

The Show Must Go on!

FHS Senior Steps Up to Lead Peers in aftermath of Staff Cuts

By J.D. O'GARA

Jason "Jace" Dimatteo is just 17, and he became president of the Franklin High School Theatre Company (FHSTC) last year, at the end of his junior year. In the meantime, a Proposition 2 1/2 override came to a vote in Franklin and didn't pass. Franklin High School's theatre arts teacher, Skylar Grossman, was let go, and Theatre Arts was essentially dropped as a course of study.

"At the beginning of this year, we were a little lost," says Jace, who had never directed but still wanted to put on a play with other students this fall. He had seen *The Outsiders*, on Broadway, and felt the "timeless" theme was ideal for FHSTC to perform, but he needed to do some convincing. "It was stressful," he says, "It seemed like every idea we had and brought to administration was just shot down im-



In November, the Franklin High School Theatre Company presented the play *The Outsiders*, a story of "greasers" (cast shown here) and "soc's." Senior Jason Dimatteo, FHSTC president this year, assumed a leadership role in lieu of a teacher, rallying students to work hard to create a successful production. Photos by Jason Dimatteo.

mediately. There wasn't a clear solution on what we could do to run the show, because there had to be faculty supporting our rehearsals."

Dimatteo was determined to make *The Outsiders* happen one way or another. The senior planned a production calen-

dar, character work activities, learned to set up a ticketing website, applied for the rights to put on the show by himself, printed posters, created programs and did his own photo-

SHOW

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St. Mary's parishioners lined up to express love and support to church leaders following the first Mass, held outdoors, after a fire believed to have been set took place at the church October 23rd.

Services Move to Parish Hall & Chapel after St. Mary's Fire

Arsonist Remains at Large, Fund for Repair Created

By J.D. O'GARA

Although services in the main portion of St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Franklin remained sus-

pended in late November, church business rebounded rather quickly

FIRE

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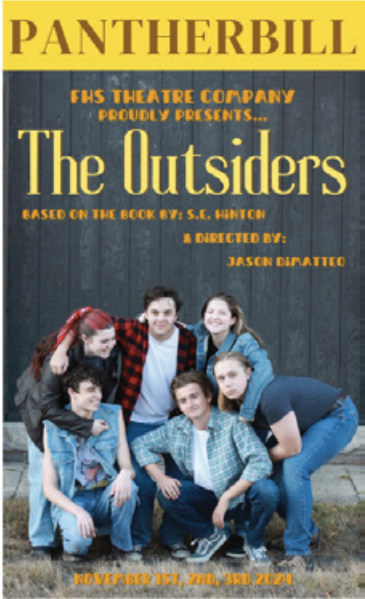
shoot for promotional activities. “I acted like I knew what I was doing. It was hard. I had to think of every possible situation that could arise,” he says.

The hesitant go-ahead came, if a faculty member would be present during rehearsals. Jace and other FHSTC students had to ask FHS teachers to volunteer time, and many generously complied.

“As we got further into weeks of it, (asking teachers to volunteer) became a burden, and I hated to ask them, but I also knew we had to open our show,” says Dimatteo, “In the end, they came together and really pushed through. I am really grateful,” he says, thanking Ms. Amy Edson, Mr. Kevin Enos, Ms. Danielle Laplante, Ms. Shelly Laquinta, Ms. Helen Hoffenberg, Ms. Gina Johnson, Ms. Madelyn Degutis, Ms. Maria Gentile, Ms. Katherine Quigley, Ms. Jennifer Briggs and Mr. David Soulard.

Between 50-60 students were involved in the production.

“I think the way Jason stepped up was so amazing,” says sophomore Kayla Harwood, part of the crew. “I know many people who have no comfort at school and T-co (sic) is the only thing



Dimatteo took on a lot of jobs in addition to director of the show, including designing this program.

they look forward to at the end of a school day.”

In October, the school was, ultimately, able to hire a theatre advisor and program director on a part-time basis through the rest of the year – Chloe Selznick, a 2020 FHS graduate who recently her BFA from Hofstra University.

“When I saw the override wasn’t going to go through, I needed to do something to help. I wouldn’t have made it through (high school) without theatre and the music program,” says Selznick a former FHSTC student.

Describing the current FHSTC students as “a very resil-



In the end, The Outsiders drew a sizable audience and was well received, and Dimatteo expressed pride in the students and their hard work, as well as gratitude to the adults who helped.

ient and passionate group,” Selznick takes her hat off to Jason. “Without an adult in the room, he had to take charge. There was a lot of student effort as well,” she says.

“I feel like I’m getting a lot of recognition for the whole program, but it really couldn’t be done without every single person we have doing what they do,” says Jason, proud of the students he directed, “I hope that people can learn that the things that they love shouldn’t be limited by anything.”

Jason heavily credits fellow senior Eden Donovan,

“I was both the head of set design and construction for the company, and I’m the social media ambassador and marketing manager,” says Donovan,

who also acted as “Dallas” in the play. Donovan, pleased with the outcome, says she’s “very grateful that we have all these people that are willing to get involved and stay involved and fight for this company,” admitting it took “a lot of trial and error” to get things off the ground, including the set build.

“We didn’t really have a tech director locked in for the year or any idea of when we would get that figured out,” explains Donovan, adding, “(The school administration) wanted it to be safe, and even though most of our tech crew does know how to be safe with tools, because of Stagecraft classes in the past, they wanted to make sure we had supervision.” Luckily, Mr. Ryan Fitzgerald, who had worked as

tech director in the past, volunteered. “He came in for a day after doing CORI checks and getting all set up with the administration, and we built the whole set in one day,” says Donovan.

“(The Outsiders) was a different experience than past theater shows, but in the end, putting on a great show just felt like such a wonderful reward for all the hard work every member of T-Co. has been putting in to keep this company alive,” says Riley MacDonald, who acted as “Jerry” in the production,” adding, “... I think there was no way we were letting this program die, so if it means more work to keep doing what we love, so be it.”

Junior Charlie Nash, who played “Ponyboy,” echoes that sentiment. “It felt awesome to be a piece of something that would show everybody that we were still making awesome things,” he says.

Dimatteo has hopes that in the future, students in FHSTC will once again have a teacher to lead the way. In the meantime, he hopes to leave a packet of resources and tips, “so in the future it’s not something (other students) have to completely figure out on their own,” he says, “I learned everything I know about running the company from Mr. Grossman, and I’m trying to teach as much as I know.”

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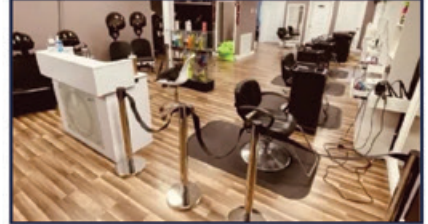
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FIRE

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after a fire last month, resuming weekend and daily Masses of late October in the Chapel and Sacred Heart Hall portions of the building. The Mass schedule is Monday – Friday, 7 a.m., Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 7:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with livestream currently unavailable due to the fire.

Fr. Bob Poitras of St. Mary's expressed happiness that services at the church could resume in some fashion. As he noted in Facebook post in late October, "This is great news that we can at least return to some use of our church so quickly. While it will not always feel ideal, at least we can join together again in our church in some form and fashion. We will all need to have patience as we continue to move forward and make the best of what we have."

The fire that damaged St. Mary's Catholic Church in Franklin yesterday evening is still being investigated as arson and investigators are asking for the public's help, said Franklin Fire Chief James G. McLaughlin,



Although services have now resumed in the chapel and parish halls (not the main church), the outdoor Mass on October 27th drew hundreds of parishioners.

Franklin Police Chief Thomas J. Lynch, and State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine.

A press release issued immediately following the fire from the Fire Marshall's office noted that the fire departments of Norfolk, Wrentham, Medway, Bellingham, and Plainville provided mutual aid at the scene of the fire. The Foxborough Fire Department provided station coverage.

As of late November, (Local Town Pages press time) the arsonist remained at large.

"We're asking anyone with information on this fire to share it with investigators," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Call the Arson Watch Reward Program at 1-800-682-9229. Tipsters can

remain anonymous if they wish."

The Arson Watch Reward Program is coordinated by the Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriting Association and offers rewards of up to \$5,000 for information that detects or prevents arson crimes.

Following the fire, on Sunday morning, October 27th, members of St. Mary's Parish turned out by the hundreds to attend Sunday Mass outdoors behind the St. Mary's School, with news crews attending and Franklin police standing by. Following the Mass, parishioners lined up in droves to embrace their three pastors in a mutual show of support. Churchgoers Local Town Pages spoke with expressed compassion.

"I feel very sad that this person, whoever it is, has such deep wounds and dark thoughts. I don't think this person under-



Members of the Franklin Interfaith Council put together a show of support for St. Mary's on Town Common in the aftermath of the fire.

stands how much good there is in the church, how many people love the church and their God, because, if they did, I don't think they would have done that," said parishioner Donna Strok, a fifth generation Franklin resident whose family has always attended the church.

"I feel sad at what happened and so very proud of our pastor, Fr. John, the whole staff, everyone who came together, as Franklin does, and as St. Mary's does," added another churchgoer, Donna O'Neil.

Later, the Franklin Interfaith Council offered a venue for those outside the St. Mary's community to show their support, with a gathering entitled, Franklin Celebration of Love and Diversity: Responding to Violence with Compassion and Unity." Various faith leaders in the community offered support to St. Mary's and

words of encouragement, healing and solidarity. Franklin Town Council Chair Tom Mercer also spoke at the ceremony, offering thoughts and prayers on behalf of the Town and its members.

"...We are here as one community, and we all stand with you as you continue the healing process from this unthinkable act..." said Mercer.

Those who would like to support reconstruction and repair of the damaged areas in the church are directed to the ongoing Saint Mary Parish Fire Fund. If you would like to donate, please send checks to St. Mary Parish, 1 Church Square, Franklin, MA 02038 or visit

<https://www.osvhub.com/st-marysfranklin/giving/funds>.

For information on church services, visit www.stmarysfranklin.org.

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Santa Foundation Giving Trees in Multiple Locations

By J.D. O'GARA

The Santa Foundation, each year, works with several generous community partners to help make the holidays special for those in Franklin and surrounding towns who are experiencing financial hardships. These partners provide the location of "Giving Trees," adorned with gift wish tags neighbors can take, fulfill and return to each location. These gifts will be distributed by the Santa Foundation. Giving Trees are placed at the following locations:

- Advanced Auto, 45 Pulaski Blvd. Bellingham
- Grove Street Auto, 79 Grove Street, Franklin
- James Breakfast & More, 850 Franklin St., Wrentham
- King Street Cafe, 390 King St., Franklin
- Middlesex Bank, 1000 Franklin Village Drive, Franklin

- Norfolk Credit Union, 194 Main St., Norfolk
- Postal Center, 279 E Central Street, Franklin
- Postal Center, 9 Medway Rd., Ste. C, Milford
- Postal Center, 14 Milliston Rd., Millis
- Salon Elan, Inc., 9 Summer St., Ste. 102, Franklin

In addition to the "Giving Tree" locations, although no trees are put up at the following locations, these community partners graciously collect and deliver gifts for The Santa Foundation:

- Franklin Police Department, 911 Panther Way, Franklin
- Medway Police Department, 315 Village St., Franklin
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Attorney Daniel Cardinal of the Franklin Law Group has been practicing as a civil trial attorney for more than 30 years.

"Most of my career was spent practicing as a trial lawyer in the Boston area. I have tried multiple civil litigation jury trials to successful verdicts in courts around the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," said Cardinal, who has lived in Franklin for over 35 years. "In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I disbanded my Boston law firm, where I was managing partner, and moved my law practice to Franklin."

And Franklin Law Group, located at 1 Fisher Street, was formed.

Franklin Law Group's practice areas include personal injury, motor vehicle collisions, motorcycle accidents, commercial slip and fall incidents, wrongful deaths, dog/domestic animal attacks, medical malpractice, estate planning, and business law.

The firm specializes in estate planning for both individuals and families. This includes creating wills, powers of attorney, healthcare proxies, and trusts to protect individual and family assets. If needed, they can also represent individuals or families with contested estates and the administration of an estate in Probate Court.

It is its individual service that makes Franklin Law Group different from other firms.

"Franklin Law Group is unique in that we provide individual service to each of our clients, in person and on a one-on-one basis," said Cardinal. "When you hire Franklin Law Group, you will personally deal with, and speak with, me at each stage of your claim. I, and my personal paralegal Traci, will both work with you throughout the entire process to ensure your individual needs are addressed. We are not a large law firm that simply takes in cases and refers them out to other law firms or attorneys; when Franklin Law Group accepts your case, you will be personally represented by me throughout your entire claim. We believe in, and we practice, personal customer service at its highest level."

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"In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I disbanded my Boston law firm, where I was managing partner, and moved my law practice to Franklin."

*-Attorney Daniel Cardinal
Franklin Law Group*

are generally from the MetroWest area though the firm does have clients in multiple states across the country who are looking for professional and personal representation.

"This is also true for our estate planning clients who are looking for a personal one-on-one service from a knowledgeable attorney who can address their unique, personal and family estate planning needs. Our estate planning clients are also generally local clients from the MetroWest area, including Franklin and surrounding towns," said Cardinal.

He added, "I have lived in Franklin for over 35 years and have raised four children through the Franklin school systems. I have been actively involved in the town representing citizens groups and have participated in coaching youth sports for over 10 years. I am a member of several organizations in town and have enjoyed all that this town has to offer as a community of caring individuals."

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Franklin Law Group resolves wrongful death of single mother with two minor children

A recent case resolved by Attorney Daniel Cardinal related to the wrongful death of a single mother that occurred in the State of Texas; she had two minor children.

"The single mother was a passenger in a car that was rear-ended by another driver in a truck. The single mother was killed instantly. The single mother was in the State of Texas trying to start a new life for her family. Her two children were in Massachusetts waiting for their mother to bring them to Texas to be with her."

Franklin Law Group brought claims against the negligent truck driver but there was no insurance coverage available, and the driver of the truck had no other assets available. After investigating the insurance coverage of the car in which the mother was a passenger, plus the single mom's personal auto insurance, the firm identified uninsured motorist insurance coverage.

Franklin Law Group was then required to initiate probate in the Massachusetts Probate Court to establish and administer the single mom's estate for the benefit of her two children.

All assets were identified and liquidated for the benefit of the minor children. Franklin Law Group then created a long-term trust for the children to ensure the proceeds would be administered for them at key points throughout their lives.

Said Cardinal, "Franklin Law Group went above and beyond to provide personal service to the estate as well as to the children individually. I met with the children and with the children's relatives on several occasions to ensure all parties understood the multiple steps required to resolve this matter. The extended relatives and the children appreciated the personal service that was provided."

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Brigham & Women's Gave Her Brother a Second Chance.

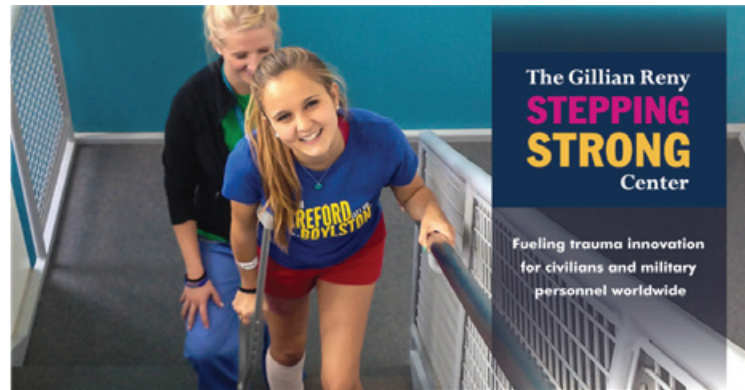
Now She's Giving Back.

By J.D. O'GARA

On an average day in September last year, Heather Bliss, of Medway, got a call from her 47-year-old brother, Peter, in Florida. He had not been feeling well for the past 24 hours. Listening to his symptoms, Heather, a nurse, realized he was suffering from a heart attack. She urged him to call 911.

Peter ended up in a Florida ICU, having suffered a "widow's maker" heart attack, where major arteries are completely blocked. Although he went home, Peter later suffered further health decline, so Bliss took him back to Boston, to Brigham & Women's Hospital, which immediately admitted him.

"They explained that ... ultimately, he would need a heart transplant," says Bliss, "So, we celebrated his birthday in January, and we celebrated Christmas as if it were his last. It was prob-



ably the hardest year of my life, my mother's, my sister's, when your loved one is just clinging to a miracle."

Peter begged to stay on the organ donor list when he ended up in the hospital and an infection threatened his suitability for the procedure, but on March 21st, after he had voiced a premonition he'd be having the transplant the day before, a heart became available through whom Bliss refers to as "Peter's angel."

"We always feel we're forever indebted to (Brigham & Women's) and their kindness," says Bliss, who was approached

by hospital to join its Stepping Strong 2025 Boston Marathon team, which will raise funds for the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Foundation, which aims to catalyze trauma innovation for injured civilians and military heroes at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Gillian Reny's life and legs were saved in 2013 after she was hit by shrapnel during the Boston Marathon bombing.

Although the foundation was not directly related to her brother's treatment, Bliss didn't hesitate to join the team. "Everyone (on the team) is running for some reason they want to give back. Everybody has the same underlying gratitude," she says.

Peter is now doing okay, although the cocktail of medications he needed damaged his kidneys to the point Bliss and her twin sister Samantha were considering donating theirs. Peter may need a kidney transplant in the future, but Bliss says, "He's very grateful that he has been given a second chance and thinks about his organ donor all the time."



Heather Bliss, of Medway, is shown here with her brother Peter, after his heart transplant at Brigham & Women's Hospital. Bliss will run the 2025 Boston Marathon for the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Foundation, and her first fundraiser will be a Christmas wrapping fundraiser at Franklin VFW Post 3402 on December 19th.

Now, Bliss must raise funds for her Brigham & Women team. Her first fundraiser will take place on December 19th, from 3:30 - 8 p.m. at the Franklin VFW Post 3402 at 1034 Pond St., Franklin. She and her team of elves (high school students) will wrap Christ-

mas gifts for a \$20-\$30 donation per bag of gifts. Folks can drop off that day or sign up ahead by emailing blissheather34@yahoo.com.

Later, on January 10th, Urban Air will donate 20% of admission proceeds to Bliss' marathon fundraiser if they mention it at the door.

Can't make the fundraisers? No problem. Donations can also be made through the following link:

https://events.brighamand-womens.org/site/TR/Events/BostonMarathonRebrand?px=1180396&pg=personal&fr_id=1390

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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 or CALL (508) 435-2211 or contact a licensed pest control professional.

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Order “Light Up Franklin” Luminary Kit by Dec. 13

Boy Scouts of America Troop 126 is conducting its annual “Light Up Franklin” sale of luminary kits, for Franklin residents and their neighbors to join in lighting on New Year’s Eve, at 6 p.m.

To participate, Franklin residents must order luminary kits (deadline December 13th) , which will be distributed at the Franklin Historical Museum at 80 West Central Street on Sunday, December 22nd, from 1-3 p.m. and Saturday, December 28th, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. (A portion of the proceeds is shared with both the Franklin Historical Museum and the Franklin Food Pantry.) Boy Scouts also deliver the kits to Franklin residents for an extra \$3.



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	3 Kits	\$36	\$39
Email:	4 Kits	\$48	\$51
Phone:	5 Kits	\$60	\$63

***Pick Up Location:**
Franklin Historical Museum
80 West Central St, Franklin

***Pick Up Times:**
Sunday, Dec. 22nd 1pm-3pm
Saturday, Dec. 28th 10am-12pm


Questions, Email Troop126fundraising@gmail.com -- Thank you for your support!



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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. 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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Upcoming Meetings

Franklin Town Council, December 18, 2024, 7 p.m.

Franklin Town Council Office Hours, December 19, 2024, Franklin Senior Center

Joint Budget Subcommittee: December 17, 2024, 7 p.m.

Finance Committee: December 11, 2024, 7 p.m.

School Committee: December 10, 2024, 7 p.m.

Planning Board, December 9, December 16, 2024, 7 p.m.



Photos by Jane Lebak

Newcomers Hold 49th Craft Fair at Tri-County

The Franklin Newcomers held their 49th Craft Fair on November 9, 2024 at Tri-County Regional Technical Vocational High School. More than 1250 persons attended the craft fair, which featured 73 crafters and artisans.

The Newcomers asked for donations to the Franklin Food Pantry at the entrance to the fair, which yielded 10 full grocery bags for the pantry.

Last year, the Franklin Newcomers gave \$1,765 to the Franklin food pantry. No decision has been made yet regarding this year's donations. Each year, the group's members nominate non-profit, local charities to receive donations, and funds are allocated by member vote. Every nominated charity will receive a donation.

For more information on the Franklin Newcomers, find them on Facebook for club information and activities: Franklin Newcomers & Friends Club.

-J.D. O'GARA





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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 head-quarters 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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Sports

Franklin Hockey Looking to Climb Back Up the Mountain

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Franklin hockey program went 13-8 last season, earning themselves a 12 seed in the Division 1 State Tournament. After two wins, the Panthers would eventually fall in the Final 4 to Xaverian, who lost to the eventual State Champion St. Johns Prep. Unfortunately, Franklin graduated 11 seniors from that team.

“We lost a talented group of seniors, a lot of points walked out that door, including our top four goal scorers,” Coach Chris Spillane said. “But we have the players, strong senior and junior classes, to step up and fill those shoes. We have a good group coming back who will give us the opportunity.”

Spillane will be looking first and foremost to senior right winger Carter Balducci to put the team on his back offensively. Last year, the winger contributed 19 points to the Franklin offense, and the coach is looking for him to have a similar season while adding to it.

Left winger Jack Wernig will be another bright spot in the offensive zone alone with Balducci. Last winter, Wernig notched 10 points, and Spillane is looking for him to explode this year and increase his totals.

In addition to the two seniors putting the puck in the net on a regular basis, Franklin has a strong junior class that should be able to step up and score some points for the Panthers if they are to be successful. A trio of players from that junior class who should be able to up their game are right wingers Thomas Quinn and Drake McAlpine and left winger Robert Fletcher.



With the multitude of wingers gracing the program, Spillane is going to have to make some adjustments. Having lost a couple of centers the Panther Coach is going to look to move some of wingers into the center position.

“All of these guys have been playing long enough and with a little bit of coaching they should be able to take on the role,” the Coach said. “Jack (Wernig) is probably the one with the inside track to take on the role in the dot.”

Defensively, the returning Franklin athletes are looking good and should be able to get back onto the ice and continue where they left off last winter. Seniors Jack Harrington and Owen Ariento both have quick puck movement out of the zone and are strong physical players. The duo epitomizes the typical Franklin defenseman being able to move the puck into transition through the neutral zone.

The last line of defense is up for grabs. Having graduated last year’s starting goalie, Franklin will look to seniors Jack O’Connor and Jo Torracco to mind the net this season. According to Spillane, both goalies are amore than capable of filling the role. The two saw minimal time on the

ice last year: O’Connor, who is smaller and quicker, played in five games while Torracco, a bigger and taller player saw action in 2 ½-3 games for the Panthers as a junior.

“At this stage, it is a wait and see situation. We’ll see who practices well during the week, they’ll most likely get the start,” Spillane said. “In addition to how they are playing we will also look at who gives us the best opportunity to win against individual opponents.”

As the season nears, Spillane and the Franklin coaching staff are hoping that the team can continue to improve each week of the season as a whole. As in the past, they would also like to capture the Hockomock League Championship and then make it back into the State Tournament.

“Once you get into the tournament, what happens there takes care of itself in this the second season,” he Franklin Coach said. “The Hockomock League is always tough, and we would love to regain that title (Franklin and King Philip were Co-Champions last year).”

In addition to playing a tough league schedule, the Panthers also play a very tough non-league schedule to prepare themselves

for the second season. In the Hockomock alone, Franklin will square off against the likes of Canton (twice) and Mansfield, as well as a skilled King Philip team that brings a neighborhood brawl to the ice each and every time the two teams hook up. Spillane went on to say, everyone plays Franklin like it’s their Stanley Cup, so the team needs to be ready at all times.

The Panthers will open the season on December 18th, when they host powerhouse Catholic Memorial. Although a perennial team in the state, “Spillane believes that it’s good to have a team like CM early in the year, as both teams are still adjusting and getting ready.

“This is the first game for both of us, as everyone starts the season on even footing and begins the season on the same day with the same amount of practices,” he said. “Early in the season, you can catch a team off guard, but you can also learn. I look to pick up something from each game throughout the season to help us improve overall.”

Having lost 11 seniors, it may take the Panthers a few games to form that camaraderie and the ability to play together as a team, but for the most part, the majority of the Franklin players are year-round hockey players and should be up to the task of going after another tournament run.

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PLEASE RECYCLE

Franklin Public Schools Announce Upcoming High School Winter Concerts

Superintendent Lucas Giguere, Principal Dr. Maria Weber, and Director of Visual and Performing Arts Diane Plouffe wish to invite the community to attend Franklin High School’s two winter concerts this December.

WHEN:
Tuesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m.

WHERE:
Franklin High School Auditorium, 218 Oak St., Franklin

WHAT:
The Franklin High School Music Department invites the community to attend its two winter concerts this holiday season.

On Dec. 10, the Chorus and Orchestra will perform a multicultural winter program including songs such as “All I Want For Christmas is You,” “BaShana HaBa’a,” “Jambo Rafiki,” “Mother Ginger” from “The Nutcracker,” and “Chanukah Festival Overture.” Chorus and Orchestra Director Plouffe will lead student musicians through the performance.

On Dec. 11, the Concert Band and Wind Ensemble will perform a traditional band program led by Band Director Leighanne Rudsit.

“We hope to see many community members at the upcoming concerts,” Principal Weber said. “The students have been hard at work preparing for these shows, and I am excited to see their preparation pay off in a celebration of the winter holidays.”

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Events December 2024

Make-An-Ornament Night:
December 5th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Franklin TV and Radio 23 Hutchinson St. Franklin, Mass. The Franklin LGBTQ Alliance is hosting a craft night. We will be creating ornaments to give to the Franklin Senior Center for their Winter Wonderland event. We will be providing crafting supplies, but feel free to bring your own. Anyone of any age is free to come!

Wicked Queer Game Night:
December 7th from 6-9:30 p.m. at Pete’s Nerd Emporium 10 Main St., Franklin, Mass.
Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance for our monthly game night! There will be a variety of card games and board games. Feel free to bring your own! There will also be games to purchase at Pete’s

Nerd Emporium. Recommended ages teen and up, but anyone is welcome!

LGBTQ Book Club:
December 11th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Pete’s Nerd Emporium 10 Main St Franklin, Mass.
Join the LGBTQ Alliance for our monthly book club. This month, we will be reading Guapa by Saleem Haddad. You can borrow a copy from the Franklin Library, and then join us as we discuss the book. Guapa is a thought-provoking novel told from the viewpoint of Rasa, a gay man living in an unnamed Middle East country. The story opens as Teta, Rasa’s grandmother and the woman who raised him, discovers Rasa and his lover, Taymour, in bed together.

Franklin Senior Center Winter Wonderland December 12

The Franklin Senior Center invites you to its annual Winter Wonderland, this year on Thursday Dec. 12th from 4:30-7 p.m., an event open to the entire community. Dozens of decorated trees will create a magical atmosphere of Santa’s Village. Elvis will be on site serenading folks, Santa & Mrs. Clause have promised to come, and the Franklin Fire Department will present a

touch-a-truck for the kiddos. Hot chocolate, cookies and fun kids crafts complete the night.

Winter Wonderland will be the biggest event of the month, but as usual, lots of fun events for seniors are taking place at the Franklin Senior Center, located at 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin. See below:

12/3: 9:30 a.m., Blanche’s Bling. Have your mobility device

blinded out for the holidays
12/3&4: 9:30-1, Busy Bee Bazaar, Handmade crafts for sale!
12/5: 12 p.m. Craft Corner, Join Jean and make an ornament for the Memory Tree
12/5: 1 p.m. Reduce Holiday Stress
12/6: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Shredding Event, bring all documents you need shredded

12/9: 11 a.m., Snowflake Craft
12/10: 11a.m., Driving Decisions, RMV hosts interactive discussion about older driver safety and mobility
12/11: 1 p.m., Pathways to Healing, Bereavement group led by nurse Trish
12/12: 4:30-7 p.m., Winter Wonderland
12/17: 11 a.m., Probate, with Attorney Michael Kasberg
12/17: 1 p.m., Memory & Cognition

12/18: 1 p.m., Pathways to Healing, Bereavement group led by nurse Trish
12/18: 4 p.m., Caroling & Cocoa with Daisy Troop 63341 Southeastern Community Band, open to entire community!
12/19: 1 p.m., Acrylic Art with Kathy
12/19: 4 p.m., Pizza and movie: It’s a Wonderful Life, must register, \$3
12/20: 11 a.m., Eat around the World-Morocco, \$6

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MA 250 to Celebrate America’s 250 birthday!

MA 250 is all about celebrating America’s 250 birthday! Communities around the commonwealth are curating programming to reflect and celebrate this milestone. How will your organization or community join in on the fun?
As the Franklin Cultural District looks ahead to Franklin’s 250th anniversary in 2028, we invite you to join us in celebrating Massachusetts 250 starting in 2025! In preparation for this exciting milestone, we encourage local event organizers to incorporate a historic element into their annual programs, celebrat-

ing Franklin’s rich heritage and cultural history. These events will be highlighted as part of a town-wide community marketing campaign that showcases the unique stories, traditions, and achievements of our town, building momentum towards the grand celebration in 2028. Let’s come together to honor the past and create a lasting legacy for the future!
Submit your MA250 event here at <https://tinyurl.com/FranklinHistoricProg> to be included in the program booklet - Deadline is December 6th, 2024.

FDP Holiday Happenings & Gift Guide to Inspire Holiday Spirit & Gift Ideas

If you have not already seen the Holiday Happenings & Gift Guide, make sure you check it out. The holiday guide spotlights all things Franklin making it easy to “keep it local” for shopping this winter season.

Franklin Downtown Partnership (FDP) business members spotlight their special sales, promotions, activities, and events for the season in the holiday guide on the Partnership’s website.

View the Holiday Happenings & Gift Guide at the Partnership’s newly designed website at franklindowntownpartnership.org for the current list of Franklin’s small businesses and all they are offering for the holidays.

The Holiday Guide includes great gift ideas and special treats for shopping for the upcoming season. It will also give shoppers the inspiration they need for food, clothing, gifts for yourself and others as we prepare for any winter holiday we celebrate. Remember to shop local!

Stay up to date info and follow the FDP on Instagram and Facebook at:

<https://www.instagram.com/franklindowntownpartnership/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/franklindowntownpartnership.org/>

The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents can join the Downtown Partnership for \$25. The Partnership manages events like the Strawberry Stroll and the Harvest Festival, and initiatives such as beautification, streetscape design, greenspace, alley murals, and sculpture projects. For more information go to www.franklindowntownpartnership.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 holi-



day 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 for tickets and more information.

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.

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Living Healthy

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 compatibil-

ity 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 government'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 re-

ferral 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?

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Franklin Awarded \$15K from Mass Cultural Council for Franklin Cultural District

The Town of Franklin is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). This funding will bolster the efforts of the Franklin Cultural District Committee, further advancing its mission to promote arts, culture, and creative initiatives that enhance the vibrancy and community engagement within the town.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council's investment aligns with Franklin's ongoing commitment to fostering a flourishing arts ecosystem through partnerships with local artists, cultural organizations, small businesses, and the creative economy.

"The Cultural District is a key component of Franklin's identity and future," said Jamie Hellen, Franklin Town Administrator. "This grant will help us grow our programming, bring new cultural experiences to our residents and visitors, and continue supporting the incredible creative work already happening here."

The \$15,000 grant will be used to:

- Enhance public art installations across the district.
- Support community events and festivals showcasing local talent.
- Promote collaborations between local artists, schools, and businesses.
- Expand outreach efforts to promote the Franklin Cultural District as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

The Franklin Cultural District Committee is currently working on several exciting initiatives, including [mention upcoming event, festival, or project]. With this grant, the committee will be able to enhance the scope of these efforts and further position Franklin as a hub for arts and culture in the region.

"Franklin has a rich cultural heritage, and with the support of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, we are excited to create

even more opportunities for creative expression and community engagement," said Cory Shea, Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to stay connected through the Franklin Cultural District's weekly cultural newsletter and social media platforms to learn about upcoming events and new initiatives.

For more information on the Franklin Cultural District, visit franklinculture.org

Learn about the FY25 Franklin Cultural District Committee Investment Grant Opportunities at <https://www.franklinculture.org/cultural-investment-grants-fy25>.

About the Massachusetts Cultural Council:

The Massachusetts Cultural Council promotes excellence, inclusion, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and sciences to foster a rich cultural life for Massachusetts residents and communities.

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

Franklin Federated Church to Host Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols

The Franklin Federated Church, located at 171 Main Street in Franklin, invites all to their Christmas events. First, "Blue Christmas," to take place at 7 p.m. on December 12th, is a service for those who are having a hard time with the "merry" aspect of Christmas, whether due to grieving or loneliness. The event includes candlelight and comforting songs, readings and reflection.

Also, "Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols" will take place at 5 p.m. on December 24th, which 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."

EYES

continued from page 16

- 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.

The Milford-Franklin Eye Center Difference

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center and the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, our mission is clear: to provide ethical, patient-focused care in a licensed and accredited surgery center closer to home. Our local ophthalmologists are in-network, community-based, and have served the

region for over 40 years.

Unlike office-based surgery models, our accredited and licensed surgery center features:

- A full-time MD anesthesiologist for every procedure.
- IV-based anesthesia for optimal safety and comfort.
- No hidden fees or out-of-pocket costs for Medicare-covered procedures.

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.

For more details, see our ad on page 16.

Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.

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.stjohnsfranklinma.org, or call (508) 528-2387.

Franklin Garden Club to Sell Decorated Holiday Wreaths and Arrangements

The Franklin Garden Club will sell decorated holiday wreaths, swags, patio and cemetery boxes, and sleds and skates on Saturday, December 7, from 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Daddario's Hardware Store, 528 West Central Street, Franklin, MA. In addition, holiday fresh floral arrangements will be sold on Instagram and Facebook. The Franklin Garden Club Instagram handle is @franklingardenclubma. The sales will benefit several different club activities. Payment for all purchases can be made with cash, check, or credit card.

The fresh wreaths and swags will be decorated in a variety of colors and styles and will include eye-catching bows and other ornamentation. Many will include a variety of greens, as will the patio and cemetery boxes. Pricing for all items will range from \$25 - \$40.

Club Co-Presidents Pat Donnelly and Mary Anne Dean stated, "We are very excited to offer area residents the opportunity to purchase beautiful holiday wreaths and arrange-



ments created by members of the Franklin Garden Club. This will help those who may not have the time to decorate their own wreaths or make arrangements, while also assisting the Club. All proceeds will benefit Garden Club activities, including the Club scholarship, pine tree seedling program for elementary school students, some of the Franklin Common and library plantings, and education programs open to the public. The Franklin Garden Club is a member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts.

Sip Shop Stroll & Roll on December 7th in Downtown Franklin, 12- 7 p.m.

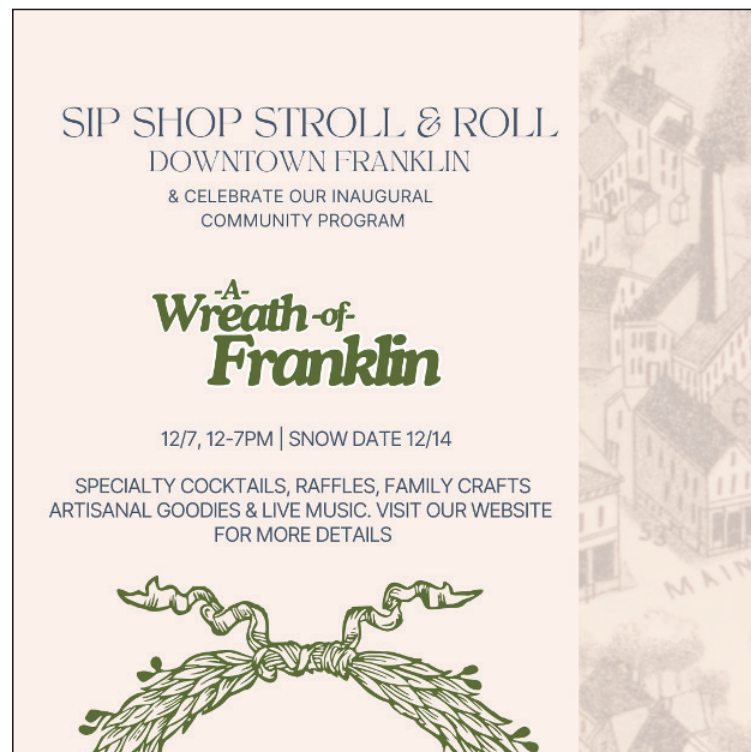
Snow Date December 14th.

The "Sip, Shop, Stroll, and Roll" event is the exciting celebration of the 'A-Wreath-of-Franklin' community wreath program, designed to bring people downtown to enjoy the festive atmosphere and vote for their favorite community-made wreaths.

This festive day invites the Franklin community to experience the creativity of Franklin with live music, specialty cocktails, raffle prizes, and the chance to shop pop-up artisan goods in local storefronts.

It's a day that combines holiday spirit with community pride, offering something for everyone to enjoy in the heart of downtown Franklin!

Local artists, schools, and community members are invited to decorate wreaths in their interpretation of our inaugural theme, "Stories of the Season". Our cultural volunteers will pair community wreaths to be displayed at local businesses throughout the downtown area (December through January).



On December 7th, 12-7 p.m., enjoy a "Sip, Shop, Stroll & Roll" event. Community members are welcomed Downtown to vote for their favorite wreaths, shop, eat

and enjoy local festivities! Don't miss the fun!

See more details at <https://www.franklinculture.org/wreath-franklin>.

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.

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Franklin Honors Veterans at Franklin Elks Lodge #2136

By J.D. O’GARA

Franklin’s 2024 Veterans Day Luncheon courtesy of the Franklin Elks Lodge #2136 once again saw a packed venue, with a welcome from Shannon Nisbett, Franklin’s VSO, posting of the colors by American Legion District Commander John Milot and Sergeant-at-Arms Dawn Anderson (who also made the Veterans Day proclamation), with the “National Anthem,” and later, “America the Beautiful” sung by Franklin High School Chorus members and the Pledge of Allegiance led by veteran Judy Hynes, USN. “Chaplain Bob” Markunis of American Legion Post 75 led the prayer.

Korean War Veteran Gerald Bradie, Jr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 3402 explained to attendees the meaning of the specially prepared POW-MIA table, giving statistics on just how many soldiers were left unaccounted for.

The Keynote speaker of the day was Veteran Patrick Doyle, USMC, who explained that



Vietnam Veteran Patrick Doyle (USMC) was the keynote speaker for Franklin’s 2024 Veterans Day luncheon.

veterans’ “service has been the foundation of our freedom. You put the good of the country and our freedom above the good and safety of yourselves...so future generations can enjoy the same privileges and freedoms that we have now.”

Doyle touched upon sacrifices of the veterans, including

key years of their youth, and the heavy burden carried by many who have served. He shared a letter he wrote home in 1972 from his ship in Vietnam, and how, when he returned, few besides his parents understood or cared what he had experienced, and that finding local veterans’ organizations helped him find others



Korean War Veteran Gerald Bradie explains the importance of the items on the table in honor of Prisoners of War and soldiers Missing in Action.

who understood.

“The common denominator is we all served to defend freedom and democracy,” he said. He noted that the town of Franklin does stand by its veterans with American Legion Post 75 and VFW Post 3402, monthly vet-



Veteran Judy Hynes leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

erans’ coffee socials, a monthly veterans council meeting, and a helpful Franklin Veterans Services Office and some of the programs it runs, such as Tune it

VETERANS
continued on page 23

Where the
Holiday Spirit
lives.

The holidays have the ability to uplift your spirit that’s unlike any other time of year. It’s a time of connection and comfort. When memories are shared, new ones are created, and everything takes on a festive look.

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Historic Happenings at Franklin Historical Museum December 2024

NOTE: The last two Decembers at the Museum have featured a display of detailed miniature models of the center of Franklin, circa 1932. This year, the exhibit has been postponed and will be back bigger and better in March, 2025!

Sun. Dec. 1- Introducing "Stocking Stuffer Sunday" with a gift shop sale, music, and MRS. CLAUS! Everyone knows about Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday... but in Franklin we also now have STOCKING-STUFFER SUNDAY. The Gift Shop at the Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central Street, is holding a special sale (half price on ALL books) -- and special hours -- on Sunday, Dec. 1, with something for anyone who lives (or has ever lived) in Franklin-- Stocking Stuffers and beyond! We have little things for little kids, and things to please any adult...The Special Stocking Stuffer Sunday hours are from noon to 5 pm. Plus, with every \$10 purchase you are eligible for a free drawing on Dec 8 to win a teddy bear! Bring the kids for a free photo-op with Mrs Claus from 1-3. There will be seasonal music and, of course, the historic displays at the museum.

Can't make it? The Gift Shop at the Museum is also open during regular museum hours, 10-1 on Saturdays and 1 to 4 on other Sundays AND extended hours on Dec. 7...Check out a preview at <https://www.franklin-museum1778.com> (just click on the Gift Shop tab) * The shop is operated by the Friends of the Franklin Historical Museum, a 501 (c) 3.

Sat Dec. 7 A-Wreath-a-Franklin: Sip Shop Stroll & Roll

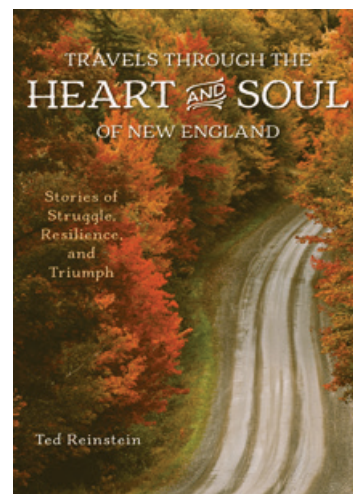
The museum will be open during A-Wreath-a-Franklin:



Sip Shop Stroll & Roll fun, from noon to 7 p.m., with a film at 5. This festive community celebration is sponsored by the Franklin Downtown Partnership and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy! Sip, Shop Stroll and Roll will offer festive beverages, raffles and live music around the downtown.

Sat. Dec. 7 Film themed in honor of Pearl Harbor Day-- The critically acclaimed classic, "So Proudly We Hail"

The story of the lives of three U.S. Army nurses who leave San Francisco for their tour of duty in Hawaii in December 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor changes their destination, and their lives. Led by Lt. Janet Davidson, the nurses are sent to Bataan, in the Philippines. Faced with untested nurses, the group quickly become battle-weary veterans. When Bataan falls, the American forces flee to the offshore island of Corregidor, where they find the Japanese assault just as intense. The movie was released in 1943 and is 126 minutes in length. The showing begins at 5



p.m. Our Cinema 80 Film series is produced in cooperation with the Franklin Senior Center.

Sun. Dec. 8--Second Sunday Speaker Series: WCVB Chronicle's Ted Reinstein.

Journalist and author Ted Reinstein has reported all around New England for 25 years, telling the colorful stories of this historic, ever-changing corner of America. Now, he condenses his countless travels into a single, labor of love: *Travels through the Heart and Soul of New England -- Stories of Struggle, Resilience, and*



Triumph. With his always flawless presentation skills, Ted will share some of the stories and the process of gathering them and creating the book. The museum opens at 1:15 and will be available to autograph books after his presentation. The museum is open until 4. Admission is free, donations always appreciated.

Sun. Dec. 15 "Third Sunday" Music at the Museum program features a Chamber Music Ensemble

The museum will come alive with seasonal favorites. Come to listen and watch or come to check out the museum, with 'music on the side.' The museum opens at 1 and the program will start at about 1:15. The event is FREE, but donations are welcome.

Sunday Dec. 22 and Saturday Dec. 28th Pick Up Your Luminaries!

Franklin Boy Scouts Troop 126 are again selling luminaries. The scouts hope everyone will share them on New Year's Eve. They must be preordered and can be picked up at the Franklin Historical Museum at



80 West Central Street on Sunday, December 22nd, from 1-3 p.m. and Saturday, December 28th, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. (A portion of the proceeds is shared with both the Franklin Historical Museum and the Franklin Food Pantry.) Boy Scouts will also deliver the kits to Franklin residents for an extra \$3. Then, on New Year's Eve, at 6 p.m., everyone joins together in lighting their luminaries! More information is available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KOnNLt6Og7vXOCryhSSmYpHv5b0LXnc7/view?usp=sharing>

'CINEMA 80'

Cinema 80, captained by videographer and cinephile Chris Leverone, will be back in the New Year for another season of amazing free film entertainment on Saturdays at 6 p.m., in coordination with the Franklin Senior Center.

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central Street, Franklin. The museum is open Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (except as noted above) and Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m.

When visiting the museum, please consider donating a non-perishable item for the Franklin Food Pantry. Questions? Contact Alan Earls at (508) 560 3786. Visit us online at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.com>

Knights of Columbus Advent/Christmas Gift Card Drive

December 14th and 15th

The Knights of Columbus (Sacred Heart Council #1847 - St. Mary's Church in Franklin, MA) is holding our annual Advent/Christmas Fundraiser for those in Franklin and surrounding communities who are "in need" during the holiday season... and it will be the only charity card drive of the year!

ALL proceeds from the event will benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Society - and (to make sure we maximize the impact for those in need) the Knights will be DOUBLING the impact by making a matching donation equal to the total amount collected!

The Knights will have a table set up outside the church after each Mass at St. Mary's on the

weekend of December 14th & 15th, and you'll have the opportunity to make donations in several ways:

- Purchase Stop & Shop gift cards (5% gets donated to St. Vincent de Paul)
- Purchase & Donate Stop & Shop gift cards, cash or checks (100% donated to St. Vincent de Paul)

- **ONLINE GIVING OPTION:** Visit <https://kofc1847.org/food-card-drive-donations> or use the following QR Code accompanying this article.

We thank you in advance for your continued support and charitable donations for those less fortunate - especially during the Christmas season!



Calendar

December 1

"Stocking Stuffer Sunday", 12-5 p.m., The Gift Shop at the Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, special sale (half price on ALL books), and with every \$10 purchase you are eligible for a free drawing on Dec 8 to win a teddy bear! Bring the kids for a free photo-op with Mrs. Claus from 1-3.

December 3

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

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.

Make an Ornament Night, 6:30-8:30 p.m., sponsored by Franklin LGBTQ Alliance, Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, make an ornament for Franklin Senior Center's Winter Wonderland.

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

December 7

Holiday Wreath and Arrangement Sale: The Franklin Garden Club fundraiser, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Daddario's Hardware Store, 528 West Central Street, Franklin, holiday wreaths, swags and cemetery and patio boxes from \$20- \$40, by cash, credit, check or Venmo, [@franklingardenclubma](https://www.facebook.com/franklingardenclubma).

Sip, Shop, Stroll & Roll, A Wreath of Franklin event, 12-7 p.m., Downtown Franklin, specialty cocktails, raffles, family crafts, artisanal goodies & live music, snow date

<https://www.franklinculture.org/wreath-franklin> for details

December 8

Franklin Art Association Collage Workshop by Lenny Moskowitz, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, \$65. To register, contact Susan Plume at susan_plume@yahoo.com or text (508) 846-2589 and send a check payable to FAA to: Treasurer, Franklin Art Association, 279 East Central St., PO 289, Franklin, MA 02028

Concert: Celtic & Christmas with Jeff Snow, 3 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

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.stjohnsfranklinma.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 for information and tickets.

Franklin Historical Museum Cinema 80 and Franklin Senior Center presents So Proudly We Hail, 5 p.m., 80 West Central St., Franklin, 1943 film follows the life of three U.S. Army nurses during Pearl Harbor.

Wicked Queer Game Night, 6-9:30 p.m., Pete's Nerd Emporium, 10 Main St., Franklin, sponsored by Franklin LGBTQ Alliance

December 8

Pre-Chanukah Glow Party, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Temple Beth Torah, 2162 Washington St., Holliston, free latke bar with toppings, glow in the dark games, crafts & dancing, glow menorah lighting, free to public

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

Ayla Brown Christmas, 7:30 p.m., Hopkinton Center for the

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Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, For more info. and link for tickets, visit event calendar at www.hopartscenter.org

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

Second Sunday Speaker Series presents WCVB Chronicle's Ted Reinstein, 1:15 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, journalist and author will discuss his new book *Travels through the Heart and Soul of New England -- Stories of Struggle, Resilience, and Triumph*

December 9

Sondheim Showcase, 7 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

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 10

Franklin High School Chorus & Orchestra Winter Concert, 7 p.m., Franklin High School Auditorium, 218 Oak St., Franklin

December 11

Pocus Magic Show! Wednesday, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin magic, hilarious comedy, music, puppets, and snowy surprises for children (and adults).

Franklin High School Concert Band and Wind Ensemble Winter Concert, 7 p.m., Franklin High School Auditorium, 218 Oak St., Franklin

LGBTQ Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pete's Nerd Emporium, 10 Main St., Franklin, sponsored by Franklin LGBTQ Alliance, book title *Guapa*, by Saleem Haddad

December 12

Franklin Senior Center Winter Wonderland, 4:30-7 p.m., 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, Elvis, Santa & Mrs. Clause, Franklin Fire - touch-a-truck, decorated trees, kids' crafts, Santa's Village, Hot chocolate, Cookies

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 13

Franklin Public Library Book Sale, 1-5 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 14

Franklin Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart Council #1847 Christmas Gift Card Drive, following all Masses on this day, 5% of all gift cards goes to SvDP, OR purchase cards for SvDP, also online at <https://kofc1847.org/food-card-drive-donations>

Franklin Public Library Book Sale, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

First Universalist Society of Franklin "Holiday Cookie Walk," 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 262 Chestnut St., Franklin

Maker Moments: Silk Scarves, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Registration Required, craft class for adults will cover painting on silk with alcohol inks.

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 15

Franklin Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart Council #1847 Christmas Gift Card Drive, following all Masses on this day, 5% of all gift cards goes to SvDP, OR purchase cards for SvDP, also online at <https://kofc1847.org/food-card-drive-donations>

"Third Sunday" Music at the Museum, 1:15 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, program features a Chamber Music Ensemble, FREE, but donations welcome.

December 17

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

CALENDAR

continued on page 23

Winter Break Tips for College Bound Seniors

Winter break is the perfect time for high school seniors to take advantage of a well-needed break from their late night studying and the juggling of sports, work, and clubs. It is a time to catch up on sleep, enjoy the holidays, and of course, cross a few things off the college application checklist!

Winter Break To-Do List:

At this point, students have already submitted their early decision and early action college applications. This is an ideal time for students to submit any outstanding regular decision college applications with January and February deadlines.

- 1. Before break begins:** Be certain your teacher & guidance counselor recommendation letters and transcripts have been uploaded to the Common Application prior to break.
- 2. Finish Regular Decision Applications:**
 - Confirm the application deadlines, required ma-

- terials that will be needed, and complete the final edits of the main college essay.
- Complete all supplemental essays- including optional essays.
 - Complete and submit your regular decision applications as early as possible.
 - And, whatever you do do not wait till 12/31/24 to fill out and submit your 1/1/25 applications.
- 3. Create a final College spreadsheet:** Once the applications have been submitted, create a spreadsheet with the final list of colleges. Include: college name, campus visit or demonstrated interest status, the college's Acceptance Students Day dates, intended major, scholarship deadlines, tuition and room & board costs, and any other college criteria that is important.

- 4. Review College List:** Take a moment to evaluate the final college list. Make sure that you would be happy to attend ANY of the colleges on your list, especially the "likelys." Having a balanced college list, which includes 2 or 3 likely, probable, and selective colleges, will allow a broader range of possibilities. Lastly, take the time to reflect if there is a school that's missing- perhaps a dream school? If it is - dream - and apply!
- 5. Submit Financial Aid Forms:** Complete and submit the FAFSA and CSS forms (if required). Each school posts their deadlines on the financial aid page of their website -important to keep on top of this. The new FAFSA form should be available on 12/1/24.
- 6. Schedule Campus Tours:** It is not too late and the best way to truly determine whether a college is the right fit is to visit the campus when the school is



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

in session. It's best not to visit campuses over winter break, but plan your campus tour schedule in late January or February.

transcript at the end of the academic year to be certain the student has completed the necessary credits and that their grades are still in good-standing.

General Reminders:

- 1. Admission Portals:** Most colleges provide access to their admission portal so that students can check the status of their applications. The portal also confirms that the colleges have received all of the supplemental materials (transcript, high school profile, recommendation letters, SRAR). A student's application will not be reviewed until all required materials have been received. If a student has not received a portal email notification from a college, call the college's admission office.

Balancing work and play is an important part of maintaining good mental health. The winter break can achieve both! Take time to also do what you love most. And maybe if you run out of fun things to do, you can have your mom & dad teach you how to do laundry and make a budget - helpful skills in college!

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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CALENDAR

continued from page 21

December 19

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

Wrap-a-Thon, Thursday, 6 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Join us for a Thursday Night Wrap-a-thon with music and cocoa!

December 23

Mobile Mini Golf! 1-4 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

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. Worshippers will share the light, passing one candle to the next, in the final carol, "Silent Night."

December 26

Pumpernickel Puppets! 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 27

Toe Jam Puppet Band! 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 28

Scott Martell Magic Show! 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 28

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

December 30

Zoo Show with Records & Burpee!, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin
Best for ages 5+

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.

VETERANS

continued from page 19



Phyllis Malcolm and Jan Jewett welcomed veterans and guests to the luncheon.

Out Guitar and Warrior Within classes and the honoring of fallen heroes that takes place monthly on the Town Common. Residents, he said, can continue to honor veterans' legacy by offering assistance and sometimes just an ear to veterans, and by supporting veterans' organizations



Franklin Elks Tommy Marcone, Joannie Casey, General Manager, and Elena Menize, Franklin Elks Exalted Ruler prepare the buffet table for the luncheon.



and others, such as the Franklin Elks and Knights of Columbus, that are committed to helping veterans.

Following lunch, Debra Martin, Franklin's Veterans' Services Executive Assistant, offered updates and announcements, while Commander Dick Hynes and Commander Ernest Carruthers placed remembrance wreaths.

To contact Franklin's Veterans Services Office, call (508) 613-1315.

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 or contact our Interim Minister, the Reverend Beverly Waring at (508) 528-5348 or minister@fusf.org



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December 2024 at Franklin Public Library

The Library will close early at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24th and December 31st and is closed Wednesday, December 25th for Christmas.

Franklin Public Library's 2024 Reading Challenge!

December: A 2024 Goodreads Choice Award Nominee or Winner!
Welcome to the Franklin Public Library's first Annual Reading Challenge! For each monthly prompt that you complete and submit on time you will receive a Free Book Coupon that's good at the library's Book Sale. Submissions MUST be submitted by the last day of each month in order to qualify for that month's Free Book Coupon. For complete details and to sign-up, visit our website at <https://www.franklinma.gov/franklin-public-library/pages/2024-reading-challenge>. Grand prizes made possible by the Friends of the Franklin Library!

Franklin Public Library VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Volunteers are always needed for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs... better known as VITA and TCE. Many volunteer roles are available. You can help as a greeter, an interpreter, and many other roles, but most of all, we need tax preparers. Training for certification is provided!

Learn more at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-tax-volunteers> or email site coordinator Mitzi Gousie at mgousie@min-lib.net

ESL & Adult Literacy Program

The Franklin Public Library has started an English as a Second Language and Adult Literacy Program to serve Franklin and its surrounding communities. Volunteers and students do not need to be Franklin residents. If interested, fill out the registration form on the library's website.

Special Events for Kids

Holiday Crafternoon! Saturday, December 7th @ 1 p.m.
'Tis the season! For kiddos of all ages! We'll have an assortment of winter and holiday themed crafts for all to enjoy! No registration required.

Pocus Magic Show! Wednesday, December 11th @ 1 p.m.

Join us for a winter wonderland of amazing magic, hilarious comedy, music, puppets, and snowy surprises! Children (and adults) of all ages will love this holiday-themed magic show! No registration required.

Pancakes & Pajamas! Saturday, December 14th @ 10:30 a.m.

Keep your jammies on and join us for a cozy pancake breakfast, hot cocoa, and holiday music with Jamie Barrett!

Fairytale Fun! Saturday, December 21st @ 1 p.m.

Bundle up in your winter finest and join us for a special visit from our favorite royal sisters! There will be singing, dancing, interactive storytelling and a photo opportunity with each guest!

Mobile Mini Golf! Monday, December 23rd @ 1-4 p.m.

Bring your friends and family and we'll provide the rest! Join us as we transform the library into a Mini Golf course! *Children under the age of 14 MUST be accompanied by an adult.

Pumpernickel Puppets! Thursday, December 26th @ 10:30 a.m.

Toe Jam Puppet Band! Friday, December 27th @ 1 p.m.

Join the Toe Jam Puppet Band for a rockin' concert at the Franklin Public Library!

Scott Martell Magic Show! Saturday, December 28th @ 10:30 a.m.

Wish Upon a Star Slime! Saturday, December 28th @ 1 p.m.

Zoo Show with Records & Burpee! Monday, December 30th @ 1 p.m.

Join us for a Wild and Educational program featuring live exotic animals! Best for ages 5 and up.

Noon Year's Eve Party! Tuesday, December 21st @ 11 a.m.

Let's sendoff 2024 in style! Join us for an end of the year bash as we ring in 2025 early!

We'll have music, snacks, games, and a super new year's celebration!

Special Events for Teens

Musical BINGO: Carol Edition! Wednesday December 4th @ 5 p.m.

Part Bingo, part trivia, participants will listen to the music as it plays and fill in their bingo cards! This month's Bingo theme: Carols!

Hack Your College App! Wednesday, December 4th @ 6 p.m.

Applying to college? Come by and meet with Jorge Marinez, a former College Guidance Counselor and a current Admissions Counselor to help you stand out.

Special Events for Adults

Jewelry Gifts with PT Color Market, Thursday December 5th @ 6:30 p.m.

Registration Required Make a gift for yourself or a loved one with PT Color Market!

Maker Moments: Silk Scarves, Saturday December 14th @ 1 p.m.

Registration Required! Take a moment to try a craft this holiday with Mrs. Mitzi! This craft class for adults will cover painting on silk with alcohol inks.

Friends of Franklin Library Meeting, Tuesday December 17th @ 7 p.m.

Love the Library? Then how about joining the Friends! At-

tend the next Friends of Franklin Library meeting! Contact the FOFL at: fofl02038@gmail.com | Follow the Friends on Twitter: @FriendsFranklin

Special Events for All Ages

Sondheim Showcase, Monday December 9th @ 7 p.m.

Concert: Celtic & Christmas with Jeff Snow December 7th at 3:00 p.m.

Join us in welcoming Jeff Snow as he combines the music, stories and history from Scotland, Ireland and England into a concert on the 'softer side of Celtic' to warm the heart.

Wrapping Station opens December 16th – 23rd

The wrapping station returns! All the usual wrapping tools are available for use at the library.

Wrap-a-Thon, Thursday December 19th @ 6 p.m.

Join us for a Thursday Night Wrap-a-thon with music and cocoa!

Wish Upon a Star Slime, Saturday December 28th @ 1 p.m.

Franklin Library Book Sale

Friday, December 13th, 1-5 p.m., Saturday, December 14th, 9 a.m. - Noon

All books are just one dollar!

Bag Sale - \$5 A Bag—Saturday, December 14th, from 1-4 p.m.

Attention Middle and High School Students:

Join Pantry Elves and Help Raise Funds for Franklin Food Pantry

The Franklin Food Pantry, which provides supplemental food and household necessities, invites middle and high school students to volunteer for the Pantry Elves campaign! Since 2005, hundreds of students have participated in this holiday-inspired campaign, which has evolved into one of The Pantry's largest fundraising events of the year. The annual campaign has been instrumen-

tal in raising funds to fight food insecurity during the holiday season and throughout the year. This year, Pantry Elves will fundraise electronically from their friends and family members and will not canvass neighborhoods. Donations, which will be used to purchase fresh produce, dairy, meats and proteins, and household necessities, will be sent directly to The Pantry.



Pantry Elves registration is open through December 2, 2024, and volunteers will receive 12 hours of community service. To register, visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org/get-involved/volunteer/pantryelves, or contact Jen Johnson, Development Associate Franklin Food Pantry, at jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org.

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 cel-

ebating 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.



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 edu-

cational 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.

“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.

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Norfolk County Register of Deeds Toy & Food Drives

Dedham, MA – 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.

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, call (781) 461-6101 or email registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

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

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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



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

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

Reference rnqg.org for specifics and consider joining the guild as we wrap celebrating its 40th year to start or continue your quilting journey.

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Lorraine is doing her annual sponsoring of a Giving Tree for The Santa Foundation. Please consider helping local families by selecting a Tag or Tags for a child. Visit her office @RE/MAX Executive Realty 308 West Central Street, Franklin or for Contactless options Call or email Lorraine direct.

Lorrainekuney@gmail.com or 508-380-9938. Return your **new, unwrapped** contributions by December 20th. The gifts will be distributed after December 21st by The Santa Foundation volunteers.

Wishing Everyone Joy and Peace this Holiday Season!



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