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January 2025

Merry and Bright

By SEAN SULLIVAN

For the past month, holiday lights have brought cheer and joy to Ashland. Homeowners and businesses alike adorned their structures and property with festive displays to honor the various holidays of the season.

LIGHTS
continued on page 4



40B Update from the Town

The news is out that MassHousing approved both 40B project applications that were applied for in the spring.

The projects, which include 250 units at the Mill site downtown and 226 units at 61 Waverly Street, received the green light to submit an application to Ashland's local Zoning Board of Appeals.

Although the developer at 61 Waverly has yet to submit an application, the 10-60 Main Street Mill site has now officially started their process. Read below for more information and next steps.

The Ashland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, Jan. 7, at 7 PM, in the second floor Select Board Hearing Room, Ashland Town Hall, 101 Main St., Ashland. This Public Hearing can also be joined via Zoom video conference.

The petition is from SLV Ashland, LLC, requesting a Comprehensive Permit per M.G.L. Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23 to allow for the development of two multifamily story buildings for 250 apartment units, and 337 concealed podium parking spaces. The applicant also proposed to restore and convert the northernmost mills 7,500 sq. ft. into commercial and retail space, some of it open to the public. The property in question is located at 10-60 Main St, Assessors Map 14, Lot 128, in the Ashland Overlay Downtown District A (ADD-A) and Industrial base zoning. Parties wishing to be heard on this matter should appear at the time and place indicated above.

Materials may be viewed at: <https://www.ashland-mass.com/543/Current-Cases-Before-the-Planning-and-Zo>.

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Special Town Meeting Recap

Nov. 19, a Special Town Meeting was held.

The Moderator, Adam Shuster, called the meeting to order at 7pm. 246 voters were present. The Moderator welcomed everyone and thanked them for being there. He read the list of preliminaries explaining the basics of how Town Meeting will operate.

ARTICLE 1: Free Cash Transfer SPONSOR: Town Manager/Finance Director To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash, an amount of funds, to be placed in the Stabilization Fund, OPEB Trust Fund, Special Education Special Purpose Stabilization Account,

Capital Account, Capital Stabilization Account and/or General Fund or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto. Account Amount Account Number General Stabilization Fund \$50,000 84980-49710 OPEB Trust Fund \$822,841 88100-49710 SPED Stabilization Fund \$210,000 84980-49715 Capital \$1,709,962 01930-58000 Total \$2,792,803.00 Speaker: Michael Herbert, Town Manager **MOTION MADE:** That the Town transfers \$2,792,803 from Free Cash to the following accounts: \$50,000 to the General Stabi-

lization Fund; \$822,841 to the OPEB Trust Fund; \$210,000 to the SPED Stabilization Fund; \$1,709,962 to the Capital Account; as shown in the table. The motion was seconded. A simple majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 1:** Passed unanimously

ARTICLE 2: Budget Amendment SPONSOR: Town Manager/Finance Director To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the treasury a sum of money to be added to or to make adjustments to Article 2 of the May 2024 annual town meeting (fiscal year 2025 budget), or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto. Speaker: Michael Herbert, Town Manager **MOTION MADE:** That the Town increase the FY 25 Capital Outlay appropriation by \$1,033,925 from \$2,690,000 to \$3,723,925 The motion was seconded. A simple majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 2:** Passed unanimously 2

ARTICLE 3: Property Tax Exemptions SPONSOR: Board of Assessors/Select Board/Town Manager To see if the Town will vote to adjust (the exemption amount and eligibility factors) for the property tax exemption for senior citizens under MGL Chapter 59, Section 5 Clause 41C1/2, to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto. Speaker: Joseph Magnani, Jr, Select Board Clerk **MOTION MADE:** That the Town adjust (the exemption amount and eligibility factors) for the property tax exemption for senior citizens under MGL Chapter 59, Section 5 Clause 41C1/2 to 12% to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 The motion was seconded. A simple majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 3:** Passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4: Correction of Article Authorization for the Select Board to Accept Gift of Land SPONSOR: Town Manager To see if the Town will correct the Vote of Article 8 of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting to read instead as follows (underline and bold new and cross out removed): To see if the Town will accept a gift of real property from the Hopkinton Land Trust shown as Town of Ashland Assessors Map

18 Lot 0142 to be for conservation purposes and the property shown as Town of Ashland Assessors Map 18 Lot 0067 and Map 18 Lot 0074 and Map 18 27 Lot 0100 under the care, custody and control of the Select Board and to further authorize the Select Board to execute any documents to effectuate this transaction, or taken any action related thereto. Speaker: Michael Herbert **MOTION MADE:** That the Town correct the Vote of Article 8 of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting by changing the reference from Map 18 Lot 0100 to Map 27 Lot 0100. The motion was seconded. A 2/3 majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 4:** Passed unanimously

ARTICLE 5: Authorize Borrowing for Water Main Replacement Project SPONSOR: Town Manager/Finance Director To see if the Town will appropriate \$1,000,000 to pay costs of engineering, design and construction related to various water main replacement projects, including the costs of roadway restoration and all other costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by 3 appropriation, transfer from available funds, borrowing or otherwise provided, or take any other action related thereto. Speaker: Michael Herbert **MOTION MADE:** That the Town appropriate \$1,000,000 to pay costs of engineering, design and construction related to various water main replacement projects, including the costs of roadway restoration and all other costs incidental or related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §8(4), or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. The motion was seconded. A 2/3 majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 5:** Passed unanimously

ARTICLE 6: CPA Funding to Conduct a Feasibility Study with the City of Framingham for the Waushakum Pond Restoration Study SPONSOR: Community Preservation Committee To see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to \$18,750 for the Waushakum Pond Restoration Study and that to meet this appropriation, the sum of up to \$18,750 be transferred from the Undesignated

Funds from the Community Preservation Fund balance, and with unexpended funds as of December 31, 2027 being returned to their funding source; or pass any vote or take any other action thereon. Speaker: Aaron Ladd, Community Preservation Committee Chair **MOTION MADE:** That the Town appropriate up to \$18,750 for the Waushakum Pond Restoration Study and that to meet this appropriation, the sum of up to \$18,750 be transferred from the Undesignated Funds of the Community Preservation Fund balance, and with unexpended funds as of December 31, 2027 being returned to their funding source. The motion was seconded. A simple majority is required. **VOTE ON ARTICLE 6:** Passed unanimously

ARTICLE 7: Accept New Bylaw: Blight SPONSOR: Select Board/Board of Health/Building Commissioner To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Ashland General bylaws by adding a new Chapter 266, Blight Bylaw, to the Town General Bylaws as printed in Article 7 of the warrant. Speaker: Doug Scott, Building Commissioner 4 **MOTION MADE:** That the Town amend the Town of Ashland General bylaws by adding a new Chapter 266, to the Town General Bylaws as printed in Article 7 of the Warrant. The motion was seconded. **WITHDRAWN:** After much discussion, the article was withdrawn by the sponsor.

ARTICLE 8: Accept New Zoning Bylaw: MBTA Communities SPONSOR: Planning Board and Amend Zoning Map To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Ashland Zoning bylaws, chapter 282 by adding a new section 8.9 and to amend the Zoning Map to include a new MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District, including sub districts as shown in Article 8 of the warrant: Section 8.9 MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD) Speaker: Tricia Kendall, Planning Board Chair **MOTION MADE:** That the Town amend the Town of Ashland Zoning bylaws, Chapter 282 by adding a new section 8.9 and to amend the Zoning Map to include a new MBTA Communities Multi-family Overlay District

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20/60
20/40

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A Festive Weekend in Ashland!

The streets of Downtown Ashland were filled with people on Dec. 7, for Ashland's Annual Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting.

We saw our biggest turnout yet with close to 1,000 people in attendance between both events. With 13 shopping locations and 33 pop-up vendors, we saw smiling faces and overflowing shopping bags all day long!

Local businesses and pop-up shops were grateful for the economic boost, some reported record highs in sales. These events help support our local restaurants too and it was nice to hear that those as well had record numbers.

Thank you to all those who spent their dollars in Ashland, it does have a huge impact and helps these businesses thrive.

The Corner Spot was full of families from start to finish. Kids were able to write letter to Santa with Mrs. Claus, then the big man himself made an appear-

ance to take pictures and chat with the kids.

The Boy Scouts mended the fire pit throughout the day so that we could all roast marshmallows and stay warm! They had a booth themselves, finishing up their wreath sales for the year.

We were also happy to have Ashland's Sha'arei Shalom set up at The Corner Spot with Hanukah games, coloring, and activities, this was a popular favorite with the kids.

The Tree Lighting was nothing short of magical! Every inch of Montenegro Square was filled with residents ready to welcome in the holiday spirit. With hot chocolate from Connect Church, cookies from the Ashland Lions and live Christmas music from Hit the Bus Band, it was a picturesque, small town Christmas spectacular! The lights were so bright, Santa found his way into Montenegro

Square with help from Ashland Police and Fire. AFD's Sparky was so excited to be a part of the night too, taking photos with everyone on the antique fire truck.

This day would not have been possible without the help of our selfless volunteers, who truly kept the show running throughout the day – thank you. Another thank you to our Ashland Police officers who kept everyone in attendance safe while the streets were busy. We can't believe the day has come and gone, but we can't wait to do it all again next year. Happy Holidays, Ashland!

Special kudos to the Police and Fire Departments for going above and beyond to drive Santa and his happy elf through town waving and playing Christmas tunes too! This was something that happened during the pandemic and has become a fan favorite and possibly a staple event for some time to come.



RECAP

continued from page 2

as shown in Article 8 The motion was seconded. A simple majority is required. VOTE ON ARTICLE 8: Passed

ARTICLE 9: Authorize Purchase of Open Space Land for the Town Forest SPONSOR: Town Forest Committee/Town Manager To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to purchase, acquire, or take by eminent domain, the property of the United Church of Christ [UCC] consisting of approximate 52 acres +/-, located at 0 Winter Street, shown as Parcel 1 on a Plan of Land in Ashland, Massachusetts, prepared by Schofield Brothers Inc., dated February 14, 1985, recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in Book 16212 Page END, and which is a portion of the land as more fully described in a deed recorded in the Middlesex South Registry of Deed Book 7615 Page 235, dated July 26, 1950, (the "Property") on file in the Town Clerk's office, to be used for conservation and passive open space purposes as part of the Town Forest meaning and intending to dedicate this land as Article 97 Land so called under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts, and to be under the care, custody and control of the Select Board, and to pay for said acquisition along with legal and engineering costs required to effectuate said purchase of the Property and in addition pay for a Conservation Restriction therefore, that the town authorize the Town to borrow, appropriate or transfer a sum of money and further that the Select Board shall be authorized to enter into and purchase a Conservation Restriction for said Property as well as for any other parcel which comprises the Town Forest, so called, or take any action relative thereto. Speaker: Robert St. Germain, Town Forest Committee Member 5 MOTION MADE: That the Town authorize the Select Board to purchase, acquire, or take by eminent domain, the property of the United Church of Christ [UCC] consisting of approximate 52 acres +/-, located at 0 Winter Street, shown as Parcel 1 on a Plan of Land in Ashland, Massachusetts, prepared by Schofield Brothers Inc., dated February 14, 1985, recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in Book 16212 Page END, and which is a portion of the land as more fully described in a deed recorded in the Middlesex South Registry of

Deed Book 7615 Page 235, dated July 26, 1950, (the "Property") on file in the Town Clerk's office, to be used for conservation and passive recreation and open space purposes as part of the Town Forest meaning and intending to dedicate this land as Article 97 Land so called under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to be under the care, custody and control of the Select Board, and to pay for said acquisition along with legal and engineering costs required to effectuate said purchase of the Property and granting of a Conservation Restriction therefore, and further that the town transfer sufficient funds from the Capital Account set forth in Article 2 of this Town Meeting to accomplish said purchases and further that the Select Board shall be authorized to enter into and grant a Conservation Restriction for said Property as well as for any other parcel which comprises the Town Forest, so called, or take any action relative thereto. The motion was seconded. A 2/3 majority is required. VOTE ON ARTICLE 9: Passed unanimously

There was no further business and a motion was made and passed to dissolve Town Meeting. The Special Town Meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.



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LIGHTS

continued from page 1



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Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards \$5 Million for Protection of Forest Reserves

On Nov. 19, our Town Meeting took an important step, voting to authorize the purchase of 52 acres of pristine woodland from the Southern New England United Church of Christ to expand the Ashland Town Forest. This visionary move not only enhances our community but also safeguards an invaluable natural resource.

At the time of this decision, town leadership shared the in-

tention to seek state support to help offset the \$1.4 million purchase price. Since then, the Healey-Driscoll Administration has awarded Ashland over \$600,000 in state grant funds to support this purchase. This funding is part of the Commonwealth's broader initiative to protect forest reserves across Massachusetts, which this year allocated \$5 million to projects just like Ashland's.

This achievement would not have been possible without the incredible efforts of several key partners. Immense gratitude goes to Rob St. Germain, who meticulously crafted the grant application, and Tony Scibelli from the Sudbury Valley Trustees, whose guidance was instrumental throughout this process. Ashlanders should also extend appreciation to Senate President Karen Spilka and Representa-

tive Jack Lewis for their important support of this initiative.

This grant is more than just financial support; it is an affirmation of our shared vision—where Ashland leads the way in conservation and sustainability. This purchase helps protect our town's heritage and ensures that these woods remain a haven for recreation, wildlife, and natural beauty for generations to come.

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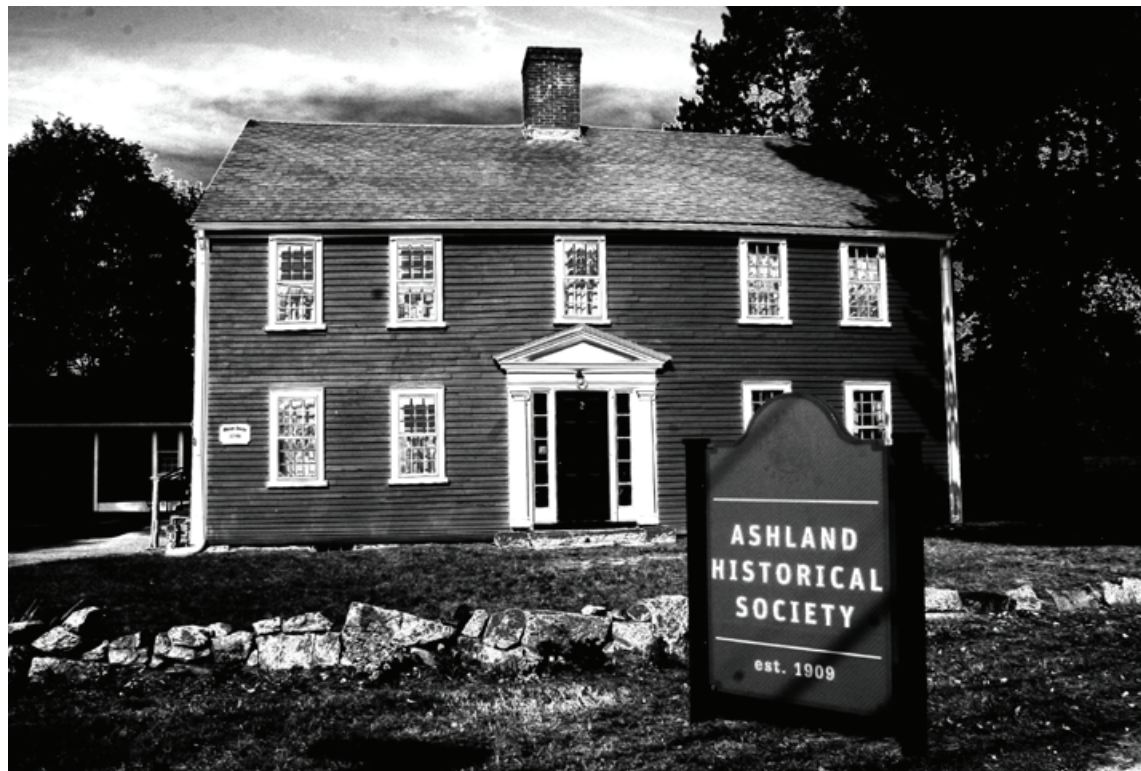
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Ashland Teacher Running Boston Marathon



I have been a Kindergarten teacher here in Ashland for 25 years now. I feel so much a part of this community. I have taught over 480 young Ashland Kindergarteners in my career so far. Many families I have taught more than one or sometimes all of their children. They have become a part of my life and I would love the opportunity to help raise money for the town of Ashland, its families and children!

I ran the Chicago Marathon in 2022 and the Boston Marathon has been a life-long dream of mine. In truth, one of my biggest goals is to complete the three US major marathons: Chicago, Boston, and New York City. I am so excited to check Boston off my list next!

I know how important the marathon is to the town of Ashland and beyond. I help my students make signs each year for them to hold while cheering. It would mean the world to me to be able to support the community that has given me so much as a teacher and one that I feel so a part of.

If you are able, I hope that you will consider donating in my name. You can do so through the town of Ashland

website and follow the prompts or venmo @Joanne-Forrest-6. Your support is greatly appreciated! I look forward to seeing you all as I run through!

Thank you!
Joanne Forrest

Hello Ashland! My name is Joanne Forrest and I am so honored and excited to be running the 2025 Boston Marathon for the Town of Ashland! I am asking for your support to help me reach my \$3,000 fundraising goal! All of your donations will go directly to supporting Ashland's BAA Grant Program. Money raised by the runners is the sole source of funding for this program. Please help me in supporting Ashland!

MARATHON
continued on page 7

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When is a good time for a Roth conversion?



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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In life, you often get second chances — and the same is true with investing. To illustrate: You might not have been able to contribute to a Roth IRA during your working years due to your income level, but you may get that opportunity as you near retirement, or even when you are retired — through a Roth conversion.

Why is a Roth IRA desirable for some people? Here are the key benefits:

- **Tax-free withdrawals** — You put in after-tax dollars to a Roth IRA, so you can withdraw your contributions at any time, free of taxes and penalties. And if you've had your account for at least five years and you're at least 59½, you can also withdraw your earnings free of taxes.

- **No RMDs** — With a traditional IRA, you'll have to start taking withdrawals — called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — when you turn 73, or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later. But there's no RMD requirement with a Roth IRA — you can essentially leave the money intact as long as you like.

- **Tax-free legacy for your heirs** — When your heirs inherit your Roth IRA, they can withdraw the contributions without paying taxes or penalties, and if the

account has been open at least five years, they can also withdraw earnings tax free.

But even if you were aware of these advantages, you might not have been able to invest in a Roth IRA for much of your life. For one thing, you might have earned too much money — a Roth IRA, unlike a traditional IRA, has income limits. Also, a Roth IRA has only been around since 1998, so, in the previous years, you were limited to a traditional IRA.

As you approach retirement, though, you might start thinking of just how much you'd like to benefit from a Roth IRA. And you can do so by converting your traditional IRA to a Roth. While this sounds simple, there's a major caveat: taxes. You'll be taxed on the amount in pre-tax dollars you contributed to a traditional IRA and then converted to a Roth IRA. (If you have both pre- and after-tax dollars in your traditional IRA, the taxable amount is

based on the percentage of pre-tax dollars.)

If you have large amounts in a traditional IRA, the tax bill on conversion can be significant. The key to potentially lowering this tax bill is timing. Generally speaking, the lower your income in a given year, the more favorable it is for you to convert to a Roth IRA. So, for example, if you have already retired, but have not started collecting RMDs, your income may be down.

Timing also comes into play with the financial markets. When the market is going through a decline, and the value of your traditional IRA drops, you could convert the same number of shares of the underlying investments and receive a lower tax bill or convert more shares of these investments for what would have been the same tax bill.

Finally, you could lower your tax bill in any given year by

stretching out your Roth IRA conversions over several years, rather than doing it all at once.

You'll want to consult with your tax advisor before embarking on this conversion — but if it's appropriate for your situation, you could find that owning a Roth IRA can benefit you and your family for years to come.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
77 West Main Street,
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Boston Marathon Highlight

Hello! My name is Alison Rose, and I am proud to be one of the 15 runners from Ashland participating in the 2025 Boston Marathon to raise money for the town I call home.

Some of you may know me from my 10 years at WACA, Ashland's community media station. For others, this may be our first introduction—and either way, I'm so happy to connect with you! I've lived along the marathon route in Ashland my entire life, and since childhood, it's been my dream to be involved in the marathon in some way.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of contributing to the marathon in various ways—whether it was interviewing spectators at the start line for Around the Clock: News for Ashland, running my first Boston Marathon in 2019 to raise funds for Mass Eye and Ear, or volunteering with the Green Team last year to help keep the race's start line clean.

My first Boston Marathon was in 2019, when my sister Michelle Rose (who is running for Ashland for the second time), and I raised funds for Mass Eye and Ear. I have an autoimmune disease affecting my eyes, and this cause felt deeply personal to me as I wanted to give back to the doctor who has helped me manage my condition while also contributing to important research.

Since then, I've completed four marathons, including the virtual London Marathon during COVID and the Walt Disney World Dopey Challenge—5K, 10K, half marathon, and full marathon over four days. But this year's marathon holds special significance. I'm running in support of the BAA Grant Fund, which supports essential programs in Ashland such as the Ashland Emergency Fund, the Ashland Food Pantry, and local events like WACA's Summer Movie Nights. One of my proudest moments at WACA was organizing those

Movie Nights, which brought our community together for free, family-friendly entertainment. The BAA Grant Fund played an essential role in making those events possible, and now I'm honored to give back.

My fundraising goal this year is \$3,000, and every penny raised will directly benefit local programs that make Ashland a vibrant, caring, and resilient community. Whether it's supporting families in need, providing critical services, or organizing community events, your donation will make a real difference.

Growing up in Ashland, I've always been amazed by how this town comes together—whether rallying around local businesses or supporting each other in tough times. For me, this marathon is not just about running; it's about continuing that tradition of community support. It's about showing that, no matter how big or small, we all play a part in making Ashland the incredible place it is.

I'm beyond grateful to have the opportunity to give back to the town that shaped me, and I hope to see you on the course on April 21, 2025!

To donate:

1. Visit the City Hall Systems website at www.epay.city-hallsystems.com
2. Select Ashland, MA from the Municipality dropdown list.
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4. Under "Select bill type," choose Marathon Donations.

5. Complete all five fields, then click "Add to cart."

Donations can also be made by check. Please include "ALISON ROSE" in the memo area and mail your check to:

Town of Ashland Boston Marathon Fundraiser

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101 Main Street
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Thank you for your support, and let's work together to make Ashland stronger than ever!

Marathon Runners Spotlight

Each year 15 runners run for Ashland in the Boston Marathon.

Each runner is required to raise a minimum of \$3,000 in funds that benefit the town.

This year we will spotlight a few runners in each issue of Local Town Pages leading up the marathon to show our support as a community for their hard work and thank them for choosing Ashland!

The 129th running of the Boston Marathon will take place on Monday April 21.

This year's runner are: Eesha Yadav, Mikayla Tirabassi, Benjamin Savage, Michelle Rose, Bernice Reznick, Siobhan O'Reilly, Christian Navarro, Telio Keegan, Makeda Keegan, Nick Howes, Maggie Champion, Thalita Abreu, Alison Rose, Tom Goss, Joanne Forrest.

Our 2024 Boston Marathon runners raised \$81,357, which is outstanding! The funding raised is the sole source of funding for



the BAA Grant Program. Grants are offered twice a year and the focus is that funding request benefits the residents of Ashland in some way.

Please consider supporting the runners and know that the funds will go right back into the community! To make a donation, go to City Hall Systems

page via the town website, www.ashlandmass.com. Donations can also be made by check. Include the name of your runner in the memo area of the check. Mail check to: Town of Ashland Boston Marathon Fundraiser c/o Susan Robie, 101 Main Street, Ashland, MA 01721.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Get to Know the b.LUXE Experience - 2.0

Many of you loved the original Beauty Beat article, “Get to Know The b.LUXE Experience,” from a few years ago. We’ve grown and evolved over the past two years, adding new services, talented team members, and more ways to enjoy your beauty experience. We’re excited to share what’s new and what’s been happening—there’s so much to update you on!

As the creative minds behind The Beauty Beat, the team at b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio loves sharing the latest trends, tips, and inspiration. But did you know many of our ideas and new service offerings are sparked directly from our conversations with our incredible clients? Your stories, challenges, and beauty goals motivate us to innovate, create, and seek services to meet your unique needs.

What’s New at b.LUXE?

- **Apprentice Services at Specially Discounted Prices:** Enjoy top-notch beauty services at a fraction of the cost while supporting our training stylists! In collaboration with the Massachusetts State Board of Cosmetology, b.LUXE is proud to introduce an apprenticeship program offering hands-on experience and high-quality, supervised services at specially discounted rates. This program provides our young talent with exceptional education and training, all while delivering great value to you.
- **Wig & Topper Hair Services:** We now offer compassionate, customized solutions for

clients experiencing hair loss or seeking hair-enhancing options. Our full range of human hair and synthetic wigs, toppers, and holistic scalp treatments restore your appearance, confidence, and well-being.

- **Expanded Beauty Services:** We’re excited to announce the addition of new treatments and services alongside our signature offerings! Our new Mind Body Facial is a holistic skincare treatment that combines the rejuvenating benefits of facial therapy with the healing energy of Reiki and aromatherapy, providing a complete mind-body experience.
- **The Saphira Defrizzing Treatment:** This hair treatment features Hyaluronic Acid with a formula enriched with 26 minerals from the Dead Sea, diamond powder, lily flower, and essential oils. It removes frizz and transforms dry, brittle hair into soft waves that enhance natural hair patterns and texture. Each treatment includes a full-sized Prep & Maintain Shampoo and Mineral Mist for you to take home.

Why Choose b.LUXE?

We’re excited to be recognized as Google’s highest-rated salon in Massachusetts, with over 800 five-star reviews! Additionally, we’re proud to be a two-time recipient of The Salon Today 200 Award, which honors the best beauty establishments in the country. Our bright and vibrant studio is home to passionate professionals who

genuinely care about our clients. Whether you’re visiting for a haircut, coloring, or a spa day, we strive to make every experience luxurious.

Our Specialties:

Hair Services: We offer a full range of expert hair services, including precision cutting, all aspects of hair coloring, foiling, balayage, smoothing treatments, and more. Our team specializes in curly haircuts, extensions, and gray-blending to help you achieve your perfect look.

- **Hair Loss Solutions:** We offer fully customized human hair and synthetic wigs, toppers, and bangs designed to add volume and coverage. Our compassionate services support individuals experiencing hair loss or thinning due to conditions such as alopecia or the effects of cancer treatments, as well as those seeking easy options for added volume and variety. Customization and adjustments are also available, including cutting, coloring, and styling to ensure a perfect fit and look. Additionally, our Scalp Spa services provide a holistic approach to promote continued scalp health.

- **Superior Skincare and Spa Services:** We offer a full line of luxurious spa services, including luxury facials, lash extensions, waxing, and dermaplaning.

- **Makeup Services:** Ready for a beauty boost? We offer various makeup services, including special occasion, editorial, and wedding makeup, along with makeup lessons and our mature makeup makeovers. Our team of skilled makeup artists will work with you to craft a look that’s uniquely yours and perfect for any event!

- **Wedding Beauty:** On-site and in-studio services for your big day.



The b.LUXE Experience:

From the moment you arrive, you’ll feel the difference. Our friendly staff will greet you warmly, check you in, and invite you to unwind in our relaxing lounge with refreshments from our deluxe coffee bar.

Your personalized consultation ensures every service meets your goals, budget, and style. And don’t forget our complimentary **LUXE for Everyone** add-ons, designed to surprise and delight:

- **BEFORE Oil Treatment:** Nourishes hair and scalp with a soothing massage.
- **Moisturizing Hand Treatments:** Perfect during color or smoothing sessions.
- **Hot Stone Foot Treatment:** A relaxing bonus with luxurious facials.

Community and Convenience

At b.LUXE, we operate as a team-based salon, ensuring you’re comfortable in the expert hands of your usual stylist or any of our talented professionals. There is no “my client” or “your client” at b.LUXE—only “Our Clients.”

For your convenience, we offer:

- Online booking for easy scheduling
- Evening and Monday hours to fit your busy lifestyle
- A private service room for clients requiring added privacy
- Three large parking areas

Our Products

We proudly carry top-tier hair products from Oribe, Kerasilk, Goldwell, Ouidad, and G.M. Collin skincare. Our team is always ready to provide personalized product recommendations to help you maintain your look at home.

Visit Us in the Historic Medway Mills

Our studio isn’t just a place for beauty—it’s a vibrant community. Located in the historic Medway Mills, it’s a space where creativity thrives, along with many other local businesses. We treat our clients like valued friends, welcoming them with warmth and care at every visit.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year! We can’t wait to meet you and help you achieve your beauty goals—**after all, beauty is our business!**

Stay connected with us online or book your appointment at bluxe.com to experience all that b.LUXE has to offer.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Hoping “New Year, New You” Makes Financial Goals Come True?



Glenn Brown, CFP

Made New Year’s resolutions to improve your financial wellness in 2025?

Now is when many of us reflect on what we’ve accomplished and where we fell short. This introspection often leads to the creation of New Year’s resolutions, with financial goals ranking high on the list. Whether it’s paying down debt, saving more, or investing smarter, the start of the year feels like an ideal time for a fresh financial start.

Yet, people often struggle to make lasting changes to their financial habits. Understanding the reasons behind these challenges can help create more sustainable financial planning strategies for the year ahead.

Let’s examine 5 common challenges.

1. Unrealistic Expectations

- A common reason why New Year’s resolutions fail. Take someone who wants to save 50% of their income or pay off long-standing debt in a short period. While ambitious, these goals often don’t align with one’s current financial reality, thus frustration and discouragement occur when progress is slower than expected. Setting unattainable goals results in burnout and abandonment.

Resolution: Break goals into small, manageable steps. Instead of resolving to pay off a debt in one year, consider reducing the balance by 25% in 6 months. If you end up with more, great, but an incremental approach brings accomplishment and makes the goal feel more achievable.

2. Lack of a Clear Plan - Vague goals like “save more money” or “get out of debt” lack actionable steps, making it difficult to execute. Without a structured plan and understanding your “why”, it’s easy to become distracted by day-to-day life, leading to stagnation.

Resolution: Develop an outline of specific considerations, steps and timelines. For example, if building an emergency fund is a goal, then create a budget, set up logistics like automatic transfers and monitor progress/spending to stay on track.

3. Failure to Track Progress

- An easy way to lose sight of financial goals is not having scheduled check-ins. It doesn’t need to be weekly or even monthly, but there needs to be consistency in times to review and identify where adjustments are needed. Without this, bad habits persist or worse, form, and now you’re battled to unwind new problems.

Resolution: Leverage technology and objective people that are unafraid to tell you much-needed truths. For many couples, an outside intermediary saying what needs to be said greatly benefits relationships. Also, make sure you celebrate milestones along the way.

4. Emotional Spending and Instant Gratification

- Many struggle with impulse spending or seek instant gratification, especially after a stressful day. Afraid to look at your Amazon spending history? This behavior derails the best-laid financial plans.

Resolution: Identify triggers and implement strategies to delay or review purchase decisions. Create a spending prioritization strategy by identifying where you want to spend your money, this helps shift focus from immediate desires to long-term financial goals.

5. Lack of Accountability

- Some are great at executing on their own, for others going it alone can make sticking to financial goals even more challenging. Without a support system or accountability partner, it’s easier to lose focus and fall back into old habits.

Resolution: It goes beyond someone telling you “No” when needed, as by sharing progress and/or changes along the way, an accountability partner can help reassure you’re on track and motivate you with confidence to keep pushing forward.

Conclusion

Financial resolutions are a powerful tool for creating long-

term financial security, but they require more than just wishful thinking.

Maybe it’s time to socialize your goals, set monthly action steps to create fresh start moments and leverage an accountability partner (i.e. Certified Financial Planner) to make your 2025 resolutions happen.

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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Recognizing and Responding to Hypothermia

As the temperature drops, the risk of experiencing hypothermia rises.

Our bodies have a fairly narrow range of ideal temperatures, and it is important to recognize signs of hypothermia at an early stage so action can be taken to treat the condition.

With hypothermia, the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, causing a dangerously low body temperature.

Common causes of hypothermia include exposure to cold weather or immersion in cold water. Any time you combine wet clothing and cold temperatures, you increase the risk for hypothermia, particularly when wind is involved.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Shivering-body attempting to retain heat
- Slurred speech or mumbling
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Weak pulse
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Drowsiness or very low energy

- Confusion or memory loss
- Loss of consciousness
- In infants, bright red, cold skin

People with hypothermia usually aren't aware of their condition. This is because the symptoms often begin gradually, and the confused thinking associated with hypothermia prevents self-awareness.

Risk factors for hypothermia include:

- Exhaustion. Fatigue reduces a person's ability to tolerate cold.
- Older age. The body's ability to regulate temperature and to sense cold may lessen with age.
- Very young age. Children lose heat faster than adults do. Children also may ignore the cold because they're having too much fun to think about it.
- Cognitive impairment. People with dementia or other conditions that interfere with judgment may not dress properly for the weather or under-

stand the risk of cold weather. People with dementia may wander from home or get lost easily, making them more likely to be stranded outside in cold or wet weather.

- Alcohol and drug use. Alcohol may make the body feel warm inside, but it causes blood vessels to expand. As a result, the surface of the skin loses heat more rapidly, and the effects of alcohol decrease situational awareness.

Prevention

To stay warm in cold weather, remember the acronym COLD — cover, overexertion, layers, dry:

Cover. Wear a hat or other protective covering to prevent body heat from escaping from your head, face and neck. Cover your hands with mittens instead of gloves.

Overexertion. Avoid activities that cause a lot of sweating. The combination of wet clothing and cold weather can cause the body to lose heat more quickly. Remember that shoveling snow counts as exercise!

Layers. Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer clothing made of tightly woven, water-repellent material is best for wind protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold body heat better than cotton does.

Dry. Get out of wet clothing as soon as you are able. Be especially careful to keep your hands and feet dry, as it's easy for snow to get into mittens and boots.

If you suspect that someone is experiencing hypothermia, call 911. While waiting for emergency help to arrive, gently move the person inside if possible. Jarring, abrupt movements can trigger dangerous irregular heartbeats, so it is imperative to handle the person gently. Carefully remove any wet clothing and replace it with warm, dry coats or blankets.

For localized areas of frostbite, the American Red Cross suggest the following:

- Move the person to a warm place.
- Handle the area gently; never rub the affected area.

- Warm gently by soaking the affected area in warm water (100–105 degrees F) until it appears red and feels warm.
- Loosely bandage the area with dry, sterile dressings.
- If the person's fingers or toes are frostbitten, place dry, sterile gauze between them to keep them separated.
- Avoid breaking any blisters.
- Do not allow the affected area to refreeze.

If you exercise outdoors in more remote areas, ensure that you have a fully charged phone with you. If you have to travel by car in severe weather, keep additional warm clothing and blankets in your vehicle. During severe weather emergencies, remember that you can call 211 to find the location of local warming shelters. The link below leads to Ashland-specific information:

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

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

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Blood Drive Jan. 14

The Ashland Senior Center is hosting Blood Drive with American Red Cross on Jan. 14, from 12-5PM.

Visit here to schedule your appointment: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>

The American Red Cross and the NFL are partnering for the sixth year during National Blood Donor Month this January. If you schedule an appointment to donate blood at the Ashland Senior Center on 1/14, you will automatically be entered to win a

trip for two to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans!

Click here for more information about the Super Bowl giveaway: https://www.redcrossblood.org/loc.../events/super_bowl.html

January 14th
12-5

Schedule your appointment today!
<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>

RedCrossBlood.org
1-800-RED CROSS

Give blood.

Help save lives.

American Red Cross

January is National Blood Donor Month

PROMOTION:

Those who come to give Jan. 1-26, 2025, will be automatically entered to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans. For package experience details, visit: [RedCrossBlood.org/Super Bowl](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl).

Greater Ashland Lions Club

Happy New Year!

Our annual Coat Drive is running until January 5th 2025. To date we have collected 192 warm winter coats for children and adults. For Pickup: contact Lion Debbi at 508.728.4912 or visit these sites for drop-off: Town Hall on Main Street or Shear Perfection on Homer Ave (across from the old train station), Community Center (West Union Street) and Starbucks (intersection of Union and Summer Streets)..

During our December Dinner Meeting on December 5th we wrote out holiday cards for elderly residents of senior living facilities.

Our club donated money to purchase gift cards that will be given to teens in need.

Do you have any used eyeglasses hanging around? We'll take them! Please bring them to the Police Station (located in

the Public Safety Building at 12 Union St), Market Basket (Pond Street / Rte.126), the VFW (at 311 Pleasant Street), or the Town Hall (Main Street).

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

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

More January observances to warm you up during the cold days: January 20th remembering the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., also on January 20th it will be Inauguration Day, January 19th Popcorn Day, January 26th will be Spouse's Day and

to hold all of the days together: January 31st is National Hot Chocolate and Scotch Tape Days!

We are the Lions in Purple. We Serve!

SUBMITTED: LION ROSALIE PORTER, 2ND VP

DPW Prepares for Winter Challenges in Ashland

As winter approaches, the Department of Public Works (DPW) in Ashland is already in full snow and ice mode, gearing up for the season ahead. For an effective snow program and to support DPW in providing top-notch service, here are some important tips for our community:

Ensure any obstructions in public spaces are moved into your yard, such as basketball hoops or planters. Please avoid leaving them on or along the road or sidewalk, as they could be damaged and pose a risk to the town's equipment.

Boost visibility for plow operators by placing reflective markers at the bottom of your driveway and where the sidewalk intersects.

Take charge of a fire hydrant near your home—clear it of snow to guarantee quick access in case of an emergency.

Remember, overnight parking is not allowed in Ashland during the winter. DPW may conduct salt or modified plow operations to keep our roads safe, so it's crucial not to block or obstruct roadways.

DPW's main goal is ensuring safe roadways. All road users should adjust their speed based on driving conditions.

For any inquiries about DPW's winter operations, don't hesitate to reach out at dpw@ashland-mass.com or call (508) 881-0120. Residents can find more information on the DPW webpage of the town's site or at the following link: <https://www.ashlandmass.com/639/Snow-and-Ice>. Let's work together to stay safe and prepared for winter weather in Ashland!

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Senior Community Center Activities for JANUARY 2025

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

Jan 1st

CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

Jan 2nd at 10:30

NEW!!! 2nd Annual New Year's Brunch FREE

Toast the New Year's with Us! Live music by Stephen McGovern.

Limited seating available. Call to reserve your seat by DEC. 20th at Noon.

Jan 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th 10:00 – 12:00

SHINE In Person Appointment w/ Lenore Tracy

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

Jan 6th at 12:00

Lunch and Learn w/ Terry Duddy, Advanced Wellness Pharmacy

Presentation about medication packs delivered monthly meant to simplify and organize medications. Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person. Due by JAN. 2nd at Noon.

Jan 8th & 22nd 9:00-11:30

Veterans Office Hours with Richard Sabounjian

Appointments recommend. Walk ins welcome. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

Jan 8th at 10:00

Computer Class: Round Robin – Bring your questions & your device.

Registrations Requested. Walk Ins also welcome. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Jan 9th at 9:00

FREE Breakfast sponsored by Ashland Lions Club

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

Jan 9th at 10:00

Ashland Council on Aging Meeting Public Invited.

Jan 9th at 10:30

Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 3, Episode 3

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

Jan 9th at 12:00

Friends of the Council on Aging Meeting Public Invited.

Jan 10th 10:00-11:30

Legal Phone Consultation with Arthur P. Bergeron

Call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1

Jan 10th at 10:00

Pins & Needles Sewing Class w/ Tobi – No Sew Fleece Scarf

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

Jan 13th at 10:00

FREE Hearing Aid Cleaning w/ Hopkinton Audiology

Jan 13th at 12:00

NEW!!! Lunch w/ music by "Elvis" Impersonator Robert Black & w/ Sen. Karen Spilka's Listening Hour Please use the

payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. Cost \$5 per person.

Due by JAN. 9th at Noon.

Jan. 14th 12:00–5:00

NEW!!! American Red Cross Blood Drive

Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Ashland to schedule an appointment at Ashland Senior Center.

Jan 14th at 11:00

NEW!!!! Coffee & Donuts Social at Ashland Commons FREE

Susan McNulty, Outreach Coordinator & Mary Opanasets, Activities & Volunteer Coordinator, will be hosting a Social at the Ashland Commons.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

Jan 15th at 10:00

Town Manager's Coffee Hour. All are welcome!

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

Jan 15th at 11:00

NEW!!! "Building Independence w/ Resistance Training" w/ Anne Fitzgerald, RN.

Anne will demonstrate using resistance band exercises to keep your muscles stronger to help you remain independent longer. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Jan. 17th at 10:00

Crafting w/ Chaitanya – Create a Snow Globe

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

Jan 17th at 11:00

NEW!!! "Seed Dispersal: Finding a Place to Thrive" w/ Nature Connection

Find out ways plants use animals, insects, humans and natural forces (ex. wind) to disperse their seeds. Also meet and pet Chili the Chinchilla. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Jan 20th

CLOSED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Jan 21st at 12:00

NEW!!! Chinese New Year's Lunch

Celebrate Chinese New Years w/ authentic Chinese cuisine (no MSG added) Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. COST IS \$6 pp for this limited seating lunch. Reservation due by JAN. 16th at Noon.

Jan 22nd, 29th at 4:45-5:30

NEW!!! Line Dancing w/ Lisa (4 weeks: Jan 22nd, 29nd, Feb 5 and 12th)

Made a resolution to exercise more? Join us for an early evening Line Dancing Class with Lisa. A variety of dance styles are taught to all levels of mobility. \$4 pp donation per class.

Jan 23rd at 10:00

Clocktown Memory Cafe

Clocktown Cafe provides a welcoming place for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or a cognitive impairment accompanied by the caregiver. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Susan McNulty smcnulty@ashlandmass.com or 508-532-7945.

Jan 24th at 10:00

Pins & Needles Sewing Class w/ Tobi – Fleece Hat

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

Jan 27th at 12:00

Lunch and Trivia Contest

Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person.

Jan 27th 1:00-2:30

Cooking Class with Chef Lee – Korean Bibimbap – Bowl of Rice & Mixed Vegetables w/ Tofu Soup. \$5 pp.

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

Jan 31st at 10 :00

Crafting w/ Elissa – Snowman Craft

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

WEEKLY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

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

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

Bingo – First and Third Tuesdays of the month at 1 pm w/ Micki

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

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

Canasta – FREE!!! Wednesdays at 12:30 pm NEW TIME

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

Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 1 pm

Chess – FREE!!! Mondays at 1:30 pm

Craft Class FREE!!! – Third & Last Friday of the Month at 10 am

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

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

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

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

Line Dancing with Lisa – Thursdays at 12 pm

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

Mindfulness & Meditation – Thursdays at 11 am with Mary Green

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

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

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

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

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

Zumba Gold with Kellie – Tuesdays at 10 am

Bonded Siblings Need New Home

Ten-month-old bonded siblings Prince Filipe (foreground) and Princess Gracie were trapped in Framingham with their mom and other siblings. They were shy at first, but with socialization and lots of love from their fosters, they have come a long way with some

bribes (food and toys), and they now meow for attention and pets. Prince Filipe loves full-on head and back scratches and body rubs. He will rub against his human and nudge for more pets. He loves food, but will take breaks just to make sure you're there to

give him pets. He is familiar with humans and is not afraid of lying down comfortably in front of strangers when he feels safe. Princess Gracie is more on the shy side compared to her brother. She wants affection, but is hesitant to initiate it. She will instead circle you and make eye contact (don't be surprised if you see her hiding around the corner and peeking at you), inviting you to pet and love on her. With patience,

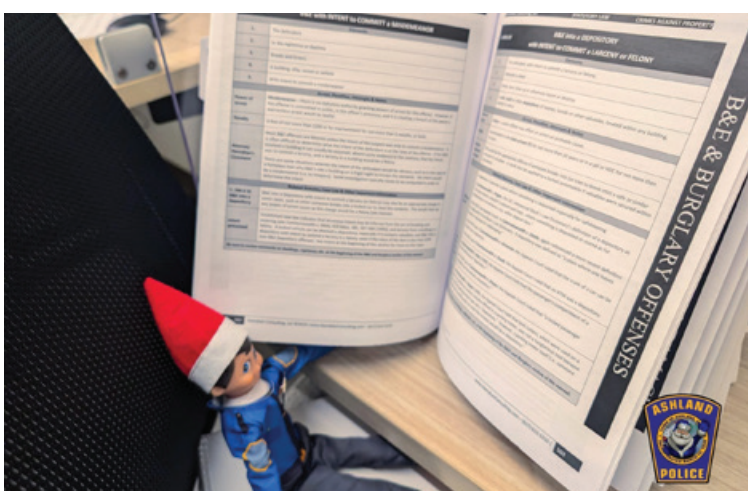
she will be just like her brother! Once she feels safe, she melts and thoroughly enjoys being pet. Especially chin and head scratches! Princess Gracie loves to play and will hold toys in her mouth and claim them as hers. She loves her brother so much that she likes stacking on top of him when he is sleeping!
As we are closed to the public, adoptions are by appointment only. If you have an interest in

meeting Prince Filipe and Princess Gracie, please use this link to find additional information about them. You can also see all our currently available Adoptable Cats here, and fill out our online adoption application:
<https://metrowesthumaneociety.org/adoptable-cats/>
We will review all applications and make appointments for those applicants we feel would provide a good and loving home.



Police Department Gets Elfed

The Ashland Police Department hired a new member of its force last month: Benny the elf. After doing some community service work because of his naughty ways, Benny reformed himself. He studied all the rules, had an interview and was hired to join the force.



Happy New Year! 

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January 2025 at the Ashland Library

ANNOUNCING - We have a new calendar! Click here to see all of our wonderful upcoming events (bookmark it!):

<https://www.ashlandmass.com/1224/16470/APL-Calendar>

The Library will be closed on Monday, January 20th for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Adult:

Visit our Website Calendar for Additional Info & Registration links:

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

Online - Adult Winter Reading Challenge 2025

Wednesday, January 1 - 31, 2025

Online - Beanstack

We had so much fun with Adult Winter Reading last year that we had to do it again! Once again, read whatever you want during the month and count up the minutes. You can submit up to 1800 minutes (30 hours) worth of reading time. Each hour that you read gives you a raffle ticket to win fabulous prizes!

In Person - Gardening Series: Seedlings Made Easy - Winter Sowing

Monday, January 6 @ 6:00—7:30 PM

Join us for an evening in which we discuss the basics and reasons of winter sowing with one of our favorite gardeners, Monica Foley! She will lead a discussion on the purpose of winter sowing and then will help us plant our own container seeds so we'll be ready for Spring Planting!

Virtual - Q&A with Author Alka Joshi: Discussing the Jaipur Trilogy

Monday, January 6 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

We are so thrilled to be chatting with author Alka Joshi, one of our very favorite novelists! We love her books *The Henna Artist*, *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur*, and *The Perfumist of Paris*. Alka will speak to this trilogy and (maybe!) her upcoming release, *Six Days in Bombay* (coming out on Feb 25th). Bring your questions and your cuppa chai because Alka will be prepared to answer all of our burning ones (the questions, not the chai :).

Virtual - Bestselling Author Brian Freeman

Monday, January 6 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Brian Freeman will discuss his new thriller, *Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Vendetta: A Jason Bourne Novel*, in conversation with author Scott Shepherd.

Virtual - Authors Jayne Ann Krentz and Annelise Ryan in Conversation

Tuesday, January 7 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Jayne Ann Krentz will discuss her latest Romantic Suspense (with a dollop of the paranormal) book, *Shattering Dawn*, in conversation with bestselling author Annelise Ryan, author of the upcoming mystery *Beast of the North Woods*. We hope you can join us for this special discussion.

Virtual - Front Street Readers Book Club

Tuesday, January 7 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Read *Lethal Tides: Mary Sears and the Marine Scientists Who Helped Win World War II* by Catherine Muesebeck.

Virtual - The Four Brontes with Bill Thierfelder

Tuesday, January 7 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

This program examines the lives and works of Anne, Branwell, Charlotte, and Emily Bronte, with an emphasis on the lesser-known but equally satisfactory writing of this remarkable family.

Virtual - 2024 Mass Book Award Finalist Larry Rohter

Tuesday, January 7 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

2024 Mass Book Award Finalist Larry Rohter will discuss his new book, *Into the Amazon: The Life of Cândido Rondon, Trail-blazing Explorer, Scientist, Statesman, and Conservationist*.

Virtual - Adult Book Club

Wednesday, January 8 @ 6:30—8:00 PM

Read *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman.

Virtual - Q&A with Author Erica Cirino: How-to: Healthy Plastic-Free Pregnancy and Parenting

Wednesday, January 8 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Erica Cirino, author of *Thicker Than Water: The Quest for Solutions to the Plastic Crisis*, joins

us once again to help new parents (and all concerned!) with reducing plastic in their lives as they also welcome new life into their homes. As a new mom, Erica will not only be sharing the knowledge she has of the plastic crisis in general, but her own personal story of how she found ways to reduce plastic in this new phase of her life.

Virtual - Bestselling Author Allison Brennan

Wednesday, January 8 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Allison Brennan will discuss her new thriller, *See How They Hide*.

Virtual - The World's Natural Wonders with Bill Gette: Panama - From the Canal to an Extinct Volcano

Thursday, January 9 @ 1:00—2:15 PM

Join us for this 6 part series all about Bill's International Travel Adventures! He will take you for a walk in the tropical rainforest along the Panama Canal, show you photos of ships passing through Miraflores Locks on their way to the Pacific Ocean, describe the many birds found in the rice fields along the Pacific coast, and share images of the biodiversity in the caldera of an extinct volcano at El Valle.

In Person - Women's Wisdom Circle: Decisions & Challenges of Mothers Working or Staying Home

Thursday, January 9 @ 6:00—7:30 PM

For this session three members of the Ashland Moms Group will discuss how they made their decisions to be a full-time working mom, part-time working mom, or stay-at-home mom. Each has its rewards and challenges and we look forward to the discussion! This panel will be led by Meena Jain, Ashland Library Director.

HYBRID - Romance Book Club

Thursday, January 9 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Read a Historical Romance by a Debut Author

Virtual - Declutter series with Jamie Novak: New Year How to Keep Your Organizing Resolutions

Thursday, January 9 @ 7:00—8:30 PM

Decluttering humorist Jamie Novak shares the best ways to get and stay organized for the New Year. Plus, a list of re-

sources you will use year-round. Then join the live guided tidy-up for a quick jumpstart!

Virtual - Bestselling Author and Judge David Ellis

Thursday, January 9 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author (and judge!) David Ellis will discuss his new thrillers, *The Best Lies and Lies I Told*, which he co-authored with James Patterson.

In Person - Mystery Book Club

Friday, January 10 @ 12:00—1:00 PM

Read *Thin Ice* by Paige Shelton.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion

Friday, January 10 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Watch *My Mother's Castle* (French, Kanopy)

Virtual - Author Victoria Gilbert

Friday, January 10 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author (and retired librarian!) Victoria Gilbert will discuss her new cozy mystery novel, *Schooled in Murder: A Campus Sleuth Mystery*.

Bollywood Dance Workshop

Saturday, January 11 @ 1:00—1:45 PM

*For Adults and Teens

Come learn the art of Bollywood dance! If you have seen a Bollywood movie, you'll know that a feature of some is a big, elaborate dance number. This is your chance to break a small sweat and learn the moves.

Virtual - African Art Series: Case Studies: Art in Cultural Context: Contrasting Cultures

Sunday, January 12 @ 2:30—4:00 PM

Contrasting Styles -The Dogon of Mali and the Yoruba of Nigeria.

In Person - Card Making with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, January 13 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Come join us for an evening of card making with Jan. We will learn stamping and card making techniques using our huge stash of supplies.

Virtual - How Birds Created the World and other stories with Author Randi Minetor

Monday, January 13 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

We're very excited to chat with author and journalist Randi Minetor who, with her

photographer husband Nic, have visited 354 (out of 429) National Parks! All of their travels have inspired one of Randi's books, *The Complete Language Of Birds*. Today, Randi will be discussing her book, birds and their evolution, and (hopefully) some of her travels!

Virtual - Bestselling Author Tracey Lange

Monday, January 13 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Tracey Lange will discuss her new novel, *What Happened to the McCrays?*, in conversation with author Amy Jo Burns.

Virtual - Historical Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Jane Healey

Tuesday, January 14 @ 6:30—7:00 PM

Love Historical Fiction but not sure what to read next? Join bestselling author, Jane Healey (and Ashland fave!), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of historical fiction out there! We're sure you'll find something to like from Jane's many enthusiastic reviews.

Virtual - Understanding Kim Jung Un's "Hermit Kingdom" with Brandon Gauthier

Tuesday, January 14 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

This presentation examines the broader history of North Korea since 1948 and highlights the historical conditions that led to the emergence of the Kim family dynasty.

Virtual - Bestselling Authors Clay McLeod Chapman & V. Castro

Tuesday, January 14 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author Clay McLeod Chapman will discuss his latest social horror novel, *Wake Up and Open Your Eyes*, in conversation with author V. Castro.

Virtual - Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @redreadreviews

Tuesday, January 14 @ 7:30—8:00 PM

Not sure what to read next? Join Jody Blanchette (aka @redreadreviews), monthly, for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of horror and thrillers out there! We're sure you'll find something to like

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from Jody's many enthusiastic reviews.

In Person - Half-Past Crafts: Felted Penguins

Wednesday, January 15 @ 5:30—7:30 PM

This month we will be making adorable needle-felted penguins!

Virtual - Environmental Book Club

Wednesday, January 15 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Read "Year of No Garbage: Recycling Lies, Plastic Problems, and One Woman's Trashy Journey to Zero Waste" by Eve O. Schaub.

Virtual - 2x Pulitzer Prize Finalist Adam Haslett

Wednesday, January 15 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and National Book Award finalist Adam Haslett will discuss his latest novel, *Mothers and Sons*.

Virtual - Women's Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Kristan Higgins

Thursday, January 16 @ 6:30—7:00 PM

Love Women's Fiction but not sure what to read next? Join bestselling author, Kristan Higgins (and Ashland fave!), quarterly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of women's fiction out there! We're sure you'll find something to like from Kristan's many enthusiastic reviews.

Virtual - Bestselling Author Kate Fagan

Thursday, January 16 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Kate Fagan will discuss her new novel, *The Three Lives of Cate Kay*

Virtual - Author Jessie Garcia

Friday, January 17 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author Jessie Garcia will discuss her new thriller, *The Business Trip*

In Person - Cook Book Club

Tuesday, January 21 @ 5:00—6:00 PM

Cook from *United Tastes of America: An Atlas of Food Facts & Recipes from Every State* by Gabrielle Langholtz.

Virtual - Masters of Song: Rodgers and Hammerstein Part 1

Tuesday, January 21 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Explore the early career of composer Richard Rodgers, his

successful collaboration with lyricist Lorenz Hart (Manhattan, Connecticut Yankee, Jumbo etc.), and the eventual break-up of their partnership.

Virtual - Bestselling Author James Grippando

Tuesday, January 21 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author James Grippando will discuss his new legal thriller, *Grave Danger*

In Person - Bio/Memoir Book Club

Wednesday, January 22 @ 11:00 AM—12:00 PM

Read *Slow Noodles* by Chantha Nguon

Virtual - In Conversation with Author and Historian Philippa Langley

Wednesday, January 22 @ 2:00—3:15 PM

We are so looking forward to chatting with author and historical sleuth, Philippa Langley, about her book "The Princes in the Tower: Solving History's Greatest Cold Case" and her discovery of the grave of King Richard III in 2012. Join us as she discusses her research methods, her team, her findings, and how solving this cold case affects our understanding of the royal monarchy (in the 1500s, of course).

Virtual - Author Leah Konen

Wednesday, January 22 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author Leah Konen will discuss her new thriller, *The Last Room on the Left*

Virtual - The Big Cut West of Tracy with author Cindy Wilson

Thursday, January 23 @ 7:00—8:15 PM

The Big Cut West of Tracy is an approximately 45-minute presentation focusing on the railroad blockades that kept food and fuel from reaching the newly-formed towns in southwestern Minnesota and southeastern Dakota Territory during the Hard Winter of 1880-81.

Virtual - Bestselling Authors Scott Turow & Alafair Burke

Thursday, January 23 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling authors Scott Turow (*Presumed Guilty*) and Alafair Burke (*The Note*) will discuss their newest thrillers, in conversation with Dwyer Murphy, editor-in-chief of *CrimeReads*.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion

Friday, January 24 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Watch "My Father's Glory"

Virtual - Bestselling Author Vicki Delany

Friday, January 24 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Vicki Delany will discuss her new cozy mystery novel, *The Incident of the Book in the Nighttime: A Sherlock Holmes Bookshop Mystery*

In Person - Romance Author Loretta Chase in conversation with Caroline Linden

Saturday, January 25 @ 1:00—3:00 PM

One of our very favorite romance authors, Loretta Chase, has a new book out!!! Let the queeing begin! "My Inconvenient Duke" the third in the Difficult Dukes series, is a much anticipated story of a charming brother's best friend second-chance historical romance. If you know Loretta at all (as you should, she's an ICON!), you know you're in for a treat. AND, we'll be celebrating the 30th Anniversary of "The Lord of Scoundrels", Loretta's groundbreaking story that spent years at the top of All About Romance's top 100 books of all time. AND, as an extra bonus, Loretta will be in conversation with another of our favorite historical romance authors, Caroline Linden! Buckle up your bonnets, this is gonna be a good one!

Virtual - Encounters with Killers with True Crime Author Katherine Ramsland

Monday, January 27 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Dr. Katherine Ramsland recounts her most memorable interactions with serial killers over the course of her life, describing how it shaped her career in forensic psychology. A Pied Piper, two Coed Killers, a Candy Man's handyman, and BTK, among others, have left their marks on her research and writing, both fiction and nonfiction.

Virtual - Bestselling Author Fiona Davis

Monday, January 27 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Author Fiona Davis will discuss her new historical fiction novel, *The Stolen Queen*

Virtual - Author Judith Lindbergh on Her Novel "Akmaral"

Tuesday, January 28 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

We're thrilled to welcome author Judith Lindbergh, who has Ashland roots, to our virtual stage. Her book, "Akmaral" is about a nomad woman warrior



on the ancient Central Asian steppe.

Virtual - Cultural Perspectives in Chocolate with Cocoa Beantown

Tuesday, January 28 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Learn about different perceptions of chocolate around the world while also picking up tips and tricks on how to learn more about a local food culture just by visiting a chocolate shop in this multi-cultural chocolate seminar.

Virtual - International Author Samantha Sotto Yambao

Tuesday, January 28 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

International author Samantha Sotto Yambao will discuss her new fantasy novel, *Water Moon*

In Person - Photography Challenge: Winterscapes

Wednesday, January 29 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

We know that we have many amateur photographers in Ashland and we welcome you to the Library for this special program to share our images, get ideas from fellow photography enthusiasts, and create connections with others with the same interest.

Virtual - Bestselling Author Thomas Perry

Wednesday, January 29 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Thomas Perry will discuss his new thriller, *Pro Bono*

In Person - Hot Chocolate Bar and Winter Reading Discussion

Thursday, January 30 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Whether you've spent January participating in our Adult Winter Reading Challenge or you just love books and hot chocolate, join us for this special evening of relaxing, discussion, and hot cocoa!

Virtual - Art on Thursday: Devil with a Brush: Caravaggio's Dramatic Masterpieces

Thursday, January 30 @ 7:00—8:15 PM

Caravaggio's paintings reflect his tumultuous life with dramatic lighting and intense realism. The program provides an

overview of the artist's life and body of work.

Virtual - Bestselling Author Erika Swyler

Thursday, January 30 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Erika Swyler will discuss her new dystopian novel, *We Lived on the Horizon*

Virtual - Bestselling Author Grady Hendrix

Friday, January 31 @ 7:00—8:00 PM

Bestselling author Grady Hendrix will discuss his new horror novel, *Witchcraft for Wayward Girls*

Adult Weekly:**Knit and Crochet Club**

Mondays @ 6pm
Walk-In

Gentle Yoga

Tuesdays @ 6pm
Registration is required

ESL Conversation Group

Wednesdays @ 6:30pm
Walk-In

Children:**Special Programs:****Stories, Songs, and Stretches**

*for ages 4-7

Thursday, January 2 @ 6:30pm

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

Dog Days of Winter

Friday, January 3 @ 10-5pm

The votes are tallied, and the kids of Ashland chose dogs! Stop by any time to celebrate some of our favorite furry friends, including Dog Man, Bluey, Clifford and more. Festivities include a scavenger hunt, craft, and games: we'll play Keepy Uppy at 10:15 a.m., run a few rounds Bingo's Bingo at both 10:45 a.m. and 1 p.m., and have family Doggo Trivia at noon. Register for trivia, otherwise drop in!

Clocktown Rockers!

*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver

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Friday, January 10 @ 10:30am

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

Chinese Storytime

Tuesday, January 14 @ 6pm
Bring the whole family to the library for engaging stories, familiar songs, a fun art project and a special scavenger hunt, all in Chinese! Registration is requested and all are welcome.

Friday Free Play!

*for kids 0-5 with a caregiver
Friday, January 17 @ 10am
Build your child's social and motor skills and connect with other parents during this low-key library play time. An assortment of special age appropriate toys and activities will be available for children ages birth through 5. Drop in any time, no registration required.

Yoga Storytime with Ava

Saturday, January 18 @ 10:00—10:45 AM
Join local author, social emotional learning teacher and yoga instructor Ava Dussault for a reading of her charming picture book, *Renee Finds Her Calm*, followed by a short yoga session. For families with children ages 3-10. Registration required.
Paper Airplane Challenge!

Saturday, January 18 @ 1:00—2:00 PM

Up, up and away! Design, fold and test your own paper airplane. Then compete in several challenges to see if your plane has what it takes! For kids ages 7-12. Registration required.

La Hora del Cuento

*para familias
Spanish Storytime
*for families
Wednesday, January 22 @ 6:30pm

Los invitamos a disfrutar en familia de una sesión de cuentos en español en la biblioteca. Ofreceremos la oportunidad de sumergirse en historias cautivadoras, rimas divertidas y canciones alegres, ¡todo en español! Join us for a special story time, offering families the opportunity

to immerse themselves in captivating stories, fun rhymes, and cheerful songs, all in Spanish.

Little Crafters

*for 0-5 with a caregiver
Monday, January 27 @ 10:30am

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

Lego Club with Kim the Lego Lady

*Grades K-3
Wednesday, January 29 @ 4:30pm

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

Drive-in Movies @ APL!

Friday, January 31 @ 10:00—11:30 AM

Enjoy the drive-in any time of year! Come early to design your own car from a cardboard box. Then 'drive' into our 'theater', park your car, and enjoy a movie or two on the big screen! We'll be showing short film adaptations of children's books that are fun for the whole family. Be sure to take your car to continue the fun at home! For families. Registration is required.

Little Picassos Club

*Grades 2-5
Tuesday, January 7 @ 4:30pm

Tuesday, January 28 @ 4:30pm

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

Book Clubs!

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

Calling all first and second graders for APL Kids book club! Each month we will introduce an exciting book series. The

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

Graphic Novel Book Club

Thursday, January 16 @ 6:30pm

*grades 3 thru 6
Dive into a world where stories jump off the page! Each month, you'll read an exciting graphic novel before our meeting, where we'll chat about the book, play awesome games, and unleash your creativity with fun art projects. Plus, you get to vote on what book we'll read next—so your voice truly matters! With new friends, thrilling stories, and endless fun, it's the ultimate way to bring reading to life. Don't miss out on the excitement—come be a part of our graphic novel gang!

Space is limited to 16 and registration is required.

Kindergarten Book Club

Tuesday, January 21 @ 4:30pm

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

Space is limited to 12 and registration is required.

Be a Reading Machine: STEM for Littles

Thursday, January 23 @ 10:30—11:00 AM

*For families with children ages 2-6

Join us for a STEM-themed storytime perfect for curious little minds! We'll read fun stories with a scientific twist and work on a STEM activity that little ones can get their hands on. Registration required.

Ashland STEM Club

Saturday, January 4 @ 11am
Please Register
*for kids in K-5

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

Weekly Storytimes:**Clocktown Rockers!**

*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Tuesdays at 10:30-11am

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

Storytime Sprouts

* For ages 0-3 with a caregiver

Wednesdays @ 10:30am-11am

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

Saturday Stories

*for ages 2-5 with a caregiver

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

Saturday, January 4 @ 10:30am

Saturday, January 11 @ 10:30am

Saturday, January 25 @ 10:30am

Project ABC Play, Learn, and Grow Group

*for Ages 0 to 5
Tuesdays at 11am

A parent and child group offered by the Metrowest YMCA and the Early Childhood Alliance of Ashland & Framingham. A structured program to help prepare children for socialization and a school experience.

Registration *IS* required for this program

January 7

January 14

January 21

January 28

Teen:**Teen Makers Club**

Thursday, January 9 @ 6pm
Join us for our new monthly club of teen makers!

Stitch, knit, crochet, and generally hang out with other crafty teens the second Thursday of every month from 6:00PM-7:00PM. Bring, work on, and show off your latest projects,



and maybe learn a few new tips while you're here! Registration is requested, but walk-ins are welcome!

Bollywood Dance Workshop

Saturday, January 11 @ 1:00—1:45 PM

Come learn the art of Bollywood dance! If you have seen a Bollywood movie, you'll know that a feature of some is a big, elaborate dance number. This is your chance to break a small sweat and learn the moves, whether you are a complete dance beginner or an expert looking to strut your stuff. Teens (ages 12+) and adults are welcome at this event on Saturday, January 11th from 1:00PM to 1:45PM.

Friends of the Ashland Public Library Monthly Book Sale & Donation Day!

Saturday, January 4 @ 9:30-1pm

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

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

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

Upstairs Display Case

“Model Engineering Marvels” Wooden Models designed and made by Edwin Wlodyka

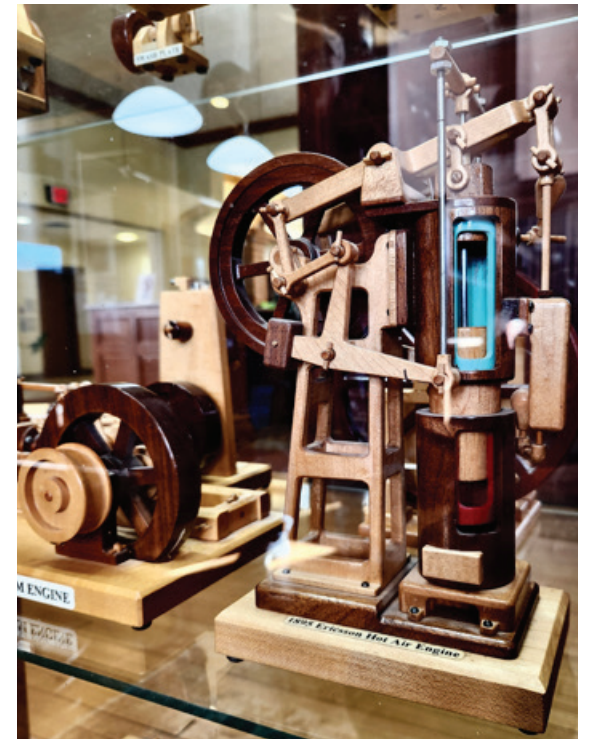
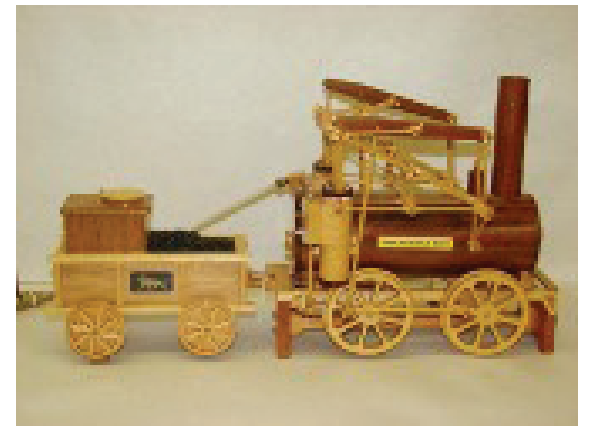
December 3, 2024 - March 1, 2025.

Edwin Wlodyka lived and raised his family in Ashland for many years. Before he passed away he gave his son, David, all of the wooden models he made. David Wlodyka, an Ashland High School grad who now lives in Hopkinton, has put together an exhibit of some of his father's models. A very special exhibit not to be missed.

In David Words:

“Edwin Wlodyka was a life-long resident of Ashland. He was an engineer who co-founded and managed Highland Laboratories in Ashland for over 35 years. Ed was a master machinist and inventor who holds several US patents ranging from surgical soap dispensers and blood donor scales to commercial paint dispensers and mixers. Ed had a natural and genuine curiosity about everything in life and was always building something interesting and fun. After retiring he became an active member of the

New England Model Engineering Society in Waltham, a group for those who enjoy metal working and machining. He developed a particular interest in the history and the mechanical workings of steam and hot air engines and began building models. As with many members of the club he machined and built several working models out of metal. However, Ed found a niche and began building most of his working models out of wood that fully function on compressed air. He began working with maple, mahogany, black walnut and other hardwoods as a cleaner alternative to working with metals in his small shop at home. During his retirement he built a collection of over 70 mechanical models. The collection ranges from simple handheld mechanical devices to multi-cylinder engines with complex mechanisms that operate on alcohol or compressed air. This display represents a small cross section of his entire collection.”



Community Foundation for MetroWest Announces 2024 Fall Grant Partners

The Community Foundation for MetroWest is thrilled to announce its 2024 Fall Grant Partners, awarding a total of \$625,000 to support critical initiatives across the MetroWest region.

This year's grants were awarded to 69 nonprofit grant partners that encompass a diverse range of focus areas, including, environmental, human services, arts & culture, and hunger relief initiatives. These funds will empower local nonprofit organizations to address vital needs and enhance the lives of residents throughout MetroWest.

“This year, we've received a remarkable number of grant proposals, a testament to the growing needs of our community,” said Jay Kim, Executive Director of the Community Foundation for MetroWest. “We are committed to supporting our non-profit partners in delivering

essential services, cultivating artistic expression, and creating a more equitable and sustainable future for all.”

2024 Grant Highlights:

- **Environmental Grant Partners:** Organizations like OARS and the Charles River Watershed Association will promote environmental stewardship and conservation efforts.
- **Discretionary Grant Partners:** The Waltham Boys & Girls Club and Friends of the Waltham Family School will receive crucial support for their youth development and educational programming.
- **Human Services Grant Partners:** Funding will assist a wide range of organizations, including 2Life Communities, Advocates, and African Cultural Ser-



Community Foundation for MetroWest

VICES, in addressing essential human needs such as housing, healthcare, and mental health services.

- **Arts & Culture Grant Partners:** Grants will be awarded to organizations like Acton Community Center (DBA Theatre III), Bellforge Arts Center, and the Danforth Art Museum and School, fostering artistic expression and cultural engagement.
- **Hunger Relief Grant Partners:** A Place to Turn, Gaining Ground, and other hunger relief organizations will receive vital resources to combat food insecurity.

“While MetroWest is often seen as a collection of affluent suburbs, it's important to remember the striking disparities our neighbors are facing,” stated Susan Kavogian, Chair of the Foundation's Distribution Committee and Foundation Trustee. We are so grateful to our Distribution Committee for investing their time in reviewing applications and going on site visits to make informed and thoughtful decisions when awarding these grants.”

To see a complete listing of our 2024 Grant Partners, visit <https://www.communityfoundationmw.org/about/news-updates/community-foun->

[community-foundation-for-metrowest-announces-2024-fall-grant-partners/](https://www.communityfoundationmw.org/about/news-updates/community-foundation-for-metrowest-announces-2024-fall-grant-partners/).

Learn how to make a lasting impact in MetroWest by visiting <https://www.communityfoundationmw.org/funds-giving/ways-to-give/>.

About the Community Foundation for MetroWest

The Community Foundation for MetroWest is the trusted philanthropic partner for individuals, families, and businesses dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all in the MetroWest region. Since 1995, the Foundation has awarded more than \$35 million in grants to charitable organizations and stewards over \$30 million in charitable assets to 30+ cities and towns across the region. Visit [communityfoundationmw.org](https://www.communityfoundationmw.org) or call (508) 647-2260 to learn more.

Sports

Pat Leslie Takes Reins of Girls Basketball Team

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Pat Leslie will be taking over the coaching duties for the Ashland girls' basketball team this winter, where he hopes to put his spin on things to make the squad relevant once again.

Last season the Clocker girls were only able to manage a single win during a 20-game season.

The new Coach, who had played some basketball in Korea for a club team, began his coaching career in Texas as an assistant girls' basketball coach. He then found himself moving to North Saint Paul, Minn., where he had applied for both the boys' and girls' openings; he got the girls' gig not realizing that they were in a very bad spot.

"I didn't know that the boys' job was a coveted position, while the girls had lost 45 straight games," he said. "I really didn't know what I had gotten myself into, but here I was."

Leslie took the winless team to its first win in some time and the girls were able to capture two wins during his first season in North Saint Paul. The following years things would get better – during his second season with the Polars Leslie was able to get his team to win 10 games and just about doubled that with 19 in his third season. During that first year Leslie was also able to



guide his team to a win over their rivals, a team that had beaten them by 50 plus points just a year earlier.

Leslie went on to say that the team had success because they bought into his vision, which in his words was kind of an experiment. But to go from 10 to 19 wins (a feat that tied the record for most wins in school history) in only his third season with the team, was above and beyond what he could have expected. As first-year students on the North Saint Paul team the girls were winless, but by their senior campaign they were winning 19 games: an astonishing accomplishment.

Although he was making fantastic strides in Minnesota, he had to leave the state and headed to Massachusetts when his wife



got a job here. Having success, he figured that it would be easy to get a head coaching job somewhere in the Bay State. Leslie would have to settle for an assistant coaching job at Arch Bishop Williams before eventually landing the job with Ashland.

"I am blessed and excited to be coaching the Clockers," he said. "It was cool how I was able to turn the ship around and into a winning program at Minnesota and am hoping to do the same thing here. I have heard that they play in a tough conference (Tri-Valley League), but it was tough in North Saint Paul too."

The new Clocker coach has spoken with some of the girls and has received positive vibes from the entire program from top to bottom. He is really excited about the youth program in town, which goes above and beyond.

Leslie has found the enthusiasm in Ashland to be unbelievable; the staff, the parents, the girls they all are on board with his vision and hopefully withing a few years the Clockers could be turning things around.

The coach will be relying heavily on two returning seniors

in Vanessa Thompson and Abby Rosenfeld.

"I honestly don't know much at this stage of the game," Leslie said. "I do know that there is a lot of potential here and the willingness to work and compete is key."

Sophomore Ava Vitti, who the new coach believes was the team's leading scorer last year as a freshman will be back and should be an important piece to the Clocker puzzle.

He also noted that junior Abby Dever also started a lot last year and he knows that there is a young group of first-year students and sophomores who will give him something to build upon. But again, noted that he can not really single anyone out at this point without being able to see them actually play.

"The main goal is to get them to compete, first and foremost. Then after learning how to do that we can move on," he said. "If you work hard and compete on a regular basis everything else will eventually fall into place. We are 'Clocked In' everyday to do our best; it's a challenge each and every day."

Leslie is looking for his girls to come into practice and close down all their outside thoughts and focus 100 percent of the task at hand; improving the basketball program. Leslie's dream is not specific, but he enjoys coaching and wants to accomplish things and if the girls follow his command they should begin to see the fruits of their labor.

"I have a vision of what I want to do here and hopefully we'll be able to accomplish something in year one," he said. "However, if things need to be adjusted we will adapt to the players we have and their talents."

While he doesn't consider himself a miracle worker, he does believe that Ashland is in a good situation with the amount of young talent that he has. He also has seen the hungeriness of the girls and knows they are aware of the success the program has had in the past and they are looking to return there.

"I am just a human being here to guide these girls, they are the ones who will have to execute and make things work if they want to be successful," Leslie said.

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Real Estate Corner

Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
12/09/2024	29 Birch Hill Road	\$535,000
12/06/2024	202 Algonquin Trail	\$605,000
12/06/2024	31 Independence Lane	\$1.16 mil
12/06/2024	25 Adams Road	\$445,000
12/06/2024	239 Trailside Way	\$355,000
12/05/2024	67 Cross Street	\$700,000
12/05/2024	42 Spyglass Hill Dr. #19A	\$600,000
12/05/2024	421 American Blvd.	\$669,900
11/27/2024	15 Constitution St.	\$690,000
11/27/2024	152 Eliot St.	\$520,000
11/25/2024	21 Treasure Way	\$565,000
11/25/2024	193 Trailside Way	\$395,000
11/22/2024	321 Cordaville Road	\$910,000
11/22/2024	2 Carl Ghilani Circle	\$615,000
11/22/2024	199 Lelan Farm Road	\$440,000
11/21/2024	105 Woodland Road	\$715,000
11/19/2024	70 Grover Road	\$980,000
11/19/2024	16 Nash Avenue	\$551,000



The 4-bed, 3-bath, 2,770-square-foot home at 70 Grover Road in Ashland recently sold for \$980,000. www.zillow.com Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages

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Changes In Commissions?



Kim Foemmel

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

As most have heard, changes with how real estate commissions are structured for buyer agents have “changed.” Well, not really.

In 2019, Midwest anti-trust lawsuits claimed sellers were paying inflated costs, that the National Association of Realtors (NAR) was requiring the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) to show the offering of a commission to a buyer agent’s company and sellers were not given the option to pay toward said commission. Other class-action lawsuits followed country-wide. The NAR responded that members didn’t violate anti-trust laws but chose not to continue to fight all these lawsuits in court in fear of going bankrupt. Settlements were reached, NAR members were released of litigation on these matters, and NAR maintains that cooperative compensation is still in the best interest of consumers.

The Massachusetts Association of Realtors (MAR) has for years spelled out in its listing contracts that sellers were given an

option if they wanted to contribute sale proceeds to the buyer’s agency. There has never been a “standard” rate of commissions. After years of stress for many real estate professionals of what the future would hold, some but not much has changed. Changes include: Real estate offices updated listing contracts that more specifically outline choices to sellers if they choose to offer compensation to the buyer agency, MLS and NAR changed their rules, including homes can go into MLS without offers of compensation to the buyer agency, and buyer agency contracts are now required between Realtors and buyers for services provided. In addition, the MAR Offer to Purchase forms now have a section indicating if a buyer’s offer price includes a buyer agency commission to be credited from the seller proceeds. In many cases, it’s business as usual.

Not much has changed. In years past, buyer agents helping buyers purchase a For Sale By Owner (FSBO) home would need to write commissions in the offer, often rolling the buyer agency commission into the offer price and asking for a credit of it back from the seller to the buyer agency at closing so the bank would allow the commission to be financed. Now this simply will become the norm for most transactions.

As home buying has become more difficult with the high cost of homes due to inflation, high demand and high interest rates, it has become challenging for buyers to save for down payments. To pay commissions out of pocket on top of the down payment would be even more challenging for a buyer. The buyer is technically paying for their buyer agency’s commission, as it’s rolled into their offer to the purchase

price. Now the commission simply needs to be spelled out in the offer as a seller credit in order for a bank to finance the commission into a buyer’s loan. The advantages to sellers to continue to credit a buyer agency commission is buyers can finance the commission into their home loan, thereby reducing stress on the buyers and incentivizing stronger offers, which could help lead to multiple offers and quicker sales for their homes. Be fair to your agents and incentivize them by paying them fairly to work hard for you!

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