a pair of matches in the Division 4 Tournament.

A 4-1 loss to top-seeded Sutton eliminated Bellingham after it posted a 2-1 triumph in the opening round against Hampshire Regional. Seeded 16th, the Blackhawks entered the playoffs with a 5-13-1 record.

Trailing at halftime, 2-0, senior midfielder Calleigh Elder scored the only goal for the Blackhawks in the second half, cutting Sutton's lead to 2-1. However, two additional tallies for Sutton clinched the outcome.

"They were fast up front, which made them difficult to defend," BHS coach Kate Howarth said. "It's always difficult to lose, but we played a good game. We battled and were competitive all year and that's what matters. We had a difficult schedule, but we made good progress."

Anabella Barasso's second-half goal proved to be the game-winner against Hampshire Regional. BHS Junior forward Lilli McGilvray scored the squad's first goal in the first half.

Barasso, a senior midfielder,

drove down the right side of the field then crossed the ball that ended up as a goal after a mistake by Hampshire's goalkeeper.

"We've been working all season to improve the way we play," Howarth said. "We've been working on bringing the ball down and controlling the play through possessing and building up the field. This win says a lot about the girls and their work. Our goal was to get better every game and every practice, and I believe we've done that."

### FIELD HOCKEY

It took the Ipswich Tigers two overtime periods to defeat Bellingham, 2-1, in what was a hard-fought, intense battle in the opening round of the Division 4 Field Hockey Tournament.

Ava Poire scored the game-winner when she took a pass at the net from Ella McCarthy and scored with 8:38 remaining. McCarthy got the assist, and she also tallied the first goal for Ipswich in the fourth quarter.

The Blackhawks' goal was scored by sophomore midfielder Molly Cormier in the first quarter off a corner. Casey Leger took a shot from the top and Cormier got the final touch for the goal. Ipswich entered the match ranked No. 12 with an 8-6-3 record. BHS, which was seeded No. 21, finished with a

regular-season record of 6-13-1.

"I'm so proud of how our team played," said Julianne Kilduff who's been the Blackhawks coach for two years. "They played their hearts out and never gave up. They worked hard all season for this moment, and it showed when they continued to give it their all in overtime. We will lose nine seniors, but I if we work hard during the off-season we'll continue to improve for next year."

### CHEERLEADING

Bellingham High's cheerleading team finished third at the Tri Valley League Championship meet with a final score of 83.8 points. The Blackhawks' point total and placement enabled them to advance to the South Regional Tournament.

Medway won the championship by scoring 93 points and Norton was second with 84.1. Nine schools competed in the meet at Bellingham High and eight managed to qualify for the regional event.

Coach Tracey Elliott, who's led BHS to eight TVL titles and a state championship in 2022, was disappointed but still proud, nevertheless, with the way BHS competed.

"We didn't execute our stunts as well as we usually do, and our overall execution was off," she said. "But it was a good learning experience. They held their heads high, and I'm very proud of them."

Elliott pointed to a problem with the music audio that caused a brief delay for the Blackhawks as "something that threw us off."

"That glitch caused our energy to drop," she said. "We were amped up for our routine, then our energy dropped. It's difficult to get hyped up again. But the girls bounced back quickly and were able to finish third. We'll strive to be at the top for the regional. It's all about hard work. Our girls are talented and they're eager to do well."

The nine girls who competed for BHS were captains Marissa Dell and Abby Walker, and Molly Leonard, Natalie Doan,

Alyssa Gerbrands, Aibhlinn Cunningham, Amelia Sanford, Maddie Egan and Jahaira Alarie.

### BOYS' SOCCER

After Bellingham High's boys' soccer team lost to Oxford, 1-0, in the Division 4 Tournament, coach Eric Mounsey was obviously disappointed with the result.

"It's a tough setback for our kids who played their hearts out," he said. "They left everything they had on the field."

The Blackhawks, who were No. 32 in the power rankings, didn't experience many winning moments during the regular season, going 1-14-2 before their match against Oxford, which was the No. 33 seed.

In soccer, a favorable bounce can be a major plus. Unfortunately for BHS, the ball didn't bounce their way.

"Oxford beat us on a fluke goal," Mounsey said. "We got control of the ball, passed it and it deflected off an Oxford player. The ball went into the air then bounced into our net."

Mounsey had high praise for his goalie, Thomas Crandall, and senior captains Jack Taylor (center defenseman) and Carter Lelievre (center midfielder).

"Thomas kept us in close matches all year," Mounsey said. "A junior, he has all the tools to be the best in our division. He played well and made some acrobatic saves. Jack and Carter are great leaders and handled lots of adversity this year with class. They kept morale up by never giving up. All our kids had a high compete level and when injuries hit us, they filled in admirably in whatever positions they played."

Mounsey said the key to improvement is "to focus on team building and to keep our nucleus in tact." Six seniors will graduate, but Mounsey expects next year's team to have about 10 experienced returnees.

### CROSS-COUNTRY

The Bellingham girls' cross-country team, which finished its

regular season with a 4-3 record, is making progress in the post-season.

Sophomore Jenna Dormady and senior Emma Smith qualified for the state tourney after finishing 14th and 20th, respectively, at the Division 3A Cross-country Championships at the Wrentham Development Center. A total of 167 runners competed. Dormady's time was 20 minutes, 8 seconds, and Smith clocked in at 20 minutes, 24 seconds on the 3.1-mile course.

Seventh-grader Morgan Henshaw finished 28th in a time of 20:53 but missed qualifying for the states by one placement.

New coach TJ Chiappone was pleased with the Blackhawks' efforts at the meet and was glad that both the boys' and girls' squads improved during the regular season. The girls' Tri Valley League record was 2-3, but one of their victories came against Dover-Sherborn. The boys went 1-4 in the TVL and were 2-5 overall.

"Jenna and Emma worked hard all season, competed intensely and were rewarded with berths in the state final," Chiappone said. "There's lot of optimism around both programs. Hard work is leading to success, and hopefully, our numbers will continue to grow and allow us to compete at a high level."

Dormady and Smith were chosen as TVL first-team all-stars and Morgan Henshaw and her brother Grady, a freshman, were honorable-mention choices.

Team awards were presented to members of both the boys' and girls' varsity teams and the middle-school team.

Those honored include Emma Smith (Senior Academic Award); Olivia Ginn, Douglas Walton, and Joseph Lussier (Most Improved); Jenna Dormady, Grady Henshaw, and Morgan Henshaw (Most Valuable Runner); Addison Howard (Coaches Award); and Emma Smith (Coach Lacasse Leadership Award).



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# Sports

## Senior Gamble Aiming to Guide BHS Quintet to Tourney

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Multi-sport captains at the high school level so often go the extra mile when they're emphasizing team chemistry, leadership and a strong work ethic, In Max Gamble's case, add 1,000 yards to that extra mile.

A senior at Bellingham High, Gamble, who's been a dynamic senior captain in football, will continue in that role for an inexperienced basketball team that will be facing major challenges against Tri Valley League opponents.

"My role in basketball will be to reinforce the need to work hard and to always give 100 percent," Gamble said. "I know we're inexperienced, but I'm hoping my leadership style will inspire others to step up."

Gamble, and three other captains in football, combined to help the Blackhawks go from a 1-3 start to a 6-3 record before being eliminated from the playoffs. At the Bulletin's deadline, however, BHS still could win the TVL Small Division title.

"No matter what happens, I'm ready to go for the basketball season," Gamble emphasized. "I've got lots of energy and I'll use it to provide motivation for a team that has some question marks."

The 5-foot-7, 140-pound Gamble is a point guard who last year started in the backcourt with Ross Priscella, a two-way guard and TVL all-star who was the Blackhawks first option on offense. Gamble averaged 3.2 points, 2 assists and 1.1 steals, but he's aiming for major improvement, both for himself and this year's team. BHS last year finished 6-14.

"Eleven players graduated from last year's squad, he noted, "but my goals are for us to improve daily, go .500 or better and qualify for the playoffs. We also want to be competitive in the TVL. For me, I want to be the best captain I can be, average 10 points and 5 assists a game and be selected as a league all-star. All these goals are realistic. Achieving a .500 record will be a challenge but our new play-



**Honor-roll student Max Gamble likes playing point guard in basketball, a position "where you read the defense, then react by finding an open man or a favorable match-up."**

ers have a strong work ethic and will provide maximum effort."

The Blackhawks are inexperienced, but they're not an overly young contingent. Most the players competed last year as jayvees. Three players who Gamble rates as potential keys are seniors Ryan Austin (center), John Doucette (power forward), and Zach Berkeley (quick forward).

"Ryan was a lacrosse captain last year, so he knows about leadership," Gamble said. "He's a great teammate who works hard. A 6-foot-3 center, he can rebound and block shots. That's where he can make an impact. John is a strong forward who is a good mid-range shooter, and Zach is intense, strong on defense and a capable shooter."

The 18-year-old Gamble enjoys his role on the point and prefers to direct a fast-break offense. "Playing the point is like being a quarterback," he offered. "It's a take-control posi-

tion where you read the defense, then react by finding an open man or a favorable match-up. I'm a pass-first point guard but on defense I'm scrappy, aggressive and aim for steals and deflections. I like it when we employ a full-court, pressure defense."

Gamble hopes to lead by example and be a communicator who's supportive. "Being named the team's captain is my top thrill in basketball," he emphasized. "That made me realize the coaches like my work ethic and leadership style. It also shows they trust me."

His coach, TJ Chiappone, knows he can heavily rely on Gamble.

"He meets situations head-on," Chiappone said. "He's a go-getter, bringing lots of intensity to the game. His makeup is to tackle any challenge and any form of adversity. His strengths include a high hoop IQ, athleticism, foot speed, stamina, pass-

ing and leadership. On defense, he's a game-changer because he's an excellent on-ball defender.

"Calm and cool, he's respected by teammates, especially younger players. The hardest worker in the gym, I admired the way he got kids to work out during the off-season and recruited younger players for our open-gym sessions."

A preview of what Gamble can provide this season might be what he delivered last year in a triumph over Holliston. "That was my best game," he said. "I scored 18 points, hit 4 three-pointers and had 5 assists. Our team chemistry was superb, and everyone contributed."

Gamble's competitive philosophy focuses on reaching his potential. The honor-roll student plans on majoring in business in college and says that playing sports is a possibility at that level.

The Bellingham native's goals in football were to defend the TVL Small Division championship and qualify for the playoffs. No tourney berth occurred, but capturing the division title was still possible. BHS was 4-0 in the division, but defense of the division title depended on the outcome of the Norton game on Thanksgiving, which was played after the Bulletin's deadline.

A wide receiver and corner back, Gamble compiled some outstanding statistics through nine games — receiving (24 catches for 495 yards and 5 TDs); rushing (20 carries for 195 yards and 4 TDs); and passing (1 completion for 45 yards and 1 TD).

"Max has been a good leader for us," said Football coach Dan Haddad, "He's always positive and leads by example — do as I do, not as I say. Even during tough times his attitude never waivers. And, he always defies the odds that size matters; Max proves it doesn't. He's explosive as dynamite on the field."

Eager to end the Blackhawks tourney drought, Gamble looks forward to the Blackhawks basketball season opener at Norton December 13.

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# Sports

## Improved BHS Girls Quintet Aims to Turn the Corner

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

The Bellingham High girls' basketball program has been on an upward swing the last two years, and it's very likely that more progress will occur during the 2024-25 campaign.

Coach Bob Pingeton, who's now starting his third year at the Blackhawks' helm, has been patient in the rebuilding process. His first season ended with a 3-18 record and no playoff berth. But, there was a major highlight — BHS won the Hutchinson Tourney, defeating Douglas and Ursuline Academy.

Last year, Pingeton's squad improved. Although BHS posted a 4-20 overall record, which wasn't much to brag about, there were two major steps forward. The team qualified for the playoffs and split two games in the post-season, beating Advanced Math and Science Academy and losing to Foxboro. More importantly, the Blackhawks snapped a four-year losing streak against Tri Valley League teams, defeating Ashland and Dedham.

Optimism is in the air, because only three seniors graduated from last year's squad, and there are 12 returnees with varying degrees of experience.

"Our team has a much-improved basketball IQ, and we're athletic and fundamentally sound," Pingeton said. "The girls are very coachable, and our team chemistry and work ethic are good."

Those strengths have Pingeton setting some challenging goals.

"We want to be competitive in every game and go from four wins to double-digit triumphs this season," he emphasized. "And, we want to qualify for the tourney again and go deeper than last year."

The Blackhawks' captains — seniors Calleigh Elder (point guard) and Anabella Barrasso (two-guard) — personify the team's strengths. Both averaged eight points a game last year.

"Calleigh gets us going offensively and is our best overall athlete," Pingeton said. "She's an excellent passer, and she's our QB on offense. Her hoop IQ is high, and her instincts and court awareness are excellent."

"Anabella is probably our best shooter. She can get to the rim and finish, she's versatile, intelligent and can shoot and pass. Both captains are respected role models and leaders, both are three-year starters, and we expect that both will be double-figure scorers."

Senior guard Luci Walden has three years of varsity experience and has started many games. "Luci is an incredible athlete with such a high compete level," Pingeton said. "Her strength is on the defensive end, but she can also knock down threes in bunches."

Maggie Kane, a physical 5-foot-5 junior, was being counted on to be a major contributor in the frontcourt but she



Calleigh Elder plays point guard and is the Blackhawks quarterback on offense.

suffered an ACL injury, which will keep her out for the season.

"Anytime you lose a player like Maggie it has an impact on your team, but this now gives someone else an opportunity to step up and fill her shoes," Pingeton said.

Sophomore guards Deb Kalem and Caleigh Hayes both got significant playing time as freshmen last year.

"Deb could be our best defensive player," Pingeton noted. "She started as a freshman and is a solid player on both ends of the floor. A left-hander who has quick hands and can shoot threes, she's played club ball in the offseason. Caleigh will be counted on to take a bigger role this season. She's a quick and athletic guard who can get to the hoop and score."

Liz Glynn and Stephanie Painchaud are freshmen who got playing time as eighth-graders last year.

"Liz started on the jayvees but joined the varsity towards the end of the season," Pingeton noted. "Her minutes increased, especially in the playoffs where she scored 14 points in the third quarter against Foxboro. Stephanie is 5-9 and will be counted on to control the boards, block shots and provide offense in the paint."

Pingeton has other returning players who saw varsity action last year. They include senior Sam Gibbs, juniors Hayley Higgins, Ainsley MacNeill and Alyssa Henrich, along with sophomores Katherine Mendez and Lyla McGilvray.

Pingeton is acutely aware that he "can't rely on his guard-oriented offense to win every game." He knows that defense and rebounding are the keys to achieve the team's goals.

"If we can control the defensive boards, then we can effectively run an up-tempo offense that'll provide us with more scoring opportunities and put pressure on opposing defenses," Pingeton said. "We also will employ a motion offense where we shoot off screens and drive to the hoop. On defense, we need to be consistent and take no nights off. We'll apply pressure and we'll be multi-dimensional with our defensive strategy."

Pingeton again will have Lauren Fraine available as his varsity assistant and jayvee coach. "Lauren has a competitive nature, she cares about her players, and she knows the game," he emphasized.

Because strength of schedule plays a key role to qualify for the playoffs, Pingeton has seven non-league games on tap against formidable foes that are traditionally strong programs. They include two against Ursuline Academy, two against Randolph and matchups against Blackstone Valley Tech, Dighton-Rehoboth and Carver.

The 51-year-old Pingeton has a common-sense approach to coaching and competing.

"Winning is important but reaching one's potential is vital," he said. "When players hit their competitive peak, then winning and enjoyment follow. "And valuable life lessons can be learned from athletics. I want our players to learn how to overcome adversity, become resilient, and lead on and off the court. Our goal is to become a team that trusts, respects and is accountable to one another."

The Blackhawks will open their season at Norton on Dec. 13. That's when Pingeton's squad will offer a glimpse into the future.

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## Get Ready for the Holidays at St. John's Christmas Fair December 7

St. John's Church Christmas Fair is set for Saturday, December 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin. This is the place to start your holiday shopping.

So many choices. Peruse silent auction and raffle items. Check out gift baskets with themes like sports; spa, health and wellness, and pet items. Give the gift of food, wine, coffees, or teas. Appreciate unique, hand-made crafts, and buy gift cards from popular restaurants and stores. You'll love the beautiful fresh wreaths and greens, as well as cozy scarves, mittens, and hats.

Choose delicious treats like cookies, fudge and other baked goods at the Cookie Walk. We'll also have snacks and drinks.

For more information, visit us on Facebook at St. John's Episcopal Church, see our website at [www.st-johnsfranklinma.org](http://www.st-johnsfranklinma.org), or call (508) 528-2387.

## BVT 2024 Annual Report Now Available

Blackstone Valley Tech is proud to announce that copies of its 2024 annual report, Generation to Generation, are now available for residents of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District to view. The report spans the FY24 fiscal year and highlights the distinctive achievements of students and staff, as well as financial information.

"As responsible stewards of your regional vocational-technical school system, we oversee and protect your investment with

numerous cost-saving measures," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "The informational document goes beyond the facts and figures of our day-to-day operation to illustrate how the budget is maximized and used to prepare our students to be career- and life-ready by the time they graduate."

### Browse the Annual Report!

The annual report includes a profile of Tom Kuik, a 1982 graduate of the Electrical pro-

gram at BVT. Learn how he discovered his true passion by looking to his past, following a childhood curiosity, and paying attention to what he finds engaging. As BVT graduates share their craft and passion for their trade, they pass on the foundation for future career success, and ultimately their legacy, from generation to generation. This and so much more is in the annual report. It is available on the school's website at [www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/annualreport](http://www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/annualreport).

## HCA Music Spotlight, Ayla Brown Christmas

Get into the holiday spirit with our 3rd annual Christmas concert featuring the incredibly talented Ayla Brown! Ayla is set to dazzle you with a mix of your

beloved holiday classics and a delightful original Christmas song. The event will take place on Friday, Dec. 6 @ 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 7 @ 7:30 p.m. at

Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton

For more information and the link for tickets, visit the event calendar at [www.hopartscenter.org](http://www.hopartscenter.org).

## Be a leader in your Community ...

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For more package info and to reserve your spot, please contact Jen Schofield at 508-570-6544 or by email at [jenschofield@localtownpages.com](mailto:jenschofield@localtownpages.com). **Only 10 available per site! They will go quick!**



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# Library Resources of the Month – Language Learning

Would you like to learn a new language? Can you speak English but it's not your native language and you would like to become more fluent? The Bellingham Library has resources that can help!

## Online Databases

The library has three online databases to help you learn a new language: *Transparent Language Online*, *Mango Languages*, and *Lingo LITE*.

**Transparent Language Online** provides lessons and language learning for over 110 languages, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and American Sign Language. Interactive learning activities encourage learners to practice listening, speaking, reading, and typing. There is also a section called KidSpeak for

young learners for certain languages, which includes fun and engaging activities for children.

**Mango Languages** contains over 70 world language courses to choose from. Each lesson combines real-life situations and audio from native speakers with simple, clear instructions. The courses are presented with an appreciation for cultural nuance and real-world application that integrates components of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and culture.

**Lingo LITE** is an image and video-based foreign language learning tool for 260 of the most basic words and terms in 30 languages. It uses Associative Multimedia Learning to help the user associate an image with the correct foreign word without first

translating it into their native language. It enables users to hear and see words spoken. Seeing lips move is an essential part of learning how to pronounce a word. It helps pleasure and business travelers learn basic words and terms quickly, and it supports students preparing for study abroad programs.

To access the language learning databases, go to the Bellingham Public Library's website at [www.bellinghamlibrary.org](http://www.bellinghamlibrary.org). Click on the Resources tab and click Online Courses/Tutoring.

## Books and Other Materials

The library has a number of **language learning books in print, as well as CDs, Playaways, and computer software** that can

be checked out with your library card. There are also **ebooks** and **eAudiobooks** available that you can check out to read or listen to on your device.

Whether you would like to learn a new language or become more proficient speaking English, the library has a number of ways to assist you! If you need help accessing any of the online resources or want more information, please come into the library or call us at 508-966-1660.

## Exciting News! Coming in January!

### English Conversation Group for Adults (age 16 and up)

For speakers of other languages who want to improve their English language skills.

Watch the library's calendar and the Bellingham Bulletin for dates and times.

The library is starting an **English Conversation Group** in January which will meet once a week. This is for adult English language learners who want to become more fluent in the language. It is not an English class, but a chance to practice speaking English in a friendly and supportive environment. The group will meet on different days/times, so please check the library's calendar or call the library to find out when they are meeting or for more information. You can come to as many meetings as you want, and there is no registration.

# Santa to Visit Hope Chest December 14th in Millis

Charity Thrift Shop Also Seeking Volunteers

Saturday December 14, 2024, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. the Bethany House Hope Chest at 1134 Main Street Millis invites chil-

dren to visit with Santa, take your picture and receive a **free special gift bag**.

The Hope Chest is an eclectic second-hand store where customers will find some amazing

bargains; a visit is sure to appeal to people of all ages. The store is operated by the Bethany House Ministries, a non-profit organization whose mission is to "provide a compassionate, healing envi-

ronment of hope and to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to those facing challenges, especially those impacted by the harsh realities of prison."

"We run groups in the prisons, help with reentry, provide clothing and basic needs for folks being released from prison. The shop also provides household items and furniture for people leaving prison who are setting up their apartments for the first time," says Sister Ruth Raichle, of Bethany House Ministries, "Right now, we are working on purchasing over 3,000 holiday gifts for folks in prisons and Boston shelters." The Bethany House Hope Chest is also currently looking for volunteers.

To learn more visit <https://bethanyhouseministries.org> or talk to our staff and volunteers



at this special event. What better way to immerse yourself in the Holiday Spirit by supporting this ministry and saying hello to Santa?



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# Save the Date for Virtual Author Event January 25

The Friends of the Millis Public Library will once again host "A Novel Occasion," a virtual live experience with bestselling authors, on January 25, 2023. Authors include

Chris Bohjalian, Gareth Brown, Hank Phillippi Ryan,

Jamie Brenner, Jayne Ann Krentz, Piper Huguley, Rebecca J. Sanford, Tess Gerritsen, and other authors TBA.

Visit <https://www.anoveloccasion.com/>.

# Calendar

## December 1

Bellingham Police Toy Drive, Walmart

## December 2

Moonlight Program in Practical Nursing (Post-Secondary) at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Open House 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., 65 Pleasant St., Upton, [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse).

## December 3

Friends of the Library Holiday Open House/Holiday Craft Workshop, 6-7:45 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, learn about the Friends of the Library, memberships, light refreshments, create holiday ornaments for yourself, and Friends Annual Holiday Boutique. Registration preferred but not necessary.

Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m., Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, Zoom option also available, visit <https://voiceof-franklin.toastmastersclubs.org/>

## December 4

Virtual Author Talks, 2 p.m., Smithsonian Gem Collection with Dr. Jeffrey Post – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellingham>

## December 5

Dean College's Holiday Lighting Ceremony, sundown, Dean College lawn on Awpie Way, event includes holiday entertainment and performances by Dean students. Holiday lightings will include a Christmas Tree, A Menorah, and a Kwanzaa Kinara.

## December 6

Ayla Brown Christmas, 7:30 p.m., Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, For more info. and link for tickets, visit event calendar at [www.hopartscenter.org](http://www.hopartscenter.org)

## December 7

Christmas Country Fair, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., St. Blaise Parish Hall, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham, kids' zone, Santa 10-2, raffles, homemade gifts and more.

Munchkins with Santa, 10 a.m., Bellingham Police Department, 30 Blackstone St., Bellingham, free professional picture with Santa from Heather Best Photography. Our local Dunkin' family will be supplying munchkins for kids.

Polar Express Extravaganza, 5-6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, includes famous story, seasonal crafts, and visits from both Santa and the Grinch! For families. No registration required.

Christmas Fair, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 237 Pleasant St., Franklin Crafts • Raffle • Silent Auction • Gift Baskets • Cookie Walk • Snack Bar. .

Visit Facebook at St John's Episcopal Church, [www.st-johnsfranklinma.org](http://www.st-johnsfranklinma.org) or (508) 528-2387

The Heather Pierson Trio presents 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' album as recorded by the Vince Guaraldi Trio, and other Guaraldi compositions, <https://heatherpierson.com/>, 7:30 p.m., Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, visit [circlefolk.org](http://circlefolk.org) for information and tickets.

Ayla Brown Christmas, 7:30 p.m., Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, For more info. and link for tickets, visit event calendar at [www.hopartscenter.org](http://www.hopartscenter.org)

The Fright Before Christmas with Jeff Belanger, 7 p.m., The G.B. and Lexi Singh Performance Center, 60 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-fright-before-christmas-with-jeff-belanger-at-the-singh-performance-center-tickets-950993405877>

## December 8

Pictures with Santa, Franklin Police Department, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., 911 Panther Way, Franklin, Santa and Mrs. Claus will take over the Chief's Office for pictures, For more info.: Contact Officer Rosa at (508) 528-1212 ext. 1556 or [arosa@franklinma.gov](mailto:arosa@franklinma.gov)

## December 9

Chat & Craft for Adults, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Come and make a holiday ornament! Materials supplied by the Friends of the Library and generous library patrons. Registration is necessary, supplies are limited.

Milford Regional Tree of Life Fundraiser, 5:30-7 p.m., Milford Regional Hospital, 14 Prospect St., Milford, ornaments and luminaries in honor of those lost to cancer available for purchase, event includes short ceremony and tree lighting.

## December 11

Bellingham Business Association Holiday Party, Savino's Pomodoro Italian Kitchen & Bar, 476 Rathbun St., Woonsocket, RI, \$50 pp includes meal, bingo ticket, and door prize. Please bring unwrapped toy for Santa's elves; RSVP by Dec. 9 to [contact@bellingshambusinessassociation.org](mailto:contact@bellingshambusinessassociation.org)

Virtual Author Talks, 2 p.m. – Virtual Conversation with Author Laura Dave, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellingham>

## December 12

Ladies of St. Anne Sodality (LoSA) Gala, 6 p.m., Bellingham Sportsman Club, 360 Lake St., Bellingham. \$32 check or cash. Checks should be made to St. Blaise Church with LSA Christmas Gala on the memo line. Payment can be placed in the collection basket at Mass but must be

in an envelope marked LSA Christmas Gala, Ann-Marie or Monique

Franklin Federated Church "Blue Christmas," 7 p.m., 171 Main Street, Franklin, a service for those who are having a hard time with the "merry" aspect of Christmas, whether due to grieving or loneliness.

## December 14

BWOT Ice Cream Sundaes with Santa, 12:30-2 p.m., St. Blaise Parish Hall, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham, Food and beverage items \$2.50 - \$4.00 each. Admission fee \$5 per child; maximum charge of \$15 per family.

Visit with Santa, Take a Picture, Receive a Treat, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Bethany House Hope Chest, 1134 Main Street, Millis. The Hope Chest is an eclectic second-hand store operated by the Bethany House Ministries, a non-profit organization, whose mission is to "provide a compassionate, healing environment of hope and to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to those facing challenges, especially those impacted by the harsh realities of prison." Visit <https://bethanyhouseministries.org> for more information.

## December 17

BHS Winter Concert: Grades 8 - 12, Bands & Choirs, 7-8:30 p.m., Bellingham High School 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Snow Date 12/18.

Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m., Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, Zoom option also available, visit <https://voiceof-franklin.toastmastersclubs.org/>

## December 19

Gingerbread Mania, 10-11:30 a.m. and 3-4:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, come decorate gingerbread people! We'll be using gingerbread, frosting, and an assortment of candies! For families - registration required.

Christmas Gift Wrapping Fundraiser, 3:30-8 p.m., Franklin VFW Post 3402, 1034 Pond St., Franklin, get trash bag full of Christmas gifts wrapped for \$20-\$30 donation to Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Foundation for Brigham and Women's Hospital

## December 21

Bellingham First Baptist Church Christmas Cantata, 6 p.m., Christmas music and hymns will be sung and there will be refreshments after the program. A Christmas Eve service also is scheduled.

## December 22

Bellingham Bible Baptist Church "Christmas Cantata" 11 a.m., 365 Hartford Ave., Bellingham, program will feature soft Christmas music and Christmas carols, will precede a spiritual message by Rev. Michael Carrier

## December 24

Franklin Federated Church "Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols," 5 p.m. on December 24th, includes Bible passages about the Christmas story as well as non-Bible poems and reflections interspersed with Christmas carols. Worshipers will share the light, passing one candle to the next, in the final carol, "Silent Night."

## December 27

New Year's Eve Party, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, music, crafts, a photo station, and celebrating. For families - please register.

## December 28

Hanukkah Celebration, 5 p.m., Beaver Pond, Franklin

## December 31

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) New Year's Eve Labyrinth Walk, 5 – 7 p.m., 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, Experience a candlelit labyrinth in our sanctuary.

Contact Jen to find out how you can use this space to reach more than 153,000 homes and businesses each month!  
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# Bellingham Planning Board Updates – November Meeting

By JENNIFER RUSSO

At the latest Planning Board meeting on November 14th, discussions continued over several applications currently under consideration including a non-residential subdivision construction at 306 Maple Street, an application by LMP for a scenic road special permit involving the entry area of 169 Maple Street, and a 15,000 SF industrial building on Maple Street lots 3 and 3A, located across from the existing J. Brian Day building.

## 306 Maple Street Non-Residential Subdivision

As discussed in previous meetings, the 306 Maple Street non-residential subdivision proposes the eventual building of a 60,000 SF warehouse, with no determined use at this time. The request put before the board at the meeting was to freeze the zoning to accommodate the project. Waivers were requested for the official file that included information verifying that the lots meet subdivision regulations (width,

curbing, grade, emergency outlets, etc.), that a drainage and stormwater analysis be completed, and other considerations. It was recommended that discussion be continued, with a draft of a conditional document to be prepared for review. This conditional document would include specifics that if a warehouse were to be built, the plans would need to come back to the board before building for all necessary analysis and approvals. The topic was continued to the December 12th agenda.

## LMP Scenic Road Special Permit

The LMP application for a scenic-road special permit proposes constructing a retaining wall and upgrades to the entry of 169 Maple Street, where the large mulch operation resides. The building of this wall would include the removal of a tree, and the applicant did work with the conservation commission, where they received a condition for storm water installation. With 30 other conditions to de-

velopment, LNP challenged 8 of them, which were stricken by the Superior Court. The applicant requested to the Planning Board in this meeting to approve an upgrade to a timber wall. The Planning Board said that they received landscape plans, but not submittals about the sound barrier wall and would like more details on that wall and its adequacy before moving forward. The issue was continued to the January 23rd meeting agenda with a recommendation that the Town Council attend.

There was a public comment about a fire access road, which the Fire Chief agreed to look into.

## 0 Maple Street (Lots 3 and 3A) – Industrial Trades Building

There was continued discussion of the proposal to build an industrial trades building and associated parking with 30-foot driveway. The building plan had been amended for a reduced footprint, now at 15,000 SF (5 units at 3,000 SF each), a reduction

down to one driveway instead of the original two, and less parking spaces. The applicant discussed stormwater standards and water quality, letting the board know that all water would be captured and treated, and there is a tie into a scenic road permit with a request to remove some existing trees and replace with nursery grade trees and shrubbery. It is anticipated that three employees would work onsite. The Fire Chief did have questions about sprinkler plans, access to FDC and location of hydrants, if there would be a fire lane that allowed for a ladder truck on building sides. The applicant agreed to send this information as well as preliminary architectural plans. The board also requested a cut & fill analysis to ensure earth removal regulations were compliant, and that a noise study be completed.

A resident asked if there was research done on the proposed driveway location and line of sight for travelers on the road when commercial trucks would

be turning into it, as well as considerations of traffic build up.

A resident raised the suggestion to the applicant that when considering a name for the building, looking at naming it “Qua Hill,” which is what it was known as before the building of 495. The applicant has also proposed a monument at the location.

The discussion was continued to the 12/12 agenda for quantifying tree and earth removal, noise ordinance studies, building elevation plan, and fire safety plans – items that would be due to the board by 12/4 for review.

Note: Though on the agenda for the November meeting, the Prospect Hill Village application was not discussed as the applicant dropped off additional information for review, and so that topic has been continued to the 12/12 agenda.

The public is strongly encouraged to attend the December 12th Planning Board meeting when many of these topics will be discussed in more detail.



## Wishing you a happy Holiday Season and a wonderful New Year.

*Please note our special holiday hours*

<p><b>Christmas Eve</b> Tuesday, December 24th 8:30 AM to Noon</p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b> Wednesday, December 25th Closed</p>	<p><b>New Year's Eve</b> Tuesday, December 31st 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM</p> <p><b>New Year's Day</b> Wednesday, January 1st Closed</p>
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*Hours may be subject to change due to weather.  
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