

Community Closet Highlights Generosity of Franklin Neighbors

By J.D. O'GARA

“Ask and ye shall receive.” The Franklin United Methodist Church (UMC), in a way, acts as an instrument of this Bible verse (Matthew 7:7) with its Community Closet, which opened in mid-March of 2024. The Community Closet collects new and gently used clothing and distributes them free of charge to anyone in the community.

Franklin UMC Pastor Jacob Juncker, on a church website page, calls the effort “an experiment in generosity relying on community volunteers and donations to operate.” He notes that, in nine months of operation, the Closet logged over 400 visits from volunteers and shoppers during regular open hours and helped an estimated 700 people. That’s not including individual appointments or visits from social service agencies shopping for their constituents.



Pastor Jacob Juncker, shown, calls the Community Closet at the Franklin United Methodist Church “an experiment in generosity,” a call the Franklin community has answered.

“When the EA (Emergency Assistance) shelter opened in Franklin, around October of 2023, the Franklin Interfaith Council started collecting a whole bunch of items for the shelter,” says Pastor Juncker, whose church acted as a “storehouse and focal point for those donations.” He adds, “As the urgent needs

of the shelter were finally met, we still had clothing left. We’d given out a lot, but donations kept coming in. It became evident that there wasn’t really a clothing resource in the town of Franklin that was free, and so we made the pivot to open-

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Reproducing Rembrandt (and Other Artists)

Franklin Art Association Welcomes Artists from Franklin Area to Join “Fakes & Forgeries” Exhibit at Franklin Historical Museum, June 7 – 22.

Calling all artists!

Have you ever wanted to create your own interpretation of a famous, or not so famous, artist’s work? The Franklin Art Association is collaborating with the Franklin Historical Museum to present the 1st Annual Fakes and Forgeries Exhibit. The exhibit, open to all artists, including student artists from Franklin and surrounding areas, will open at the Franklin Historical Museum on the same day as Franklin Porchfest, June 7th, 2025.

“Spring Bull Gallery in Newport has been hosting a Fakes and Forgeries exhibit for many years now, and so I’ve been aware of the idea, and I think the Foxboro Association did it a few years back as well,” says Sue Sheridan, President of the Franklin Art Association, who thought the Franklin Art Association could give it a try.



That led to the question of where to do it.

“First of all, we don’t have a gallery anymore, who we can collaborate with,” says Sheridan. The Franklin Historic Museum seemed a good venue to approach, she says, because “if we do Fakes and Forgeries, we’re going to have historic works.”

She brought the idea to Alan Earls, chair of the Franklin His-

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GENEROSITY

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ing the closet for anyone in the community who might need clothing or want clothing. It was really just an experiment in generosity to see if we could do it.”

The result is heartening. “The generosity of the community has outpaced the want and the need of every single request that has been made of us. It really is spectacular to bear witness to that. We’ve never not had enough. It’s incredible. It really is. Folks in Franklin are amazingly generous,” says Juncker, who has been UMC pastor since 2018.

Tuesday is an important day of the week for the Community Closet. On the first and third Tuesdays, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., the site is open for anyone who needs clothing. It can also be opened by appointment.

“There is zero charge. We don’t ask any questions of anyone if they express a want or a need for clothing. There is no screening,” says Juncker.

On the second and fourth Tuesdays (that’s February 11th and 25th this month), volunteers sort the clothing, and the Community Closet could use some help in this department. Volunteers are also needed to

help host the shop for the community. High school students in town can also use this toward their school volunteer hours. To sign up, click the “volunteer” link at <https://franklinumc.org>.

The small UMC congregation has a deep impact and reach into the community, says Juncker, noting that, in addition to the closet, the UMC hosts Tri-Valley Inc.’s Meals on Wheels program (which also needs volunteers), a language immersion school, reaches out with free community concerts and cookouts, and makes its space available to community groups. In fact, this month, the church will host a concert at 7 p.m. on February 8th with The Padula Trio.

With its neighbors in mind, the church is working on a capital campaign to make the church more accessible and usable. For example, the Community Closet, at the top of a 150-year-old staircase, is currently not physically accessible for some folks with mobility issues.

“We’re hoping to break ground on a new addition to the church in the next few months,” says the pastor.

For more information on the UMC, the Community Closet or the capital campaign, visit <https://franklinumc.org>.

Frank Methodist Community Concert

There will be a FREE Community Concert @FranklinUMC featuring The Padula Trio on Saturday, February 8, at 7 p.m.

Community Concerts @FranklinUMC are an opportunity for Franklin-area artists and musicians to share their creative talents and inspire the community. Franklin UMC offers an intimate acoustic venue space in its



historic sanctuary that features a century-old tracker organ.

Franklin United Methodist Church (UMC) is located at 82 W. Central Street, Franklin (MA). Parking is available in the parking lot between the church and the Franklin Historical Mu-

seum. Street parking is available on East St., West St., and Church Ave.

Franklin UMC is always looking for local talent to feature. If you’re interested or know of a Franklin-related musician or artist that might be interested in performing, please contact the office@franklinumc.org or call (508) 528-1092.

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torical Commission, who was very receptive.

“We’re delighted to be cooperating with the Art Association on this, not only because we like working with members of the creative community in town, but also because this particular exhibit has a historical component in that the artists are being invited to look at an existing work of art, many of which will likely be historical or important,

Call for Artists!!

1st Annual Fakes & Forgeries Exhibit

Seeking artists to create interpretations of masters' artworks.

Open to all, including students. No entry fee.

Exhibit to be held at the Franklin Historical Museum June 7th-22nd

Registration deadline: May 23rd

Request entry form and exhibit guidelines by emailing the Franklin Art Association Secretary at faasecretary@gmail.com

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and they’re bringing that in their own way into a modern context, which is part of our mission, to connect people to history in relevant ways,” says Earls.

This is the first time the Franklin Art Association will collaborate with the Franklin Historical Museum, and because it’s the Art Association’s first endeavor of the sort, Sheridan says, “We’re going to be flying out of our seat a little bit, but I think it’s going to be a great thing, a lot of fun. We have a broad swath of people we’re inviting to participate, including Franklin High School students. I’m thinking we can probably support 60 works, and it (opens) on the same day as Porchfest.” The exhibit will be open from 12-6 p.m. that day, and attendees can vote on a “People’s Choice” award, which will be announced at 5 p.m.

The displays planned will have a small historical biography of the original artist being interpreted as well as a short bio of the artist doing the reproduction.

“And these will be for sale as well,” says Sheridan, “There’s no commission charged for anything and no entry fee. It’s completely free.”

Sheridan feels fortunate to have received a grant from the Franklin Cultural District, which receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. “They were very generous in approving a grant to cover some costs, for example moving the display panels from a storage unit to the Historical Museum.” says Sheridan,

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The World as She Sees It

Artist Spotlight: Margaret Munson

By J.D. O'GARA

If she's painting, Margaret Munson's in her happy place.

"I paint the beauty of the world as I see it ... with lots of artistic license. The scenes I do a painting of I usually choose because I have an emotional connection to the subject or the

place, says Munson. Attracted to nature and water, Munson tries to capture how a scene made her feel.

In 2008, Munson, who'd been a nurse for 38 years as well as a mother, finally began painting in earnest. Retired, she now had the time to set her artistic side free.



Artist Margaret Munson



Munson painted "Moonlight on the Bay" by request of fine art photographer Debbie Harris Kommalan, as a gift for her husband.

She began working for a few years with stained glass, with some of her original artwork displayed at a Newport, RI shop, but when her arthritis began to interfere, Munson began teaching herself the art of watercolor painting. Later, when she joined the Franklin Art Association, a world of additional mediums opened up to her.

"I started seeing monthly demonstrations by artists that used all different mediums," she says, "Because I didn't have an art education, I was using that as an education." Munson explored photography, not only as an expression of her art, but as reference for her paintings. She dabbled in pastels, enjoying the medium's more forgiving nature than watercolor.

"I started attending workshops here and there," says Munson, calling one particular artist, Jean Rosier-Smith, of Sudbury, "very generous in her teaching." Weekly classes soon weren't enough for Munson, who immersed herself in pastel work at home. That work found its way into Franklin Art Association shows, "and gradually, I started winning some ribbons," says Munson.

Munson is touched most when her paintings give meaning to others. One of her favorites, The Promise of a New Day, featured in an art show, was a 20"x24" sunset with ocean. She chose to give this painting to a cherished pain doctor she'd had for years, wrapping it up. Before she gave it to him, she showed him photos of her works from the show. He pointed out his favorite, not yet knowing it was the one she'd chosen to give him.

Munson, who admired Maryland photographer Debbie Harris Kommalan's work on social media, was also honored when she requested Munson recreate her photograph of a sunrise as a gift for her husband. That, too,



"The Promise of a New Day," one of Munson's favorites, she gave as a gift to her pain doctor.



"Reflections and Water Lilies" won Best in Show at the FAA show at the Norfolk Public Library.



Munson's acrylic paint pour, "SWOOSH" was part of a recent Small Works Show at the Morini Gallery in Mansfield.

is one of her favorites, entitled, "Moonlight on the Bay."

"That's the connection with my art," says Munson, "I want other people to see the world as beautiful as I see it. That often involves exaggerating the colors."

That exaggerated color in a wave painting impressed the director of a Foxboro Art Association show at Gillette Stadium so much he took the painting home, later requesting Munson to demonstrate her technique for association members.

Munson was thrilled to sell six pieces during her exhibit at the First Universalist Society of Franklin in early 2024 and to win Best in Show for "Reflections and Water Lilies" at a recent art show at the Norfolk Library in early 2024. "I was blown away," says Munson, "and one of my photographs in the show received a red ribbon and was bought."

Munson, the eldest of five, has lived in Franklin since 1993 and has been with her partner, Jack, for 26 years. She is the proud grandmother of three young women, daughters of her only son, whom she sadly lost to suicide in 2014.

"There was a time, after he died, that I couldn't paint," she says, but it heartens her to remember his own connection to and pride in her talent, and how

her granddaughters recall how he proudly displayed her artwork. Munson shares her memories of him and her love of creating with her granddaughters.

"During the pandemic, my granddaughter came to stay with us the very first day school was canceled. She stayed 12 weeks," laughs Munson. Acrylic paint pouring helped them deal with the stress of remote learning, she says.

"We did something every day, and we had so much fun," says the artist. She continues to pursue abstract paint pouring, enjoying the "very different way of doing art that's fun and not so serious," she says. Munson is proud that her granddaughters see her home as one filled with creative fun, with rooms full of colorful art and sewing projects.

"I've always enjoyed sewing, and I'm teaching all three girls to sew" she says, proudly.

If you would like to see some of Munson's work, look for Margaret L. Munson Art on Facebook. You can also check out her Artist Gallery on the Franklin Art Association website, www.franklinart.org .

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“I’m very grateful for the support we have received from the Franklin Cultural District and the Franklin Cultural Council over many years.”

So far, Sheridan has found a lot of support for this fun new project, from the Town of Franklin’s Cory Shea to Lisa Piana at the Franklin Downtown Partnership.

“It’s going to be a lot of work, but I have a great team,” she says, “There are so many creatives out there in the area who this might appeal to who are not in the Art Association. I’m hoping we can draw some of those

folks in,” says Sheridan, who plans a lot of local promotion.

Artists must register by May 23rd, and there is no entry fee to participate. Those interested can request a prospectus with a Google registration form by emailing the Franklin Art Association at faasecretary@gmail.com.

“They need to submit a digital image of what they’re reproducing,” says Sheridan, who hopes that getting the word out early enough will give creative folks a chance to consider and create a piece they’re proud of.

The Franklin Art Association’s “Fakes & Forgeries” exhibit will run at the Franklin Historical Museum from June 7th - June 22nd.

Rotary Club of Franklin MA Plans 6th Annual Valentine’s Brunch February 8th

The Rotary Club of Franklin MA is proud to announce that their 6th Annual Valentine’s Brunch is slated for February 8, 2025, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Franklin Housing Authority Hall, located at 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, MA 02038.

All Franklin Senior’s and residents of Franklin Housing Authority are welcome to join the Rotary Club as their special guests, where all will be treated to a delicious, homemade Valentine’s brunch. Feel free to show your love and wear your red!

Seniors are urged to enter their names on a sign-up so that no one is left out. Sign-up sheets may be found at the following locations:

- Central Park Terrace, 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, MA
- Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, Franklin, MA

The Rotary Club International is a non-profit organization made up of a diverse group of men and women “who come together to create positive, lasting change in our communities and around the world.” <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary>

If you would like more information about our organization or interested in attending a meeting, please contact Diane Padula at rotartyclubof-franklinma@gmail.com and she will make arrangements for you to be a guest at one of Rotary’s upcoming meetings.

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With Override Question Looming, Town Amps Budget Transparency

Joint Budget Subcommittee Schedules Six “Listening Sessions” to Inform Taxpayers


By J.D. O’GARA

Franklin’s Joint Budget Subcommittee has scheduled a “Listening Tour” aimed at informing as many residents as possible of exactly what is going into the town budget and any determination of a request for an override vote. The sessions began on January 30th last month and will continue into March at various locations and times throughout Franklin.

“We wanted to be very transparent about the budget process, and we wanted to get information to as much of the community as we could possibly reach,” says Tom Mercer, member of Franklin’s Joint Budget Subcommittee, adding, “We wanted to get out of Council Chambers trying to attract a cross section of the community as we proceed with the budget process. I’m just hopeful that these listening sessions we have, that people will come out and ask their questions, so that they can get factual answers.”

At press time, said Mercer, the town was still waiting on figures from the Governor’s office, which were due in late January, early February.

“I encourage every resident of the town that is interested



JOINT BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

LISTENING TOUR SCHEDULE

School Committee David McNeill Paul Griffith Ruthann O’Sullivan	Town Council Tom Mercer Brian Chandler Melanie Hamblen Cobi Frongillo	Finance Committee George Conley Natalie Riley Nicole Corbosiero Lauren Nagel
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Join us for open discussions on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, feedback on last year’s override ballot question, the structural deficit this coming year, and the priorities of the community!

SESSION #1 - JAN 30 Franklin Elks 1077 Pond Street 7:00PM	SESSION #2 - FEB 12 Remington-Jefferson School Cafetorium 628 Washington Street 7:00PM
SESSION #3 - FEB 19 Franklin Senior Center Common Grounds Cafe 10 Daniel McCahill Road 7:00PM	SESSION #4 - MAR 4 Franklin Senior Center Common Grounds Cafe 10 Daniel McCahill Road 9:30AM Coffee & Light Refreshments Provided
SESSION #5 - MAR 8 Franklin Municipal Building Council Chambers 355 East Central Street 10:00AM Hybrid Session - Virtual & In-Person	SESSION #6 - MAR 12 Franklin High School Auditorium 7:00PM

Any member of the community is invited to attend any, or all, of these sessions. These sessions are in-person only, unless noted.

[Franklin Budget Webpage](http://www.franklinma.gov/town-budget)
www.franklinma.gov/town-budget

in the town’s budget matters to attend any one of these meetings. We are holding them in various parts of the community and in different venues, at dif-

ferent times to give everyone an opportunity to have their voices heard, ask questions and share their feelings and thoughts.” said Jamie Hellen.



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Franklin Food Pantry Increases December Holiday Meal Distribution by 42%

The Franklin Food Pantry, which provides supplemental food assistance in Franklin, distributed an unprecedented 473 holiday meals in December, a 42% increase from the 333 meals distributed last year. Reaching more people over the holiday season was made possible by The Pantry's dedicated volunteers and generous donors, and by utilizing Oasis Insight, a customizable software provided at no cost from the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Over a three-week period in December, volunteers and staff used Oasis Insight to schedule appointments, communicate with clients, and monitor inventory. The result was that every client who shopped at The Pantry was provided with a holiday meal consisting of a grocery store gift card and an extra bag to fill with their choice of food.

The new holiday meal distribution process was first implemented over the Thanksgiving holiday and was developed in response to client feedback. It was designed to reach a greater number of people and to provide clients with the dignity of choosing food and preparing meals that are meaningful to them. In previous years, The Pantry distributed pre-packed holiday meal kits during a single, designated time. The new

process is more convenient for clients, eliminating the need to sign up in advance to receive a meal, which could lead to confusing pickup times and waitlists, and the burden of an additional trip to The Pantry.

"While the need for food assistance continues to rise, we are inspired by the dedication of our volunteers and the incredible generosity of our community who helped ensure so many families and individuals enjoyed holiday meals to celebrate with loved ones," said Tina Powderly, Executive Director, Franklin Food Pantry. "We also extend our sincere gratitude to the Greater Boston Food Bank and their dedicated team for their invaluable support in implementing Oasis Insight, which helps us serve our clients more effectively and reach more people experiencing food insecurity."

To build upon The Pantry's success, during the month of December, anonymous food donations in our donation bin increased 93% compared to last year, and The Pantry Elves campaign, which included more than 170 middle and high school students, reached \$86,000. These donations demonstrate the generosity of our community, will help sustain programs and services, and provide food and household needs for our



850 households that visit The Pantry.

For more information or to support the Franklin Food Pantry through donations or volunteerism, please visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org/get-involved.

If you or someone you know needs food assistance, please visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org/get-help, or contact The Pantry at (508) 528-3115.

About the Franklin Food Pantry, Inc.

The Franklin Food Pantry, Inc. offers supplemental food assistance, household necessities, and resource referral programs to more than 1,800 individuals per year. The Pantry relies on donations and grants to purchase items and pay for daily operations, and partnerships with The Greater Boston Food Bank, Spoonfuls, and local gro-

cery stores to achieve greater buying power and lower costs. Programs include In-person Shopping, Curbside Pick-up, Emergency Food Bags, Mobile Pantries, Home Delivery, Kids' Snack Bags, Weekend Backpacks, Holiday Meals, and the SNAP match at Franklin Farmers Market. The Pantry is a 501(c)3 non-profit organiza-

tion in good standing in Massachusetts, recognized by Charity Navigator as a Four-Star Charity, and awarded GuideStar's Platinum Transparency ranking. The Pantry is located at 341 W. Central St. in Franklin, MA on Route 140. Please visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org for more information.

SOUPer Bowl Showdown!

The Franklin Food Pantry and Weymouth Food Pantry are going head-to-head in a SOUPer Bowl matchup! Now through February 9, 2025, each community is challenged to donate cans of soup to their respective town's food pantry. The pantry that receives the most soup donations will be crowned Souper Bowl Champ 2025!

Donations for the Franklin Food Pantry can be placed in the purple bin on The Pantry's

loading dock at 341 W Central St. Franklin, MA, or sent directly to via The Pantry's Amazon Wish List at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2SIL7UR08ZZUC?ref_=wl_share.

Get in on the action! Take a pic of your donation, post, and tag the Franklin Food Pantry and Weymouth Food Pantry! Help us tackle hunger and everyone wins!



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Celebrating Ben's Birthday

Last month, Franklin Public Library was just one of many sites to celebrate its namesake's birthday. On Friday, January 17th, the library held a Ben Franklin birthday bash that included costumes, coloring, cake and even a library booksale. Take a look at photos from the day.

The Friends of Franklin Public Library are holding a fudge fundraiser this month. To see the order form, visit www.fofl02038.org.

Fudge order pick-up times will be scheduled at the Library.

Tuesday, February 11 – Thursday, February 13

Questions? Call/text (508) 272-4597 or email fofl02038@gmail.com.



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Cultural District Investment Fund Grants Awarded

In fall, 2024, the Massachusetts Cultural Council awarded the Franklin Cultural District Committee a \$15,000 Cultural District Investment Grant. This grant, one of several awarded to state-sponsored cultural districts, is intended to infuse new arts and culture activities and to attract creative businesses to the cultural districts. The Franklin Cultural District Committee voted to reserve a portion of the grant funds for FCDC-directed work and offer the remainder, in the form of grants, to Franklin arts and culture organizations.

The Franklin Cultural District Committee (FCDC) is honored to announce the grants made

possible by MCC Cultural District Investment Grant funds. The FCDC, in concert with the Town of Franklin Department of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, offers its sincere congratulations to all who received a grant. The FCDC looks forward to seeing these grant-funded initiatives come to life through performances, events, and more. The FCDC gratefully acknowledges the MCC and its generous grant that made these local grants possible, appreciates the leadership of the Franklin Department of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, and recognizes the continued support of the Town of Franklin.

Below, please find a list of funded grants. Some of these events will take place in the late spring or early summer. As a result, information pertaining to the grant-funded activity may not appear on the website until closer to the date. However, many of the organizations have other events and activities that may be of interest at this time.

Franklin Art Association: To contribute toward the cost of "Fakes and Forgeries" event during June 2025. (\$400)

Children's Museum of Franklin: To add a mural to the back wall of the Museum, currently under construction. The mural will be created by a local artist. (\$600)

Franklin Farmers Market: To provide entertainment at the Franklin Farmers Market during June 2025. (\$1,100)

Franklin Historical Commission: A second and expanded presentation of "A Community Rediscovery of Ideas, Literature, and the Shared Gift of Language." This month-long presentation celebrates the life and

many contributions of Franklin's namesake, Dr. Benjamin Franklin. (\$1,100)

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance: To subsidize a small portion of the costs associated with the June Celebrate with Pride festival. (\$1,030)

Franklin Performing Arts Company: To subsidize a small portion of the costs associated with the June 6 – 8, 2025 performance of Little Women at THE BLACK BOX.(\$1,100)

Franklin Public Library:

- A concert by the Boston Typewriter Orchestra, April 2025. (\$750)
- A concert by the Blackstone Valley String Quartet, performing the music of Taylor Swift. (\$600)

Franklin Public Schools, JFK and Parmenter Elementary Schools: To bring music, dance, the arts and more cultural diversity to JF Kennedy and Parmenter Schools (where Ms. MacMurray is the music faculty member). (\$1,000)

Franklin Public Schools Music Department, and the Franklin Public Schools: To contribute toward the purchase of needed quality string instruments to rebuild and strengthen middle school string program. (\$2,120)

In addition to the funds associated with these ten grants, the FCDC reserved \$5,200 to fund three projects to be overseen by the FCDC. The committee-directed projects are:

- Porchfest 2025, to contribute to the cost of the Porchfest website, police detail and insurance. (\$3,500)
- Artsy Boxes, to provide for maintenance of the artwork of current Artsy Boxes. (\$1,200)
- Collaborative Musicians, to compensate musicians performing at community events. (\$500)

Information about these and other and Culture happenings is shared weekly in the Cultural District Newsletter.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Marriage & Finances: What's Love Got To Do With It?



Glenn Brown, CFP

er's financial habits, values, and experiences. Are you a spender or a saver? Do you prioritize security or investment?

Sharing how you were raised to think about money, past financial experiences, and your attitudes toward spending and investing can avoid future misunderstandings.

2. Combining Finances

Couples must decide whether to share everything, keep things separate, or take a hybrid approach. While some CFPs say there is no right answer, I don't encounter \$5M+ married households where finances are separate. Sure, a small discretionary account may exist, but so does transparency of it and across the household.

When couples feel they're underachieving, I'll see evidence of divided assets, funky income-based ratios to cover expenses and opportunities missed due to each spouse having several unknowns of the other. In summary, a lack of trust prohibits taking calculated risks to generate wealth.

The way you manage assets, liabilities and spending should reflect values and shared vision of where your household is in 3, 5 and 10+ year increments.

- If one enters marriage with 6-figure student loan debt, you both work to pay it down.
- If one comes from family money, accept offers of assistance that align with your household's vision.

- If one makes more than the other, spending and payments are balanced.
- If making a large purchase requiring a loan and/or investments, details are discussed and are to fit into the household's vision.

3. Setting Shared Financial Goals

Once finances are combined, it's time to set shared financial goals. These range from short-term goals (saving for a vacation or building an emergency fund) to long-term goals (buying a house or saving for retirement). Start by discussing your personal aspirations and then find ways to align them into a unified plan. Prioritize these goals based on timelines and importance and be prepared to compromise.

It's essential both partners feel involved and heard when setting goals. This shared vision will make the process of working together more fulfilling and successful.

4. Budget & Prioritize Spending Together

A budget helps couples allocate income, control spending, and save for shared goals. Start by listing all monthly expenses, debt repayments and automatic savings (i.e. 401k). Separately list one-time expenses expected in coming 1-3 years, such as home improvements, travel, auto, etc.

If cash flow is positive, then monitor your budget and adjust as necessary. For some it's monthly, others it's revisited when expected results don't occur.

5. Transparency and Communication

Just as love requires ongoing communication and transparency, so does financial planning. Working together as a team with check-ins and honest conversations ensures you stay on track, discuss progress toward your goals, and adjust when necessary.

Make sure to celebrate milestones together. Besides keeping each other motivated, it recognizes your power of working together and strengthens your emotional bond.

So, "What's love got to do with it?"—the answer is simple: everything.

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 PlanDynamic, 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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Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate love, but also an opportunity to reflect on how love influences every part of your relationship—even finances.

Financial planning for married couples is not just about managing money; it's about working together toward shared goals with trust, understanding, and united purpose.

Yet, it's surprising the rising number of married couples entering financial planning engagements with separate finances and desire to keep it that way. Blame pre-existing debt (i.e. student loans), divorce rates and desired autonomy to continue not having to answer for personal spending habits.

By combining finances and collaborating on financial goals, couples can set themselves up for long-term wealth. Here's how to work together as one effectively.

1. Financial Values and Habits

Before combining finances, it's essential to understand each other's



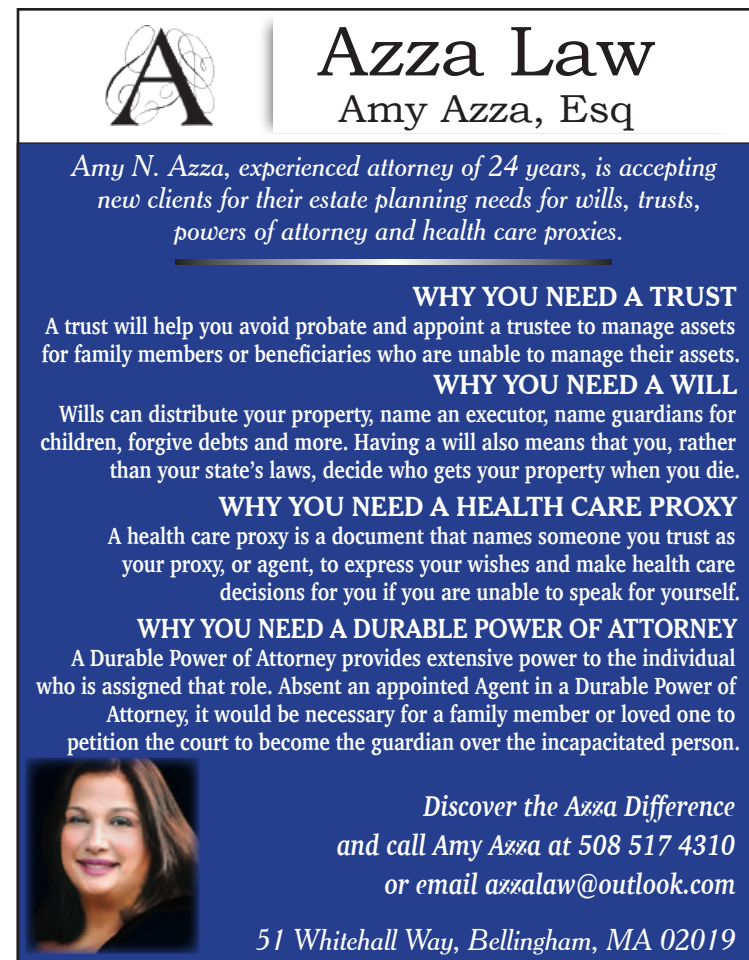
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WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY
A health care proxy is a document that names someone you trust as your proxy, or agent, to express your wishes and make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

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Town of Franklin Seeks Input from Residents in Community-Wide Survey

In January, The Town of Franklin launched The National Community Survey (NCS) to gather

resident input for strategic planning initiatives and to align goals around the community's top priorities. It seeks resident feedback on a wide array of topics, including economy, mobility, community design, utilities, safety, natural environment, inclusivity, engagement, and other elements of Franklin's overall livability.

The survey results will provide the Town with valuable data to incorporate into future policy discussions and strategic planning.

The National Community Survey (The NCS) was developed by National Research Center at Polco. The results will show Franklin's strengths, areas in need of improvement, and what matters most to residents. The Town will also be able to see how its performance compares to other communities across the country.

"The National Community Survey provides a fantastic opportunity for residents of Franklin to impact and enhance the quality of life in the Town of Franklin. The feedback received from the survey will give Town staff and officials critical insight into how residents feel about life in Franklin today, and what can be done to make it an even better community in the future. We encourage all residents to complete the survey and help to shape the future of Franklin", stated Town Administrator, Jamie Hellen.

Five-thousand randomly selected households will receive mailed survey invitations over the next few weeks. Households that receive an invitation are asked to follow the enclosed instructions and complete the survey. Residents who are not included in the random selection will be able to complete the community-wide version of the survey when it is released in early February 2025. To receive notification when this survey is released and to register for a Polco profile, follow this

link: [polco.us/n/res/signup](https://www.franklinma.gov/town-council/webforms/national-community-survey). The random selection survey and community-wide survey will both close on February 19, 2025.

For more information or questions regarding the survey, contact the Project Manager, Kate Hinckley, Director of GIS at (508) 553-5534 or visit our website at

<https://www.franklinma.gov/town-council/webforms/national-community-survey>.

About Polco: Polco brings people and data together to help build stronger, healthier communities. With award-winning community engagement tools and services, Polco allows leaders to engage residents around their most important topics, align goals, and strengthen public trust. Polco is committed to a strict privacy policy, designed to keep participants' responses confidential and protect personal data.

Learn more at info.polco.us.



Franklin Elks Donate \$2K for Franklin Veterans

Franklin Veterans' Services recently received a donation of \$2,000 for the Veterans' Gift Fund from the Franklin Elks Lodge's Bingo proceeds. The Gift Fund is used to help Franklin Veterans and their immediate family members facing a crisis

or unexpected financial burden. Pictured left to right: Debra Martin, Veterans' Services Executive Assistant, Elena Menize, Franklin Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler and Shannon Nisbett, Director of Veterans' Services.

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SAFE Coalition Delivers Housing Support to Dozens of Franklin Residents over Holidays

Local nonprofit SAFE Coalition has helped more than 30 Franklin residents, many of whom parents and children, find safe and stable housing since December.

Funded by the Town of Franklin's ARPA grant for housing insecurity, SAFE's housing services help Franklin residents seek temporary housing, connect with housing resources, advocate in housing court, and prevent imminent eviction. Additional support includes financial literacy, vocational opportunities, and clinical care.

SAFE Community Outreach Counselor Dr. Stephanie Heath works directly with SAFE's housing clients and says homelessness can take many different forms. "It can look like living in your car, spending time on the couches of different family members, living in hotels, staying in churches, or other situations," says Heath. "Circumstances like

joblessness, domestic abuse, and forced eviction can all impact a person's ability to access safe and stable housing. Every situation is unique, so it is important that we treat everyone on a case-by-case basis."

Heath says SAFE's recent surge in support cases affords opportunity for understanding and compassion. "This can truly happen to anyone. So often, people have done everything right, and they still end up without a reliable place to stay during the coldest months of the year. These are our neighbors and friends, people you'd never guess this is happening to."

Heath works with clients as they build 90-day support plans. The plan helps identify factors impacting not only housing but personal, financial, and environmental wellness, expand the client's support network, set goals, and create accountability check-ins. "We help people see them-



selves as capable of making their own best decisions. Homelessness may be out of their control, but we want to support people in ways that they feel ownership over decisions about their own life," says Heath.

This support comes at a critical time in Massachusetts, with homelessness growing by 74% since 2022. Of the people experiencing homelessness in the state, 76% are families with children.

The state also has a high rate of chronic homelessness, which the Department of Housing and Urban Development defines as someone who has been homeless for 12 months consecutively or who has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness over the course of three years.

SAFE's ARPA-funded housing services are a vital resource for local families. Where the state Section 8 low-income housing wait time is currently several years, SAFE can help families avoid eviction and access safe and stable housing in a matter of days or weeks.

In 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act federal stimulus bill (ARPA) was created to address public health and economic

recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill included support for rental and housing services, affordable housing initiatives, utility assistance, grant programs for tenants and landlords, food security programs, childcare, and community outreach services.

In receiving an ARPA grant from the Town of Franklin in 2024, SAFE increased their ability to meet the needs of residents experiencing housing insecurity and the issues that come with it.

Community members wishing to grow SAFE's ability to help can donate online (<https://www.safecoalitionma.org/donate>) or email info@safecoalitionma.org to volunteer.

Franklin Fallen Heroes' Upcoming Remembrance Ceremonies

In honor of the 45 Franklin Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, remembrance ceremonies are held on the anniversary of their KIA date. The ceremonies are led by members of the American Legion Post 75 and VFW Post 3402 and are held at 9:00 a.m. on the Veterans Memorial Walkway on the Franklin Town Common. Family members, friends and members of the community are all welcome to attend. In the event of

inclement weather, the ceremony will be postponed to the following day.

February 18 – Alan W. Willard - Vietnam

February 22 – James P. Murray - WWI

February 24 – David Laughlan III - WWII

February 26 – Richard L. Desper - Vietnam

March 10 – Marshall E. Rollins - WWII

March 10 – John A. Schur - WWII

March 18 – Elton E. Ekstrom - WWII

March 30 – W. Franklin Lynch - WWI

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Curls Just Wanna Have Fun!

By GINA WOELFEL

The b.LUXE Curly Cut

At b.LUXE, we're all about celebrating texture, and our curly hair specialists love working with every curl, wave, and coil to bring out their unique style. Our professionals focus on unlocking your curl's full potential with a new level of curl confidence you didn't know was possible! With extensive training, a passion for precision, and a deep understanding of curly hair, our specialists consult with you to craft a look that's uniquely your own. Their expert cuts, tailored treatments, and creative styling tips help you achieve a look you love.

The Specialists:

Meet Sandra Wilkey, Emily Mateo, and Donna Guadagno, the b.LUXE Curly Haired Specialists who are revolutionizing curly hair styling in Boston's Metrowest. With their extensive training and passion for natural textures, they offer innovative styling techniques that celebrate curly hair's individuality.

They also offer essential education on maintaining curls at home, product recommendations, tips for heat-free styling, and deep conditioning treatments. By helping clients understand their unique curl patterns and teaching them the proper way to care for them, they can achieve beautiful, healthy hair and wave goodbye to "bad hair days" faster than you can say, "Not today, frizz!"

What's a "Curly Cut"

A "curly cut" is a specialized haircut tailored to enhance curly hair's natural pattern and texture. This technique involves cutting the hair while it is dry, allowing the stylist to see how each curl behaves. Clients are encouraged to arrive with clean, dry hair styled in their usual way. The stylist sculpts the hair during the appointment, cutting each curl individually. This method maximizes definition and reduces frizz by considering the unique characteristics of the client's curl type and density.

Understanding Your Curls, Coils & Waves

Did you know that the shape of your hair follicle where your hair grows determines the shape of your curls? Hair follicles that are flatter or more oval-shaped produce curlier hair, while rounder follicles produce straighter hair. The shape of your curls determines your curl pattern. Many individuals have multiple curl types on their heads, with different curl patterns in various sections of their hair. This phenomenon is known as "multi-textured hair." Hair width can be coarse, medium, or fine. Curly hair is generally more porous and fragile than straight, thus making it more susceptible to humidity.

Every curl is unique with a full spectrum of textures:



- **Wavy:** Loose, beachy waves that need lightweight products for definition and hold.
- **Curly:** Spirals and ringlets that benefit from moisture and frizz control.
- **Coily:** Tight, densely packed curls that thrive with deep hydration and gentle handling.

To effectively manage your curly hair, it's essential to identify your curl patterns and follow your curly hair specialist's product and styling recommendations.

Key Features of The b.LUXE Curly Cut:

- **Dry Cutting:** The stylist cuts the hair dry to observe how the curls naturally fall and shape the cut accordingly.
- **Curly-by-Curl Sculpting:** Each curl is carefully cut to enhance its natural shape and definition.
- **Focus on Shape and Volume:** The goal is to create a balanced cut that, de-bulks, adds volume and movement while maintaining curl definition.
- **Reduced Frizz Potential:** Working with the natural curl pattern helps define and separate the natural curls, allowing each curl to "stack" on top of one another. This minimizes the exposed hair cuticle surface that contributes to frizz while also removing split ends, which can exacerbate frizziness. A good curly cut helps the curls naturally hold their shape and reduces flyaways and uneven strands. You can also combat frizz and restore moisture with targeted treatments. At b.LUXE we use premium styling products that deeply nourish curls, lock in hydra-



tion, and leave your hair feeling soft, shiny, and manageable. For extreme cases, we also offer "The Saphira De-Frizzing Treatment," which eliminates frizz and smooths dry, brittle hair into soft waves that enhance your natural hair pattern and texture. This treatment includes a full-sized Prep & Maintain Shampoo and Mineral Mist for you to take home.

- **Styling Education:** At-Home Education: Sandra, Emily, and Donna are more than just hairstylists; they're your curly hair confidantes! During a comprehensive consultation, they will assess your needs, customize your haircut, and provide essential tips for washing, conditioning, and styling your curls. You'll leave the salon looking

fabulous and equipped with the knowledge to keep your curls thriving between visits!

Book Your Curly Cut Today!

Are you ready to fall in love with your curls again? Look no further than the experts at b.LUXE. With their specialized curly hair services, Sandra, Emily, and Donna are here to help you achieve the best curls of your life!

For more information, go to bluxe.com or scan the QR code to visit our "Curly Hair" webpage. When booking, be sure to select the "b.LUXE Curly Cut" to experience the difference this cut can make.

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Sports

Franklin Boys Basketball in a Rebuilding Year

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last season, Franklin put together an impressive season, making it all the way to the Division 1 State Championship game, but just not nailing down that final win. Entering the tournament as the number 3 seed after going 21-1 during the regular season, the Panthers took out Bridgewater Raynham by 21 points, Boston College (17), Putnam Voc. Tech (26) and Catholic Memorial (14) to gain access to the championship game against number 1 seed North High.

Although Franklin raced through its four tournament opponents by an average of 19.5 points per win, the Panthers could not solve North High and fell in the Division 1 Finals 59-53 coming up just short.

Putting together an overall 25-2 season was something special for the Panther basketball team; the squad graduated six of its top eight players from that team, including the Hockomock League MVP Sean O'Leary, leaving coach CJ Neely unsure of what this year would bring to the court.

"Coming into the season, I really didn't know what to expect after losing so much," Neely said. "There are a lot of question marks, and we are taking it one day at a time while trying to be in the mix and playing competitive basketball."

The only returning starter from last year's magical run is Caden Sullivan. The senior guard is a jack of all trades according to the coach; he is not only a great leader but can score and play shut down defense.

"Caden has a crazy motor, he's super intensive and usually guards the opposition's best player," the Panther Coach said. "Last year, he was part of a balanced attack, so he didn't have to score as much, but this year he has picked up the slack."

Being one of four Hockomock All-Stars for Franklin last winter, Sullivan has been averaging 22 points and 8 rebounds through the first half of the season.



Franklin Boys Basketball is showing strength this year, despite graduating six of its top eight players last year.

Photo submitted by FHS Coach CJ Neely

In addition to Sullivan, junior Justice Samuels, who came off the bench last year for Franklin is back this winter. The forward will be starting this season and has provided the Panthers with a really solid defensive presence, giving the team rim protection on the back end. Offensively, he's a slasher who glides into the paint aggressively, averaging 8 points and 5 rebounds thus far this year.

Jake Olmstead will run the Franklin offense as the team's point guard, and in addition to distributing the ball, he is able to create a lot of havoc on the defense side of the ball. Olmstead is physical on the drive to the net and can also knock down a three when needed.

According to Neely, Olmstead has been the second-best player on the team this year and could have been a potential

starter last year if not for injury problems.

"After he got hurt, it made it hard for him to crack the rotation with all the talent in front of him," the Coach said. "If he stays healthy this year, I expect good things from him on both ends of the court."

Senior Joe Cronin, who led his team in scoring during his freshman and sophomore seasons, will give the team a big-time scorer this season. The wing shoots the three well and is a top-notch free throw shooter.

Captain Seth O'Donnell is not the big-time scorer that Cronin is, but he does all the little things right that do not show up on the stat sheet at the end of the game.

"He does a lot of the dirty work for us," Neely said. "He's not a highlight reel, but he is the glue that keeps this team

together. He moves the ball well and will give you everything you need to succeed while he's out there."

The sixth starter or first player off the bench is Wyatt Herdon. Neely noted that Herdon is a lock down defender who gives the opposing guards fits and makes their lives miserable. Herdon can also hit the open shot, can pass the ball with the best of them and play point guard when Olmstead needs a breather.

Franklin also has four or five other players that, depending on the night and the team they are playing, could see some action. Neely calls it 'Bench by Committee' with all of them being able to give the team a boost when given the chance.

Upon entering the season, the Panther goals were the same as they were prior to the begin-

ning of last season. Franklin always comes into the season with high standards, and once again they will be looking to capture the league championship, being in the mix and playing competitive hoop.

"As a coach, I never relax and am always looking for more, but I am excited so far with what we've been able to do over the first half of this season," Neely said. "The guys have done a great job effort wise improving each day and seem to be getting more comfortable with their roles."

At the time of this writing, the Panthers were undefeated, posting a 9-0 record though the first half of the season, and although the squad has been playing good basketball, Neely firmly believes that the best is still to come.

Historic Happenings at the Franklin Historical Museum for February 2025

Continuing until Feb. 23. Two Exhibits Opened as part of Ben Franklin Month. (<https://benfranklinbookweek.com>)

• **Franklin-ventions: Revolutionary Ideas in Franklin Industries** + a look at some of Ben Franklin's famous inventions and patents and innovations "made in Franklin."

• **'Ben Gave us Books and We Gave the World Books'** - a display of Franklin-authored books, past and present. (Are you a Franklin Author? -- contact alan.r.earls@gmail.com to join the display!)

Both exhibits continue through the 23rd during regular hours (Sat. 10-1 and Sun 1-4) at the Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central Street. FREE

Sun. Feb. 9--Second Sunday Speaker Series: Dean College Professor. Dr. Rob Lawson, presents "History in Our Backyard!" Congressman Tip O'Neill is remembered as saying all politics is local. All history is local too. In this interactive presentation, Dr. Lawson will share a variety of examples where "big" history (national/global) meets local history stories. Wars, pandemics, and natural disasters are painful reminders of how big events can affect local communities, and Franklin is no exception. Together, we'll encounter a couple of Franklin history "puzzles" and explore some of the film and digital history initiatives that are making our local history accessible and relevant right now.

Bring your curiosity and put on your thinking cap as we explore the history in our backyard! at the Franklin Historical Museum. Museum open 1-4, program starts at 1:15. FREE

Friday, Feb. 14. for Valentine's Day. After a well-received fall run at the Franklin Historical Museum, Cinema 80 is back in cooperation with the Franklin Senior Center with a first free film of 2025, the ever-popular *Love Story*, a 1970 American romantic drama film written by Erich Segal, who was also the author of the best-selling 1970 novel. It was produced by Howard G. Minsky, and directed by Arthur Hiller, starring Ali MacGraw, Ryan O'Neal, John Marley, Ray Milland and Tommy Lee Jones in

his film debut. The film, which will be shown at 6 p.m., is considered one of the most romantic by the American Film Institute -- and filmed around Boston!

Sun. Feb. 16, "Third Sunday" Music at the Museum program - In honor of Black History Month the museum will show the short film, *The Cry Of Jazz*, a 1959 documentary film by Edward O. Bland that connects jazz to African American history through footage of Chicago's black neighborhoods, performances by Sun Ra, John Gilmore, and Julian Priester interspersed with scenes of musicians and intellectuals, both black and white, conversing at a jazz club. Separately, we will also hear some performances by Abbie Lincoln, Nina Simone, and others with a specific focus on Civil Rights and Black Pride. The film will be shown at 1 p.m.

Thurs. Feb. 20, a 'pop up' exhibit - "This Love" is a collection of mixed media artwork created by Artist and community builder Amy Adams. It is an interpretation of poems collected, childhood memories, and forms of love. Open 4-6pm only.

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

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

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Franklin LGBTQ Alliance February Events

Movie Night

February 6th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Franklin TV and Radio 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin

Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance for a movie night! We will be watching *Dumplin*, which is rated PG-13. Willowdean, the plus-size teenage daughter of a former beauty queen, signs up for her mom's Miss Teen Bluebonnet pageant as a protest- with help from some drag queens- that escalates when other contestants follow her footsteps, revolutionizing the pageant and their small Texas town.

LGBTQ Book Club

February 12th, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pete's Nerd Emporium, 10 Main St., Franklin

Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance for our monthly book club. This month, we will be reading *Cinnamon Gardens* by Shyam Selvadurai. It is set in 1920s's Sri Lanka, and centers around Annalukshmi, a spirited young schoolteacher and early feminist, who finds herself caught between her family's pressures to marry and her own desire for a more independent life, and her uncle, Balendran, whose comfortable life of privilege is rocked by the arrival of Richard, a lover from his past in England. Their uneasy reunion reignites tensions with Balendran's powerful father and threatens everything on which Balendran has built his present life.

Local Franklin Housing Group Recognized by AHMA for First-Year Progress

On November 21st, 2024, at AHMA's annual "Celebration of Abundance" in Somerville Massachusetts, AHMA recognized BEN 4 Franklin with their Rookie of the Year award, which celebrates the start-up wins of emerging pro-housing groups in the state. A membership-based, statewide non-profit, Abundant Housing Massachusetts (AHMA) stands up for abundant housing for all in communities across Massachusetts. AHMA drives policy at the state and local level by identifying pro-housing changemakers, building the power of local organizers, and connecting a statewide network.

When AHMA put out a call in winter 2023 for people hoping to build new groups in their communities, AHMA member Cobi Frongillo answered yes, but he wasn't quite sure if a group was possible in Franklin. As one of Franklin's elected town councilors, he had been speaking out for transit-oriented development, affordable and accessible homes, and a walkable downtown Franklin. Were there others in Franklin who had similar visions?

Cobi and AHMA's Joyce Mandell set out to find out! During the spring and summer of 2023, they had many one-on-one conversations, set up a table at the Farmers Market and Strawberry Stroll, and met with the Franklin Interfaith Council. Cobi and Joyce were able to gather over 25 residents at the Franklin United Methodist Church in August 2023 to come together, share their housing memories and to dream/play/build with Legos the future Franklin they want to experience. The group recognized their shared values about community, diversity, and inclusivity; there was so much excitement and community feeling in that room that the group continued working together on crafting a collective vision, mission and goals that fall and winter.

Building Equitable Neighborhoods (BEN) 4 Franklin officially launched in May 2024, by a small group of concerned residents including Gino and Pandora Carlucci, Cobi Frongillo, Mark Minnichelli, Max-

well Morrangiello, Ndoumbe Ndoeye, Francis Ollson, Lisa Oxford, Emma Snellings, Patrick Kinner, Steve Sherlock, Fabiana Nishoka, and Denise Noble. Building Equitable Neighborhoods (BEN) 4 Franklin's mission is to advocate for a Franklin with abundant, affordable housing for all, a walkable, economically vibrant downtown and neighborhoods that evolve in a fiscally-responsible manner. BEN envisions an inviting, diverse, environmentally sustainable, and fiscally strong Franklin where all can be engaged and find a home. BEN advocates for smart land use practices and zoning policies in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, culture, environmental sustainability and fiscal solvency.

During their first year, BEN 4 Franklin has:

- Built a growing base of 90+ pro housing advocates
- Created a website and regular newsletter featuring "BEN's Take" on proposed development projects and policies before planning and zoning boards
- Hosted a launch event in May 2024 that featured a panel discussion on pro-housing advocacy on the state and town level. AHMA Executive Director Jesse Kanson-Benanav contextualized local pro-housing advocacy within larger Massachusetts policy initiatives. Cobi Frongillo, Franklin Town Councilor, described the recent pro-housing successes in Franklin that included increasing housing density downtown to up to 18 units/acre, requiring affordability in complexes over 10 units, legalizing 3-family homes by-right around the commuter rail, passing an Accessory Dwelling Unit by-law, and rezoning an historic downtown factory for mixed-use development. Reverend Kathy McAdams described her church's dedication to providing affordable housing, including the use of almost 20 acres of their property to build 64 apartments (46 of



which will be affordable to households that make 60% of Area Median Income).

- Hosted a Jane Jacob's Walk to stimulate conversations about density, walkability and zoning in downtown Franklin
- Staffed tables at Franklin's annual Strawberry Stroll and Harvest Festival to gain interest in BEN's cause
- Actively advocated for the reduction and elimination of parking minimums for Franklin's proposed 3A district. On August 14, 2024,

nine town councilors voted unanimously in support of Franklin's proposed zoning ordinance to comply with the MBTA Communities Law! In contrast to towns that have settled for "paper compliance," Franklin went steps further: concentrating the new zoning district in the downtown core, allowing for mixed use development to

stimulate a walkable, livable district, removing parking minimums for commercial properties and reducing parking minimums from 1.5 to 1 space for residential properties.

For more information about BEN 4 Franklin, or to sign up for BEN 4 Franklin's mailing list, please visit: ben4franklin.org.

For rates and info on advertising your business, please call Jen at 508-570-6544 or email: jenschofield@locaaltownpages.com

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Living Healthy

Macular Degeneration:

What It Is and How to Treat It

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

Macular degeneration is one of the leading causes of vision loss, particularly among older adults, significantly impacting the quality of life for millions worldwide. This article examines macular degeneration, its symptoms and signs, diagnostic methods, current treatments, recent therapeutic advancements, and available care options.

What is Macular Degeneration?

Macular degeneration, often called age-related macular degeneration (AMD), is a progressive eye condition affecting the macula, the small central area of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed central vision. AMD is categorized into two primary types: dry (atrophic) and wet (neovascular).

- **Dry AMD:** The more common form, comprising 85–90% of cases. It occurs due to gradual thinning of the macula and the accumulation of drusen, yellow deposits under the retina. Vision loss progresses slowly in most cases.
- **Wet AMD:** Though less common, it is more severe, responsible for most advanced vision loss cases. It results from abnormal blood vessel growth under the retina, causing leakage, bleeding, and scarring, often leading to rapid vision loss without treatment.

Symptoms and Signs

Symptoms of macular degeneration vary by type and stage. Common signs include:

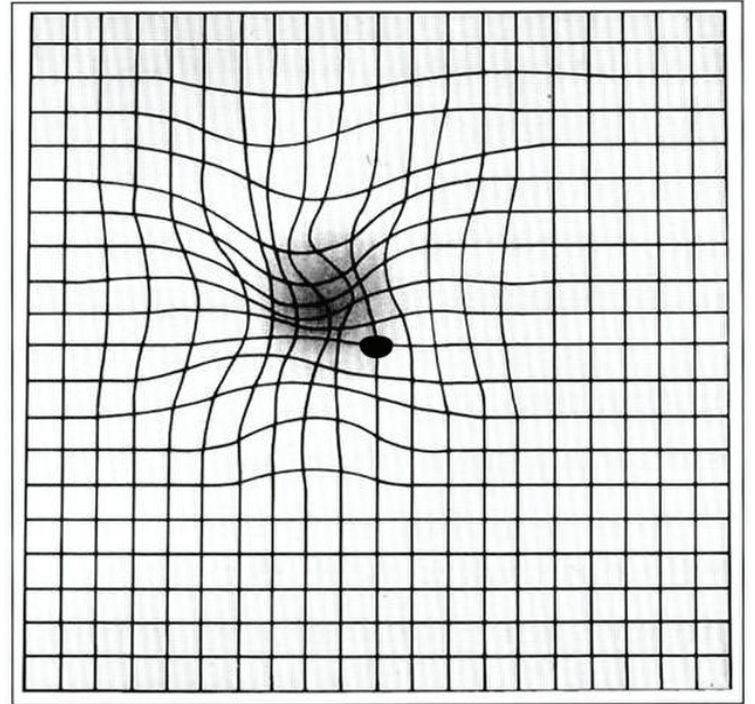
- **Blurred central vision:** Early signs may include difficulty reading or recognizing faces.

- **Distorted vision (metamorphopsia):** Straight lines may appear wavy or distorted.
- **Difficulty adapting to low light:** Challenges in transitioning from bright to dim environments.
- **Central blind spots (scotomas):** Dark or empty areas in the central field of vision.
- **Reduced color perception:** Colors may seem less vibrant over time.

Diagnostic Testing

Accurate diagnosis is vital for managing AMD effectively. Key diagnostic tools include:

- **Comprehensive eye exam:** Identifies early signs such as drusen or retinal changes.
- **Amsler grid test:** Detects distortions or blind spots in central vision.
- **Optical coherence tomography (OCT):** Offers detailed cross-sectional imaging of the retina, highlighting thinning or fluid accumulation.



- **Fluorescein angiography:** Highlights abnormal blood vessel growth and leakage in wet AMD.
- **Fundus photography:** Captures high-resolution retinal images to monitor changes over time.

- **Photodynamic therapy (PDT):** Combines a light-sensitive drug with laser activation to target abnormal vessels.
- **Laser therapy:** Less commonly used, this destroys abnormal blood vessels with laser energy.

Current Treatment Options

Treatment depends on the type and severity of AMD:

- **Dry AMD:** While no definitive cure exists, lifestyle modifications and supportive care can slow progression:
 - **Nutritional supplements:** The AREDS2 formula (antioxidants, zinc, and copper) reduces the risk of advanced AMD.
 - **Lifestyle changes:** A healthy diet rich in leafy greens, omega-3 fatty acids, avoiding smoking, and UV protection are essential.
- **Wet AMD:**

New Therapeutic Advancements

Advancements in AMD research are offering improved outcomes:

- **Gene therapy:** Experimental approaches aim to deliver protective genes to the retina, reducing the need for frequent anti-VEGF injections.
- **Long-lasting drug delivery systems:** Innovations like the Port Delivery System (PDS) with ranibizumab provide sustained medication release, minimizing injection frequency.
- **Stem cell therapy:** Research explores using stem cell-derived retinal pigment epithelial (RPE) cells to replace damaged macular cells.
- **New pharmacological agents:** Drugs like complement inhibitors (e.g., pegcetacoplan) target previously untreatable stages of dry AMD and geographic atrophy.

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- **Anti-VEGF therapy:** Medications like ranibizumab (Lucentis), aflibercept (Eylea), and brolucizumab (Beovu) inhibit vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), reducing abnormal vessel formation.

Climate: What Will You Do?

Sunday, February 16, 2025 @ 10 a.m.

The issue of climate change is an immense problem which can seem overwhelming. The Unitarian Universalist values of Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, Generosity and Love remind us of our responsibility to protect the earth and all beings from exploitation and to respect the interdependent web of existence.

Please join us for this Lay Led service as several members of FUSF's Climate Justice Team share personal perspectives and the steps they are taking to put

UU Values and their faith into action! They will also share examples of relatively simple steps one can take to make a difference.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin.

Our Interim Minister is Reverend Beverly Waring.

For more information about FUSF please visit our website at fusf.org or contact us at info@fusf.org; call (508) 528-5348.

Home Heating Help Available

With colder weather expected this year as compared to last, now is the perfect time for your audience to explore their eligibility to apply for HEAP – Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program.

HEAP is a free statewide resource that helps cover heating costs for eligible renters and

homeowners to ensure residents can keep their homes safe and warm during the colder months.

Local residents can apply through the Senior Center or online at <https://toapply.org/MassHEAP> to receive assistance for all heating sources, including oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood and coal.

EYES

continued from page 16

Living with Macular Degeneration

Managing AMD extends beyond medical treatment and includes:

- **Low vision aids:** Magnifiers, special glasses, and electronic devices maintain independence.
- **Support networks:** Connecting with groups and counseling provides emotional and practical support.
- **Routine monitoring:** Regular follow-ups ensure timely interventions and management adjustments.

Macular degeneration presents significant challenges, but early detection and proactive management can preserve vi-

sion and improve quality of life. If you experience symptoms or have risk factors, schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye care professional.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we use state-of-the-art technology to address a variety of eye conditions, including macular degeneration. Our dedicated retina specialist focuses on treating retinal eye diseases and AMD, utilizing the most recent treatment modalities discussed in this article. With advanced equipment rivaling the best teaching eye hospitals, we proudly offer world-class eye care close to home.

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Tracy Grammer, with Jim Henry, at Circle of Friends Feb. 8th

Tracy Grammer returns to the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse stage on Saturday, Feb 8th at 7:30 p.m. She is a nationally-touring multi-instrumentalist and singer who has accompanied and opened for Joan Baez and recorded with Mary Chapin Carpenter. Grammer has become one of folk music's most beloved artists. Renowned for her springwater-clear alto, perfectly intoned violin, and guitar playing that is by turns percussive and delicate, She is also a masterful storyteller with an ease and charisma on stage as well as a riotous sense of humor. <http://tracygrammer.com/>.

"Her pure voice conveys the simple truths of these songs; her gifts as a musician are like that of a painter who is a master of chiaroscuro, offering light and shadow at every turn." - Mary Chapin Carpenter.

Tracy will be accompanied by world class guitarist/dobro/mandolin player Jim Henry. <http://www.jimhenry.net/>



The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin's First Universalist Society. Concerts are presented in a smoke free and alcohol free environment at the Society's handicapped accessible Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin, and

begin at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m.. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available. Please visit <http://www.circlefolk.org/> to purchase tickets or for more information.

Upcoming Shows, Mar. 8, Joe Crookston, Apr. 5, The Kennedys, May 17, John Gorka

Rockland Trust Launches 21st Annual Scholarship Program

Rockland Trust is pleased to announce the launch of its 21st Annual Scholarship Program. This program is open to students who are enrolling in part-time or full-time post-secondary studies for the first time at an accredited two—or four-year college, university, or vocational-technical school for the entire upcoming academic year (2025-2026). Rockland Trust will award up to sixteen \$3,000 renewable scholarships this year.

Applications will be considered based on financial need,

academic performance, and unusual personal or family circumstances. Applicants must reside in a county Rockland Trust serves.

To learn more about guidelines, and eligibility criteria, and access the application, please visit RocklandTrust.com/Scholarship.



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Franklin Art Association Welcomes Oil Painter Erin Spencer Feb. 5th

The Franklin Art Association invites the public to our Wednesday, February 5th meeting. We will warmly greet Guest Demo-Artist, Erin Spencer, our landscape, oil painter for this month's public demonstration. She will be giving a step-by-step demonstration for a fine art painting. Erin will discuss how to 'simplify' your approach. Like making a poem, in her approach she looks at painting as distilling visual information made into a unique interpretation; offering a new insight. The finished work tends toward realism mixed with tonalism.

The free-to-the-public-meetings are held at the Franklin Senior Center at 6:30 p.m. FAA welcomes the public and its members to attend. Refreshments are served at the break.



Erin Spencer, Oil Landscape Painting

We have an ongoing FAA Scholarship Fund that attendees are invited to contribute to.

The FAA is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council,

the Franklin Cultural Council, Franklin Cultural District and www.franklinart.org. We can also be viewed on Facebook and Instagram.



Tri-County County Regional Chamber Upcoming Events

NextGen Networking: Business After Hours at Dean College, Tuesday, February 11th, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m., Dean College, Franklin

<https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/events#!event/2025/2/12/nextgen-networking-business-after-hours-at-dean-college>

This networking opportunity brings together chamber members and Dean College students, fostering mentorship and knowledge exchange. Help guide students in the art of effective networking, meeting new people and offer valuable insights while networking with fellow chamber members and friends...don't miss this chance to network, mentor, and inspire! Enjoy some excellent food too!

There is a CASH bar. No credit/debit cards can be processed.

Parking Lot: 109 West Central Street.

Directions to BAH: After

parking, head to the Paula M. Rooney Student Center. After entering the building, head straight to the back and follow the signs, the BAH will take place downstairs.

Leads & Lunch, Friday, February 21st | 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The Rail Trail Flatbread Company, Milford

<https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/events#!event/2025/2/21/leads-lunch>

What's better than spending a Friday afternoon enjoying lunch, networking with local businesses, and learning about a topic that's sure to inspire and educate everyone?. We're thrilled to have Tony Fiore, Senior Business Advisor at Clark University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) as

EVENTS

continued on page 21

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Calendar

February 5

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, featured step-by-step demo by oil painter Erin Spencer

February 6

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Movie Night, 6:30 p.m., Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, movie: *Dumplin*, rated PG-13

Ethics of Chocolate: A Talk & Tasting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Registration required for tasting portion of the program!

February 8

Franklin Rotary Senior Brunch, 10:30 a.m.- noon, 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, all Franklin seniors welcome, sign up at Franklin Senior Center or at Central Park Terrace

Tracy Grammer, 7:30 p.m., Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, <http://tracygrammer.com/>, with Jim Henry, <http://www.jimhenry.net/>, Franklin's First Universalist Society Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, tickets at <http://www.circlefolk.org/>

Alexander's Jazztime Band, 7 p.m., Niagara Coffee Haus, 8 Exchange St., Millis, music from the 20s and 30s, tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1109833966269>

Lunar New Year Celebration! 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

Craft Along for Adults, 3 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, This month, Folded Book Art Hearts, materials provided, Registration Required

February 9

Second Sunday Speaker Series: Dean College Professor. Dr. Rob Lawson, presents "History in Our Backyard!" Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, Museum open 1-4, program starts at 1:15. FREE

NextGen Networking: Business After Hours at Dean College, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., Dean College, Franklin, visit www.tri-countychamberma.org

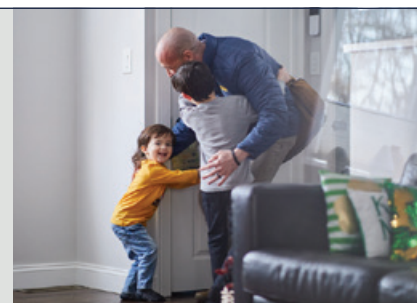
February 11

Family Yoga, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, with Katie from Sprouting Tree Yoga

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February 12

LGBTQ Book Club, 6:30 p.m., Pete's Nerd Emporium, 12 Main St., Franklin, selection: *Cinnamon Gardens* by Shyam Selvadurai

February 13

Chocolate Tasting, 6:30 p.m., adult program, Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Registration Required

February 14

Cinema 80, in cooperation with the Franklin Senior Center, presents Love Story, a 1970 American romantic drama film written by Erich Segal, 6 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, Free

February 15

John Higby: Yo-Yo-Guy! 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

February 16

Climate, What Will You Do? 10 a.m., lay-led discussion, The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF), 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin

"Third Sunday" Music at the Museum presents short film, The Cry of Jazz, a 1959 documentary film by Edward O. Bland that connects jazz to African American history through footage of Chicago's black neighborhoods. 1 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, Separately, we will also hear some performances by Abbie Lincoln, Nina Simone, and others with a specific focus on Civil Rights and Black Pride.

February 20

Pop-Up Exhibit: This Love, by Amy Adams, 4-6 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 W. Central St., Franklin

JUNTO Non-Fiction Book Club, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, The JUNTO (from the Spanish junta or assembly) was a club for mutual improvement established in 1727 by Benjamin Franklin. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

February 22

Winter Beach Party! Family Program, 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

Metrowest String Quartet Concert, 2 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

O'Donnell Sworn in for New Term as Norfolk County Register of Deeds

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell was sworn into a new term on January 1, 2025, during a ceremony at the State House Library in Boston. Shown, conducting the swearing in was Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin.

For more information on the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, visit onwww.norfolk-deeds.org



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Understanding Institutional Priorities at Highly Selective Colleges

The college admission process for highly selective colleges is unpredictable and a bit mysterious. It may seem that an applicant's outstanding accomplishments are destined for acceptance; but then the student faces unexpected rejection. An important piece of the puzzle is understanding institutional priorities - college factors that influence the final admission decisions at selective colleges. While families can't control the outcome, focusing on what students can control is the best approach.

What Are Institutional Priorities? Institutional priorities are the strategic goals and needs that colleges want to achieve through their admission process. These priorities can shift from year to year and are tailored to each college's mission, financial goals, and institutional development plans.

How Do Institutional Priorities Impact Admissions? Selective colleges receive thousands of applications from highly qualified students, far exceeding the number of available seats. Having exceptional grades, test scores, and course rigor is the first step in the process that enables applicants to become a part of the initial review. However, colleges will often differentiate among

the applicants by weighing their institutional goals alongside the applicants' academics and accomplishments. The final admission decisions are ultimately influenced by factors that go beyond individual merit.

A good friend once said to me, "If you play the glockenspiel, and the college needs a glockenspiel percussionist- you are in!" Here are a few examples of how institutional priorities can shape admissions outcomes:

- 1. Filling Specific Academic Programs:** A college may need to increase enrollment in underrepresented majors, such as physics or classics versus popular majors like business or biology.
- 2. Geographic Diversity:** Many colleges strive to enroll students from all 50 states and many countries from different parts of the world to create a diverse community.
- 3. Institutional Legacy and Alumni Connections:** Some schools place value on "legacy" applicants — students with family ties to the institution. While controversial, this priority often aligns with colleges' goals of maintaining alumni en-

agement and fundraising.

- 4. Athletic Recruitment:** For Division I and II schools, recruiting athletes to fill spots on sports teams is a significant priority. These students often go through a separate admissions track that considers their athletic contributions as heavily as their academic qualifications.

Why You Can't Control Institutional Priorities? Institutional priorities are shaped by internal discussions within colleges and are rarely made public. Because these priorities are unique to each school and shift over time, families cannot predict the factors that are influencing the decision making. For example, a college might prioritize first-generation college students one year and focus on increasing enrollment in the engineering school for the next year.

What Can Families Focus On? While institutional priorities remain outside of your control, there are key areas that students can manage to strengthen their applications:

1. Admissions decisions still heavily weigh grades and course rigor. Excelling in the classroom is the first



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

step in being competitive.

2. Compelling essays provide a chance to share a student's unique story and personality. Crafting thoughtful, authentic responses can make a significant impact.
3. Colleges value intellectual curiosity, which shows a genuine passion for learning and a willingness to explore new ideas.
4. Meaningful and "uncommon" activities are unique, less conventional pursuits that demonstrate a student's individuality, creativity, or initiative.
5. Building relationships with teachers and mentors can lead to letters of recommendation that offer genu-

ine insight into a student's character and abilities.

6. Researching schools and applying to a balanced mix of selective, probable, and likely options ensures that students will have good choices come decision time.

Institutional priorities may seem like an unpredictable wild-card in the admissions process, but they're only one part of a much larger picture. Families can't control these priorities, and worrying about them often leads to unnecessary stress. Instead, focus on what you can control: presenting a strong, authentic application that highlights a student's unique strengths and interests. By doing so, you'll maximize your chances of finding a college that's a great fit, regardless of the institutional priorities shaping the admissions decisions.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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

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Franklin Rotary 3rd Annual Comedy Night

Did you make a resolution to laugh more in 2025?!?!

If you did (well, even if you didn't) save the date...

On Saturday, March 29th, enjoy dinner and a show featuring three great Boston area comedians! Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner is at 6 p.m., and the comedy show is at 7 p.m.

Have some laughs with friends and neighbors while supporting your local community. The event will include a chance to have fun with friends and neighbors, raffles and door prizes, and lots of laughs. Full tables of 8 reservations are available.

For more information on tickets, contact us:

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- call/text: (508) 284.9598
- website: www.franklinmarotary.org

RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Calling All Creatives!

Join us in bringing magic to the Franklin Sculpture Park with the “Fairy Trails & Tales of Franklin” exhibit!

We’re inviting artists, creators and fairy architects of all ages to design and build eco-friendly fairy houses that celebrate creativity and environmental respect.

Let’s create a whimsical wonderland for all to enjoy!

How to Participate:

1. **Design Your Fairy House:** Let your imagination soar! Craft a fairy house using sustainable, natural materials like recycled wood, leaves, twigs, and stones. Ensure your creation blends harmoniously with the park’s natural beauty.
2. **Submit Your Application:** Share your vision with us by filling out the participation form at <https://form.jotform.com/243083654745058>. Provide details about your design and upload any sketches or images that showcase your concept. Deadline to sign up is Saturday, March 1st.
3. **Stay Connected:** After submitting your appli-

cation, keep an eye on your email for updates regarding exhibition logistics, including drop-off and pick-up details.

Important Details:

- **Materials:** Use eco-friendly and non-toxic materials to ensure the safety of park wildlife and the environment.
- **Installation:** The Town of Franklin will handle the installation of all fairy houses to maintain conservation principles and minimize disturbance to the landscape.
- **Community Impact:** By participating, you’ll help foster environmental awareness and strengthen community connections through public art. Let’s inspire a shared appreciation for nature and creativity!

For any questions or interested in joining our ad-hoc volunteer committee; reach out to Cory Shea, Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, at cshea@franklinma.gov.

Let’s make Franklin sparkle with fairy magic!

Sen. Rausch Makes Additions to Health Care Cost Containment Legislation

Last month, State Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) joined legislative colleagues, health advocates, and members of the administration as Governor Maura Healey signed into law a pair of critical health care cost control bills, one aimed at pharmaceuticals and the other providing major health care sector oversight to protect Massachusetts residents from soaring health care costs. The laws respond directly to the Steward Health Care collapse and will offer patients financial relief by capping the prices of certain drugs, erecting guardrails against private equity in health care, and giving the Attorney General and state health regulators more oversight authority.

“This health care cost containment legislation will help hundreds of thousands of Bay Staters avoid the stress and uncertainty of rapidly rising health

care costs,” said Senator Becca Rausch, lead sponsor of several bills included in the final package. “More than 40% of Massachusetts residents have trouble paying for health care for themselves or their families. That is unacceptable. The strong oversight and reporting measures signed into law today will improve affordability and accessibility to Massachusetts’ world-class health care. I’m so proud that my legislation to give the Health Policy Commission more tools in its cost oversight toolkit was part and parcel of this package. I am truly grateful to Senate President Karen Spilka, Senator Cindy Friedman, and our partners in the House for persevering on this legislation until it crossed the finish line, and to Governor Healey for signing these two bills into law.”

The Health Policy Commission (HPC) is an independent

state agency that monitors health care spending growth annually and sets a reasonable target for that growth. Senator Rausch’s language allows HPC to exercise its oversight authority if a provider’s total health care expenditures grow at a faster rate than the benchmark and streamlines the oversight of providers who significantly expand their scope of care. Providers will have to issue advance notice of material changes, including mergers and acquisitions, so HPC can assess whether they may substantially impact health care spending.

Now in her fourth term, State Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) represents the 11 towns that comprise the Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex District: Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Medfield, Milford, Millis, Needham, Norfolk, Plainville, Sherborn, and Wrentham.

EVENTS

continued from page 18

our guest speaker at this event! Whether you’re a start-up or an established business, this is your chance to learn directly from an expert who truly understand what it takes to thrive.

\$10,000 Dinner, March 1st, 6-9:30 p.m.

Doubletree Hotel, 11 Beaver St., Milford

<https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/events#!event/2025/3/1/-10-000-dinner>

Only 250 tickets (\$125 apiece) sold for this fundraising gala with dinner, dancing and a chance to go home with \$10 grand. Details at

Save the Date! Family Fest & Home Show, March 29th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.,

Blackstone Valley Tech, Upton

We’re heading back to Blackstone Valley Tech in Upton for this year’s Family Fest & Home Show. Vendor spaces and sponsorship opportunities are now available to reserve. This is a perfect opportunity to meet homeowners and families that are looking to do business with local companies.

For more information on the Tri-County Regional Chamber, visit www.tri-countychamberma.org.

Hopkinton Center for the Arts Seeks Clothing & Textile Donations

Cleaning out your closets? You can now bring used clothing donations to 98 Hayden Rowe Street in Hopkinton (next to the High School) where Hopkinton Center for the Arts has partnered with St. Pauly Textile Inc. to provide a wood-frame clothing drop-off shed for community use.

This shed is designed to give community members a uniquely clean, convenient, and well-cared-for option to donate their used clothing. St. Pauly Textile Inc. partners with businesses and various organizations to distribute donated items both here in the U.S. and worldwide, where they’re ultimately re-worn by people who need them. Hopkinton Center for the Arts receives funding for donated clothing,

and additionally has the option to use donations to serve community needs.

With over 1,600 clothing drop-off sheds in place, St. Pauly Textile Inc. collects over 175,000 pounds of clothing a day and estimates that this clothing ends up in 44 different countries (including the U.S.) yearly. In 2024, the company was able to help keep over 64 million articles of clothing out of landfills, which clothed an estimated 7.8 million people worldwide. The company was founded in 1996 and is an A+ rated member of the Better Business Bureau.

Accepted items: clothing, shoes, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, curtains, pillowcases, and stuffed animals.

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Temple Beth Torah to Host Family Concert March 23rd

Lily Henley and Duncan Wickel in Concert

March 23, 2025, 4-6 p.m.

Temple Beth Torah, 2162 Washington Street, Holliston, Mass.

Temple Beth Torah is hosting a concert of Contemporary Jewish, Ladino and Folk Music on Sunday March 23, 2025, at 4 p.m. The concert, supported by grants from Mass Cultural Council, Holliston Cultural Council and Medway Cultural Council, features the beautiful artistry of Lily Henley and Duncan Wickel, renowned for their songwriting, storytelling, virtuoso string performance, and beautiful vocal style.

Lily Henley (lilyhenley.com) and Duncan Wickel (duncanwickel.com) will present a concert of music, sung in English, Ladino (Sephardic Jewish) and

Hebrew. Lily is the primary vocalist and plays guitar and fiddle. Duncan plays lute and guitar and sings back-up vocals. Here is a link to one example of their Ladino music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tm4M2-UCWO8>

This concert is intended for music-lovers in the Jewish and interfaith communities of Boston, MetroWest and beyond. The concert will appeal to families, and a space in the room will be provided for children and their families to move to the music!

Tickets are available at www.tinyurl.com/LilyHenleyTBT and at the door. Children 16 and younger are free. Seating is limited, so we encourage purchasing tickets ahead of the concert date.

Register O'Donnell Thanks Contributors to Annual Holiday Food Drive

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell expressed his thanks to everyone who contributed to the Registry's 2024 Annual Holiday Food Drive, which yielded over 200 pounds of food this year. The non-perishable food collected during the drive was dispensed to several pantries throughout Norfolk County.





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Bighelp for Education Hosts 22nd Annual Event

Raises \$20K to Support Underprivileged Children in India; Honors Former BFCCPS Educator

Bighelp for Education held its 22nd annual event on Sunday, January 19th, 2025, at Marlborough Middle School. Based in Franklin, Massachusetts, the organization was founded in 2002 by Franklin resident Chand Pasha Shaik, who continues to serve as its Global President. This annual event, hosted by the Boston Chapter, celebrates Indian Republic Day and Pongal, the Indian harvest festival, while raising funds to support underprivileged children in India. This year's event saw an impressive turnout of over 1,000 attendees and raised \$20,000.

A significant highlight of the event was the Teacher Felicitation Ceremony, which honored four Massachusetts educators for their exceptional contributions to education. Among the awardees was Mr. Bernard Benjamin, former Fine & Performing Arts Director of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School. Fondly known as "Mr. B.," he was recognized for his dedication to fostering student growth, creativity, and resilience through music education.

The event was emceed by Sana Shaik, a Charter School and Franklin High School alumna and former student of Mr. Benjamin's, alongside current Franklin High School students Shorya Patel, Sahasra

Gone, Ajay Gulati, and Arnavi Pitke, who brought enthusiasm and energy to the stage.

During his speech, Chand Pasha Shaik reflected on Bighelp's journey, sharing how the organization began as a humble effort in 2002 to support 20 children in his hometown and has since expanded to touch the lives of thousands of students across India. Amar Jayam, the Global Vice President and Franklin resident, expressed gratitude to the community and stated that this year's funds will help educate over 1,200 underprivileged students.

Bighelp has created platforms to uplift children in India and engage the local community here in the United States. The organization provides opportunities for youth to participate in educational contests, take on leadership roles, and rally support for this noble cause.

The day's festivities began at 10 a.m. with Spelling Bees for grades KG-8, Coloring Contests for Pre-K and KG, and Art Contests for grades KG-8. Attendees also enjoyed over 30 cultural performances celebrating India's rich heritage and traditions.

Bighelp recognized the contributions of outstanding volunteers and community members with several awards:



Mr. Bernard Benjamin being awarded a plaque in recognition of his excellence by his former student, Sana Shaik- pictured Manju Gone, Hameeda Shaik, Chand Pasha Shaik, Sana Shaik, Bernard Benjamin, Mary Benjamin & Amar Jayam

- Volunteer of the Year Award: Presented to Franklin residents Manju Gone and Vandana Pitke for their exceptional service.
- United States Presidential Volunteer Service Awards:
 - Gold Award: Presented to Hameeda Shaik and Rekha Gundimeda, Franklin residents.
 - Silver Award: Presented to Deeksha Pericherla, Franklin High School student.

- Youth Rising Star Award: Honored Sahasra Gone, Franklin High School student, and Adwita Rachoya, BFCCPS student, for their creativity and commitment to raising funds for Bighelp's initiatives.

played a critical role in organizing and executing the day's activities."

This vibrant gathering of over 1,000 people was a testament to the community's shared passion for education and commitment to uplifting the lives of children in need.

For more information, please visit bighelp.org

Congressman Auchincloss Appointed to Energy & Commerce

Congressman Jake Auchincloss (D, MA-04) has been appointed to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce for the 119th Congress. The Committee is at the forefront of health care, technology, and energy policy. Rep. Auchincloss will serve on the Health, Energy, and Environment subcommittees. In particular, the committee has responsibility for matters including telecommunications, consumer protection, food and drug safety, public health and research, envi-

ronmental quality, energy policy, and interstate and foreign commerce.

"I am focused on lowering the cost of health care. Energy & Commerce is the prime committee for policy that can reduce co-pays and premiums, empower patients and doctors, and rein in the middlemen of corporate healthcare. I am excited to get working on legislation," said Congressman Jake Auchincloss (D, MA-04).

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State Officials Urge Fire Safety During Open Burning Season

After an unprecedented fall fire season in Massachusetts, and as wildfires rage in California, state officials are urging residents to protect themselves and their communities by following local and state restrictions on open burning.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bonnie Heiple, and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of Conservation & Recreation said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

“Open burning season begins January 15 in communities where it’s allowed,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “Even where burning is authorized, a permit from your local fire department is always required in advance, and it’s your responsibility to be able to extinguish the fire on a moment’s notice. For two years in a row, Massachusetts residents have lost their

lives when they couldn’t contain their fires – please make safety your priority when burning.”

“Open burning is limited to protect public health and public safety,” said MassDEP Commissioner Heiple. “The governing laws and regulations are in place to reduce air pollution, property damage, and personal injury. If open burning is allowed in your community, please follow the local and state guidance to keep yourself, your neighbors, and our environment safe.”

“This fall, residents across Massachusetts saw just how quickly outdoor fires can grow out of control,” said Chief Fire Warden Celino. “Right now, California is facing an even worse crisis with devastating fires consuming entire neighborhoods. Please don’t risk a fire that puts you, your home, or your community at risk. Burn only approved materials and always get a permit from your local fire department first.”

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for “no burn” days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued; and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits.

Open burning season runs from January 15 through May 1 with the following limitations. Local fire departments may deny a permit or set additional limitations if circumstances make open burning hazardous.

Only certain agricultural waste may be burned. This includes brush, cane, driftwood, residential forestry debris, fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, infected bee hives, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected elm wood if no other acceptable means of disposal is

available. It is unlawful to burn leaves, grass, hay, stumps, tires, household trash, construction materials, demolition debris, or brush, trees, cane, or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing.

Open burning may only be conducted:

- With a permit issued in advance by the local fire department;
- Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.;
- At least 75 feet from all dwellings and without causing a nuisance;
- As close as possible to the source of material being burned; and
- When it will not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.

Persons who burn unlawfully or allow a fire to grow out of control could be held liable for

firefighting costs or face fines or even jail time.

Open Burning Safety

- An adult should tend to the fire at all times and keep tools to extinguish it close by.
- Burn small amounts at a time.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other accelerants to start the fire.
- Don’t wait for the fire department to tell you that it has become unsafe to burn: put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.
- If the fire gets out of control, call the local fire department right away.

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Visit dean.edu/summeratdean or scan the QR code to learn more about Dean’s 2025 Summer Programs and secure your spot by registering today!



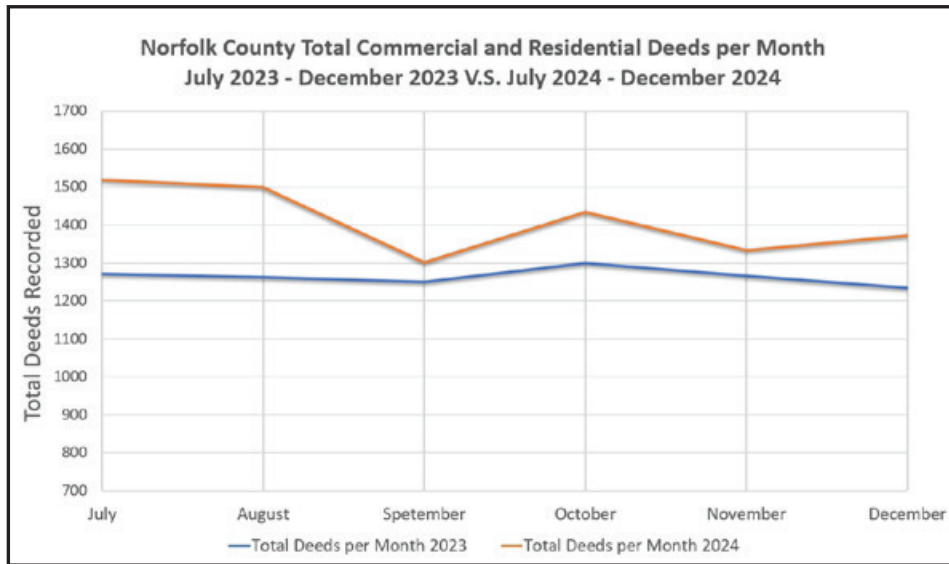
December 2024 Sees Increase in Property sales

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported that Norfolk County recordings for the month of December 2024 indicate an increase in overall real estate activity compared to last year with increases in both the total number of deeds and mortgages recorded.

The Registry of Deeds recorded 8,798 documents in December 2024. This was 10% more than in December 2023 and a 6% increase compared to November 2024.

"In the fall and start of the winter months, we have seen some positive trends in real estate recording activity, which is largely due to a significant increase in the number of mortgages and deeds recorded compared to this period of time last year," stated Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell. "It will be interesting to see if this trend continues as we move further into the winter months."

The total number of deeds recorded for December 2024, which reflects both commercial and residential real estate sales and transfers, was 1,372, up 10%



from December 2023 and up 3% from November 2024. This December, 672 commercial and residential properties sold during the month, up 6% compared to December 2023.

"Looking at the second half of 2024, recordings show a sustained increase in the overall number of deeds recorded year over year, reflecting a consistent in-

terest in real estate in Norfolk County," noted Register O'Donnell. "This indicates that the real estate market is performing decently, particularly in certain neighborhoods and property types in area communities."

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties for December 2024 rose to \$1,762,032, a 102%

increase compared to December 2023 and an increase of 82% from November 2024. Moderna's purchase of two properties in Norwood, totaling nearly \$370,000,000 has skewed the average sale price. Without these purchases, the average sale price is \$1,212,271, an increase of 39% from December 2023. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is also up, increasing by 114% from last year and up 86% from the previous month.

In December, lending activity increased compared to the same month a year ago. A total of 1,355 mortgages were recorded in December 2024, up 21% from December 2023, but down 1% from November 2024.

To learn more about Registry of Deeds events and initiatives, "like" us on Facebook at facebook.com/norfolkdeeds. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @norfolkdeeds.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High St., Dedham. Reach them at (781) 461-6101 or email registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

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February 2025 at Franklin Public Library

The Library will be closed Monday February 17 for President's Day.

Franklin Public Library's 2024 Reading Challenge!

February: Celebrate love in all its forms!

For complete details and to sign-up, visit our website! Grand prizes made possible by the Friends of the Franklin Library!

Franklin Public Library VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Site Opening Saturday February 1st!

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax return preparation to qualified individuals. Qualified individuals generally includes: People who generally make \$67,000 or less, Persons with disabilities; and Limited English-speaking taxpayers. This is a walk in site with potential wait times.

Learn more at the Library Web Page under adult services or email site coordinator Mitzi Gousie at mgousie@minlib.net

ESL & Adult Literacy Program

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

Special Events for Kids

Galentine's Jewelry Making! Wednesday, February 5th @ 5:30 p.m. (Grades 3-5)

Registration Required!

Join Paulina Teng of Comer

Teng Studio for a fun jewelry making workshop!

Girl Scouts World Thinking Day! Saturday February 8th @ 12 p.m.

Come learn about different countries and visit the booths set up by the Girl Scouts!

The Poop Museum! Monday, February 10th @ 1 p.m.

It's a half-day for the Franklin Public Schools! Join us as we celebrate National Poop Day with a special visit from the Poop Museum!

Family Yoga! Tuesday, February 11th @ 5 p.m.

Join Katie from Sprouting Tree Yoga for some Family Yoga!

John Higby: Yo-Yo-Guy! Saturday, February 15th @ 1 p.m.

John Higby, the Yo-Yo Guy, has performed his unique high-energy comedy yo-yo show in 26 countries from New Zealand to Japan, holds the world yo-yo champion title and 4 Guinness World Records.

Juice and Jelly Funtime Band! Tuesday, February 18th @ 10:30 a.m.

The BenAnna Band! Wednesday, February 19th @ 10:30 a.m.

Pajama Storytime! Wednesday, February 19th @ 6 p.m.

Mr. Vinny Shadow Puppets! Thursday, February 20th @ 10:30 a.m.

The BaNannies! Friday, February 21st @ 10:30 a.m.

Winter Beach Party! Saturday February 22nd @ 10:30 a.m.

Special Events for Teens

Teen Cookie Decorating! Monday February 10th @ 3 p.m. (Ages 12-18)

Chocolate Around the World Tasting! Wednesday, February 12th @ 5:30 p.m. (Ages 12-18)

After School Studios! Tuesday, February 18th @ 4 p.m. (Ages 10-18)

Registration Required!

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with Miss Lily by creating a painting to ring in the Year of the Snake! All materials will be provided.

Teen Murder Mystery Party! Saturday, February 22nd @ 1 p.m. (Ages 12-18)

Special Events for Adults

JUNTO Non Fiction Book Club, Thursday, February 20th 6:30 p.m.

The JUNTO (from the Spanish junta or assembly) was a club for mutual improvement established in 1727 by Benjamin Franklin. Franklin Public Library's JUNTO Book Club is a place to discuss a book of the month and share our insights! The February Book is *Caste: the Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson!

Painting for Adults, Saturday, February 1st @ 1 p.m.

Join Miss Lily to create your very own step-by-step painting of a covered bridge! All materials will be provided. Registration required!

Ethics of Chocolate: A Talk & Tasting, Thursday, February 6th @ 6:30 p.m.

Registration required for tasting portion of the program!

As the American consumer becomes more attuned to where their food comes from, concerned chocoholics find themselves feeling a new sort of guilt when enjoying their favorite indulgence as ethical issues regarding how and through what means it was sourced arise. In this program, we'll trace the chain of cocoa custody back to its questionable origins while examining the major world market players, and help you become a more educated consumer in the process!

amining the major world market players, and help you become a more educated consumer in the process!

Chocolate Tasting, Thursday, February 13th @ 6:30 p.m.

Registration Required

New England, Massachusetts in particular, has been a candy crown jewel since colonial times! Join us in tasting various chocolate types from across the commonwealth as we explore the various types and concentrations available!

Craft Along for Adults, Saturday, February 8th @ 3 p.m.

Registration Required

Adults of all ages and craft ability levels are welcome to join us one Saturday each month for a new DIY, creative craft. All supplies provided. Because adults deserve arts & crafts fun, too!

This month: Folded Book Art Hearts

Special Events for All Ages

Kids Take & Make: Yarn Heart Garland! Available Starting Saturday, February 1st

Love is in the Air! Kits include supplies and instructions for making your very own seasonal décor! SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED! First come, first serve! *LIMIT 1 PER CHILD*

Teen & Adult Take & Make: Nail Heart! Available Starting Saturday, February 1st

Let's Celebrate Love! Kits include supplies and instructions for making your very own seasonal décor! SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED! First come, first serve! *LIMIT 1 PER PERSON*

Puzzle Mania! Saturday, February 1st @ 1 p.m.

Registration Required!

Bring your family and see how quickly you can complete a 500-piece puzzle!

Lunar New Year Celebration! Saturday, February 8th @ 10:30 a.m.

It's the year of the snake! Come celebrate at the library with crafts, games, snacks and more!

Winter Beach Party! Saturday, February 22nd @ 10:30 a.m.

Families! Join us as we turn our big program room into an indoor summer oasis!

Metrowest String Quartet Concert, Saturday, February 22nd @ 2 p.m.

Join us in welcoming the Metrowest Symphony Orchestra as a quartet of their amazing cohort perform a few pieces by composers around the world and give us an inside look at the history and instruments involved.

Franklin Library Book Sale

Friday, February 14th, 1-5 p.m. Saturday, February 15th, 9 a.m. to 12 Noon, All books \$1

Bag Sale - \$5 A Bag—Saturday, February 22nd



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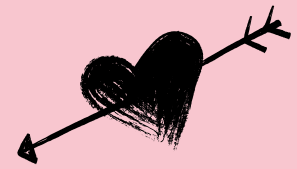
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