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March 2025

## 3rd Annual Bellingham Business Expo Coming April 5th



Sue Grady, of the Bellingham Business Association, at last year's Bellingham Business Expo. This year's event will take place on the morning of Saturday, April 5th, at Bellingham Public Library. Come meet your local businesses!

Photo used courtesy of Bellingham Public Library.

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

This is the third year of the Annual Bellingham Business Expo, which will take place at the Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, on Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. The free event, for vendors and the general public, began in 2023, when the library received a federal LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) \$10,000 grant from the IMLS (Institute of Museum & Library Services) administered by the MBLC (Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners). The grant's aim was to help businesses recover from the pandemic. The Business Expo has since grown, from 23 vendors and about 200 attendees in 2023 to 36 vendors and about 250 attendees in 2024. So far this year, 22 vendors have signed up.

**EXPO**

*continued on page 2*

## Survey to Kick Off Age & Dementia Friendly Initiative

By DAVID DUNBAR

The effort to make Bellingham more "Age & Dementia Friendly" moved forward last month with plans to mail a community assessment survey to some 4,500 town residents over the age of 55.

Age & Dementia Friendly communities number nearly 800 across the U.S. (and Bellingham is one of them). Their objective is to make communities friendly, safe, desirable places for seniors to live.

Fourteen members of the Bellingham Age & Dementia Friendly Task Force gathered at the Senior Center to learn about plans to release a 40-question survey that will ask about seniors' experience in housing, transportation, social participation, care giving, health, employment, and retirement plans. Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living provided lunch.

The community assessment is part of larger project by University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston to assist cities and towns to become more sensitive to the needs of residents as they age.

"We're promoting active aging," explained Caitlin Coyle, the Director of the university's Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging. "We want to contribute to communities to help their residents age in home." She was in Bellingham last month to talk to the Task Force. She added, "An age friendly community enables people of all ages to actively participate in community life and treats all of us with respect, regardless of our age."

Coyle says results from the survey will serve as "a conversation starter and advocacy tool."

On March 4, yellow postcards

**SURVEY**

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# Bellingham Business Association Holds Membership Drive this Month

By JUDITH DORATO O’GARA

March is the month the Bellingham Business Association holds its annual membership drive, with a membership lunch taking place this year at noon on March 12th, 2025, at Grumpy’s, 190 Pulaski Blvd., Bellingham. The event is free for potential members and \$25 for existing

members. Those who join during the membership drive receive both a membership for the rest of this year and the following year for the annual dues rate of \$75.

“If you’re new to the area and join the BBA, it’s a good way to meet people, get your business out there and show what you do



In addition to being a great way for local businesses to network, the Bellingham Business Association awards two \$1,500 scholarships each year, as well as names a Bellingham “Unsung Hero” nominated by town members. Shown here is BBA President Kerry Pickering with the organization’s 2024 scholarship recipients, Isabella Stearns and Liam Coyle.

## EXPO

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The morning will be dedicated to local businesses sharing information, giveaways and pamphlets about their products and services with the Bellingham community.

“Our goal for the businesses is to get them to have the opportunity to meet members of the community in a non-sales environment, where the attendees can get their questions answered about what the businesses do, and how they may be of service to the community members,” says Bernadette Rivard, Bellingham Public Library Director.

Rivard adds that the Business Expo falls in line with the library’s newest strategic plan, which has a goal to build strong community partnerships.

“That goal specifically mentions offering joint programs, as we are doing with this program with the Bellingham Business Association,” says Rivard.

At press time, the Business Expo was only accepting applications from Bellingham businesses and organizations and members of the Bellingham Business Association, and the number of vendors may ultimately be limited by the available venue space. Each vendor will be assigned space for a 6-foot table, which they are encouraged to bring, with set up beginning at 9 a.m.

Vendor applications will be accepted through March 21st or until all spaces are full, so please apply early! Find the Vendor Application at:

<https://tinyurl.com/BellinghamBusinessExpo>

For questions, please contact Bernadette Rivard, Library Director at [library@bellinghamlibrary.org](mailto:library@bellinghamlibrary.org) or (508) 657-2776.

or how you can help people,” says Dean Bank’s Kerry Pickering, current BBA President, who’s been a board member for about five years. She adds, “Personally, I’ve met a lot of great people” through the BBA.

“Our motto is ‘Building a better community through business,’ and there’s a benefit to (joining) us,” says Sue Grady, Secretary and Treasurer for the BBA, “The whole goal is for businesses to do business with and network with each other. A lot of our members are Chamber members as well.”

About 150 businesses and organizations belong to the BBA, which holds monthly meetings. Grady notes that a company may send any representative from their business to the monthly meetings to network. Some

of these meetings, such as last month’s, feature speakers, while others, such as January’s event which raised money for the local VFW Post 7272, are more fun. Every April, the BBA meeting focuses on the State of the Town, with speakers from the Town of Bellingham, and May’s meeting theme is the State of the State, with speakers from the Commonwealth.

In June, the BBA generally has its awards meeting, in which the group presents two high school students from the town with scholarships for \$1500. Applications for this year’s scholarships are available at [BBA Scholarship 2025.pdf](#) and will be accepted until April 15th. The BBA raises funds for these scholarships with an annual golf tournament, which this year will take place September 15th at Blissful Meadow in Uxbridge.

The June BBA Awards ceremony also honors one special resident with its annual “Unsung Hero” award, for which nominations are currently being accepted. If you know someone who has made outstanding contributions to the town of Bellingham, you can download the nomination form, [BBA Unsung Hero Nomination.pdf](#), and email it (before May 10th) to [Contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org](mailto:Contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org).

The BBA also partners with community organizations on town-wide events. One of these, the Taste of Bellingham, most

recently held at the Bellingham Senior Center, is free for participants and been running over 18 years. In June, the BBA will again work with the senior center to present Pride Fest on June 28th at the Bellingham Town Common, and in October (October 25th this year), the group teams up with the Bellingham Education Foundation to present Trunk or Treat, another fun way to interface with Bellingham consumers.

BBA membership is open to those who live in or work in the town of Bellingham, and this includes businesses and organizations. Exceptions to the residency rule are made for businesses that offer a unique service to the town, such as the YMCA. New members get a Facebook shout out and a listing in the BBA’s website directory and are automatically signed up for a monthly newsletter.

Grady points out that membership benefits are especially useful for those members who take part in the BBA’s various opportunities to network, such as the Business Expo, and she recommends it.

“You’re not going to get new customers sitting home on your couch,” she points out.

To find out more about the BBA, visit [www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org](http://www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org), email [contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org](mailto:contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org), or find the group on Facebook: [@BellinghamBusinessAssociation](#).

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# Bellingham and Franklin Health Officials Provide Guidance on Bird Flu

BY LISA GENTES-HUNT

Local officials are advising the Franklin and Bellingham communities to remain vigilant to protect themselves and their livestock from the bird flu.

Although there have been no known cases of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI) H5N1 virus (commonly known as the bird flu) there have been confirmed cases in the state. In January, state officials confirmed HPAI hit a backyard, non-commercial flock in Plymouth County, according to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources.

"Both wild and domesticated birds can become infected with HPAI. Raptors, waterfowl, and other aquatic birds are most at risk for infection, although any bird species should be considered susceptible," the Massachusetts Department of Public Health stated in its recent news advisory. "Birds may be infected with HPAI without showing any signs of illness. Wild mammals, especially those that scavenge on birds, such as foxes, can also become infected."

As of February 14, no known cases of bird flu had been reported in Franklin or Bellingham, according to local health officials.

However, health officials still want the community to remain vigilant and take proper precautions.

The Town of Franklin's Director of Public Health advised farmers and residents to take sanitary precautions to keep themselves and their livestock healthy.

"As long as there is biosecurity, and if they're taking good care and keeping their flock in, not letting them roam freely and not near other wild birds, feathers or droppings and things like that... they should have a healthy flock," Cathleen Liberty, Franklin's Director of Public Health, said.

Liberty noted that maintaining proper sanitary practices is key to avoiding any outbreaks.

"Having the one flock in Plymouth County with the bird flu does bring attention to the fact that any wild bird can be carrying this flu, so it's important for local farmers and residents to remain highly vigilant," she stated.

Dylan Labonte, the Health Agent for the Town of Bellingham, said it's a good idea for folks that keep turkeys, chickens, geese and ducks to know the basic symptoms of this bird flu.

"The basic symptoms are lethargy, decreased appetites and strange movements, decreased egg production for hens and any sudden deaths," Labonte said. "These are telltale signs that something is wrong, so know the symptoms and monitor the birds for them."

"The general consensus is to be responsible and to monitor your situation," Labonte stated. "If you keep chickens, monitor their symptoms and at the end of the day if anyone starts to feel symptomatic, get checked out. We would rather be safe than contract avoidable disease.

Just protect yourself."

Both Labonte and Liberty advised residents to wash any eggs prior to consumption.

"Make sure you wash the shell well and cook the eggs to (proper) temperature, along with any meat or poultry, so they are safe to eat," Liberty stated.

However, if there's a suspicion of a bird flu infection, discard those eggs and notify officials immediately, Labonte said.

In terms of raw milk that is being sold, "it's not being tested and the Board of Health does not recommend drinking this at this time," Liberty stated.

"Non domestic flocks are not pets," she stated. "Proper sanitation and handwashing is key to avian flu prevention and salmonella prevention as well."

Anyone that needs to report a suspected case of bird flu in poultry can go to [mass.gov/report-poultry](https://mass.gov/report-poultry) or call the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources at (617) 626-1795.

## From the Town Clerk

Thank you to those households who returned your 2025 census forms! We've been busy processing them along with the dog licenses, which are due by April 1st. Please return your license forms by the end of the month to avoid any late fees.

Why return your census form? Along with keeping accurate numbers for the state and schools, General Laws of MA (Chapter 51 section 4) mandate an annual street listing each year. Residents that don't confirm their address on the census form will be marked "inactive" and receive a postcard providing the voter an opportunity to reactivate themselves. If this is not returned, and the resident fails to appear or vote in the next two biennial elections or participate in an election related activity such as signing a nomination paper or initiative petition, that voter's name may be removed from the voter's list. The best way to avoid this is to sign and return your census forms each year.

This year, we only have one planned election which is coming up quickly! Nomination papers for the June 3rd local election will be available Tuesday, March 11th. The last day to obtain nomination papers will be April 11th, with papers due back to the Clerk's office by April 15th. Per state law, fifty valid signatures are required for each office. Nomination papers will be available for the following offices with incumbents in parenthesis:

- Select Board, 3-year term, 1 position, (Sahan Sahin)
- Town Moderator, 3-year term, 1 position, (Michael B. Carr)
- Town Clerk, 3-year term, 1 position,
- Constable, 3-year terms, 4 positions, (Richard J. Martinnelli, William H. Paine, William L. Roberts, Sr.)
- Library Trustee, 3-year term, 1 position (Nicole Buckley)

- Planning Board, 3-year terms, 2 positions, (Philip M. Devine, Nick Mobilia)
- School Committee, 3-year terms, 2 positions, (Jennifer L. Altomonte, Michael J. Reed)
- Housing Authority, 5-year term, 1 position, (Christopher Remillard)

Nomination papers may be obtained at the Town Clerk's office during normal business hours. Please call or email any questions and we'd be happy to help. (508) 657-2831 or [town-clerk@bellingshamma.org](mailto:town-clerk@bellingshamma.org). As always, updated information can be found on our website at: <https://www.bellingshamma.org/384/Town-Clerk>.

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## SURVEY

continued from page 1

were mailed to all 4,500 qualified residents asking them to be on the lookout for the survey. The survey itself was mailed the following week. Hopefully, folks will take about 15 minutes to answer the mostly multiple-choice questions and send it back by April 7. Coyle says a 25-50% response rate is typical.

The link to the survey will open on March 11 at [www.bellinghamma.org](http://www.bellinghamma.org) for those who want to complete the survey online.

Meanwhile, plans are being made to hold three focus groups and to continue interviews with “key informants” including the police and fire chiefs and the town manager.

By the end of the year, Coyle will present findings from the research and issue a final assessment of where Bellingham stands – and where it can go – to make the town as “Age & Dementia Friendly” as possible.

Present at the recent Task Force meeting were members



**Caitlin Coyle from UMASS Boston addressed members of Bellingham's Age & Dementia Friendly Task Force about the community assessment survey to be mailed to 55+ aged town residents on March 11.**

including Dave Cutler, Principal of Bellingham's Middle School. “We have a lot of grandparents whose kids are in our school and who are involved with the school system. They should feel welcomed and included.”

Also present was State Representative Mike Soter. “This is a great start! We have a lot to do. I think more older residents would stay in town if there were affordable places to downsize.”

Coyle, who has experience helping towns across Massachusetts on their paths to becoming Age & Dementia Friendly, points out that “slowness is often associated with success.” And Bellingham has begun the journey to a community where you can “Grow Up and Grow Old.”

## Congressman Auchincloss Delivers Floor Speech on the NIH's Cap on Indirect Costs

On February 12th, Congressman Jake Auchincloss delivered remarks on the House Floor on the NIH's policy on caps for indirect costs, a \$2 billion tax on Massachusetts' Eds & Meds enterprise, which generates billions of dollars in economic activity and supports hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs.

Below is a portion of his remarks. You can find the full speech at <https://x.com/RepAuchincloss/status/1889789301686444356>.

“Here's my challenge to my Republican colleagues: go back to your districts. Talk to your universities. Talk to your hospitals. See how they're feeling about this policy.

What you are going to hear is they can't afford to take these grants.

The research, and the development, and the commercialization that you brag about when you go home; the ribbons that

you cut for new companies and for new projects. They all rest upon this research infrastructure that is getting cut.

Go talk to these companies. Go talk to these institutions of higher education. Go talk to these hospitals. They don't want to see this policy go into effect.

And, they want to see you vote for it and explain it back home, not hide behind the NIH. So they're losing. Who's winning? China.

There were two main themes in the recent J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference. One was AI, which, by the way, requires a lot of research infrastructure.

The second was how good China has gotten at biotech in the last five years. The Chinese biotech enterprise is looking at the United States cutting our own research infrastructure at a time when they're investing tens of billions of dollars, and they cannot believe their luck...”

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# BFCCPS 8th Grade Capstone Projects – Students Drive Positive Change

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Each year, eighth grade students at the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School (BFCCPS) are tasked with taking on a capstone project that combines stepping up to make a difference in their community with a greater understanding of the real-world skills they need to learn in order to research, problem-solve and collaborate.

The name “capstone” comes from an architectural term which refers to the final piece of an archway...the “crowning achievement” that completes the structure and enables it to bear weight. For the students, the capstone project demonstrates their work and the experience that they have gained.

In seventh grade, the students are given the opportunity to choose the non-profit organization that they would like to support and work throughout their last two years of middle school to plan ways to create a meaningful contribution for the cause they chose. In February, the students presented their work to an audience of fellow students, teachers and family members - sharing more about the charity’s mission, their overall plans, the work they did to support them, obstacles they ran into, and personal goals they had for themselves during the course of the project.

Charitable organizations chosen by the students covered



Lara Liedtke, of Millville, presents her Capstone project, which raised money for Space2Thrive, helping to provide equipment to Volt Hockey athletes.

a number of worthy causes, including food pantries, animal shelters, adaptive sports programs, environmental initiatives, STEM education, substance abuse centers, domestic violence outreach, homelessness initiatives, various health organizations, and more. The students ran item collections, hosted student events to raise funding, cleaned litter, participated in farmers booths, and volunteered in different ways to help raise awareness.

“The community service pillar of our school is a key part of our unique mission. By doing the work to make a difference in their communities, students set off a chain reaction with positive impacts that can play out for years, or even a lifetime.

Through the capstone projects, we aim for the students to grow as people but also hope that when they reflect back on the work they did, it will guide them in continuing to be a force for good in the world,” shares Joseph Perna, Head of School.



Colin Barrows, of Bellingham, shares the results of his Capstone, which benefited the Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation.

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*Municipal Spotlight*

# Remembering Beth Cornell-Smith's Dedication

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

Beth Cornell-Smith, who suddenly passed away on December 17th at the age of 66, moved to Bellingham from New York in 1993 and eventually worked in a variety of roles for the town.

Cornell-Smith began her municipal career in the accounting and finance department, but she was best-known for her 15 years as Bellingham's Human Resource Director. On two separation occasions, she was asked to become acting Town Administrator and acting Senior Center Director. She fulfilled both of those tasks while continuing in her demanding role as Human Resource Director.

Four well-known Bellingham residents who worked with Cornell-Smith offer their thoughts on this tireless, hard-working employee who served the town diligently and will be greatly missed:

Michael Connor, Bellingham High's Athletic Director who has directed Bellingham's youth baseball program, greatly admired the way Cornell-Smith handled her role as Human Resource Director.

"I certainly came to appreciate her contributions to the success of Bellingham over my 15 years (2009-2024) as a member of the Select Board," he said. "Beth's duties as Human Resource Director ran the gamut

of recruiter, compliance officer, compensation and performance management, benefits and policy management, negotiator, day-to-day problem-solver, and the list goes on."

Connor got to know Cornell-Smith, who filled in effectively when Denis Fraine became ill.

"I saw Beth as a quiet attendee at our meetings, but as the years progressed, we became trusted friends," he noted. "It was abundantly clear that she was a valued confidante to our Town Administrator, and during his extended absence she rose to the challenge and accepted the dual role of interim Town Administrator and H.R. Director — a situation that she never received the recognition that she deserved."

Connor explained that Cornell-Smith's office, adorned with photos of her grandkids, trinkets, and an affinity for Snoopy, gave one a glimpse of her personality.

"Charles Schultz would describe Snoopy as humorous, independent, and a free spirit with alter egos. Where Charlie Brown longs for success and acceptance, Snoopy lived confidently which I think Beth did as well ... we can learn a lot from Snoopy!" said Connor, adding, "You never really know someone until you have to walk in their shoes, and Beth leaves big shoes to fill. I will miss our conversations, the town will miss her knowledge, and I



**Beth Cornell-Smith, shown here with her grandsons, was dedicated and devoted to a variety of municipal roles.**

will miss a friend."

40-year Bellingham resident Don Martinis, in his 11th year as a Select Board member, was Chair of the Select Board when Cornell-Smith was unanimously appointed to temporarily replace Fraine when he became ill and was hospitalized. He explained, "Beth was the logical choice to take over for Denis," Martinis said. "It was a crucial time for the town because we needed to hire a new police and fire chief. Negotiations had to take place, and we were preparing for the annual town meeting. She had worked day-to-day with Denis and was the most qualified to fill in. I recommended her because she had her fingers on the pulse

of the town."

Martinis praised Cornell-Smith, "She was devoted to Bellingham, and she wanted productive outcomes for all departments. She was honest and trustworthy in her roles and as a person. I enjoyed interacting with her, because she was diligent, hard-working and persevering and put others' needs ahead of her own."

Martinis and Cornell-Smith also shared a common bond. "We both had twin grandsons," he said.

Kay Page, a 60-year Bellingham resident who's volunteered at the senior center for 13 years and currently serves as the Chairman of the Council on Aging, complimented Cornell-Smith's "smooth" seven months as the acting senior center director.

"For all of us at the senior center, her style and demeanor were perfect for that stretch in 2017," Page said. "She emphasized that she would not disrupt or change things. She told the members of the Council on Aging (COA) and the Bellingham Elder Service Group (BESG) to keep doing what we do.

"We never had any problems," Page offered. "She seemed comfortable with the way activities were conducted and managed."

Page noted that Cornell-Smith assumed the senior center position while continuing to

perform her duties as the town's Human Resource Director. "She usually would be in the building three times a week and often said that she was on board to help and that she was always available if needed," Page recalled.

Denis Fraine, Bellingham's Town Administrator for 38 years whose illness created the Town Administrator vacancy for most of 2023, noted how effective Cornell-Smith was at balancing her job as Human Resource Director while working as the acting Town Administrator. He admired Cornell-Smith's team-first approach and her passion for positive outcomes.

"During her 25-year career with Bellingham, Beth took advantage of every opportunity she was presented, eventually earning the appointment as Bellingham's first Human Resources Director in 2010," Fraine said. "Beth was someone who was always ready to accept any role or responsibility without question or hesitation; she was someone I could trust and count on to always give 100 percent.

"Always ready to take on extra duties to help out during a crisis, there wasn't a role or office she didn't assist at one time or another. Beth was one of a kind and someone who literally gave her last breath to the town she lived and worked in for three decades."

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### LETTERS OF APPOINTMENT (GUARDIANSHIP OF A MINOR)

Docket No. N024P2950GD

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The Trail Court

Norfolk Probate and Family Court

35 Shawmut Rd. Canton, MA 02021

781-830-1200

IN RE: Guardianship of: **Wyatt M. Coates**, a Minor

I, Coleen M. Brierley, Register of Probate for the Norfolk Probate and Family Court hereby certify that **Gina M. Feole, 90 Clarence Rd. Bellingham MA 02019** was/were appointed or confirmed by Order of this court dated **January 28, 2025** as: **Temporary Guardian pursuant to G.L.c 190B, §5-204.**

These Letters of Guardianship for a Minor, whose date of birth is 7/21/21, are proof of the Guardian's full authority and responsibility to act, pursuant to G.L.c 190B, §5-208 regarding the minor's support, education, health and welfare as follows:  
to perform any and all acts necessary for the day-to-day care, custody, education, recreation and property of the minor.

Date: January 28, 2025

Colleen M. Brierley, REGISTER OF PROBATE



# Fuzzy Slippers, Puppets and Fun

By J.D. O’GARA

Stall Brook Elementary School children donned their fuzziest pajamas and cozy slippers for their annual “Cozy Winter Day” on Friday, January 31st. The event, organized by first-grade teacher Amy Youkilis, featured two performances by the Tanglewood Marionettes, *Cinderella*, for Kindergarten and first grade, and *An Arabian Adventure*, for grades 2 and 3, paid for by the Stall Brook Elementary School PTO.



Stall Brook students came to school in their comfiest attire on Cozy Day.



Tanglewood Marionettes, courtesy of the Stall Brook Elementary School PTO, presented *An Arabian Adventure* to first and second graders.

“We’ve been bringing cultural events to Stall Brook Elementary every year funded by the PTO for our Cozy Winter Day, and the Tanglewood Marionettes are amazing. All the kids love it,” said Youkilis, “We have a different show every year for each grade level, so by the end of four years, they get to see four different shows.”



Children were delighted when the puppet came to life in the audience.

Shannon Barca, Principal of Stall Brook, noted, “Teachers and the parents collaborate in this (PTO), and the way they come together to create these types of programs and experiences for the kids is amazing.”

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# BVT Celebrates 15 Graduates at Pinning Ceremony

The Moonlight Program in Practical Nursing (PN) at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) is a 60-week program that prepares its adult students with foundational skills essential to a nursing career. Non-traditional students navigate challenging coursework, develop hands-on skills, and cultivate compassion and empathy to care for patients with family and work commitments.

The Practical Nursing Graduation for the Class of 2025 was held at BVT on January 27. The ceremony, which signifies a rite of passage from nursing student to nurse, began with welcoming remarks from PN Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA. BVT's Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal, Mr. Anthony Steele II, spoke about the essence of nursing, and Class President Xivanna Millin gave the class address. The guest speaker, Melissa Ferguson, BSN, RN, Director of Nursing at Beth-

any Nursing Center, spoke about the dire need for more nurses.

The fifteen graduates proudly received their nursing certificates and were pinned. BVT's Superintendent-Director, Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, was recognized for his years of service and continued support of the nursing program.

In addition to the presentation of certificates and pins, Senator Fattman provided a citation for each graduate. Representative Murray provided a citation for the Milford graduates. Representative Muradian provided a citation for the Northbridge graduates. Xivanna Karelys Millin received the Faculty Recognition Award. Phiona Sebutinde received an Outstanding Academic Achievement award.

The Practical Nursing program accepts in-district and out-of-district applicants. For more information, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/practicalnursing](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/practicalnursing).



## The PN Class of 2025.

**Back (L-R):** Adriana Luz Rivera, Nickesha Palmer, Lynnette Cruz, Zoe Lynn Ragno, and Thomas James Mirabile.  
**Middle (L-R):** Matilda Baah, Xivanna Karelys Millin, Cassie Erin Fitzpatrick, and Phiona Sebutinde.  
**Front (L-R):** Joel Njifua Njemfoa, Samantha Marie Tavarez, Wilder Ruben Poma, Shyala Morgan Medeiros, Sarah Orenberg, and Junior Anuju Atabong. *Photo/Courtesy of Blackstone Valley Tech*

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St., Bellingham. The classic Irish meal, prepared by Paulie in the kitchen, will be served starting at 3 p.m., with entertainment by Scott Damgaard starting at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$25 at the door or at the Post in advance.

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Your Money, Your Independence

# Homebuying in March: A Smart Time to Make Your Move?



Glenn Brown, CFP

March signals the beginning of homebuying season as the weather improves and more sellers list homes after waiting through the slower winter months.

Some buyers will wait in hopes of aligning closing with the end of school year; thus, buyers in March may have less competition and more options.

Before scrolling Zillow, open houses, and finding a real estate agent, let's discuss things you need to implement.

**Define Your Priorities.**

Think about what you need in a home, make a list, and then prioritize #1-25, as not everything can be #1 or 1A. Consider factors like location, bedrooms, outdoor space, designated areas (i.e. office, kids' playroom),

open concept, amenities, etc. Also know your preferences: move-in ready v. fixer-upper, few neighbors v. neighborhood, and public v. private school. And whatever you do, don't let listing photos redefine your priorities.

**Do Your Research.**

Research the local market to understand pricing trends and gain an idea of what to expect when making offers. Learn what's going on with schools, public safety, property taxes, new ordinances, and city/town infrastructure. Also, if you don't want to live on a busy road, know the existing commercial and industrial zones.

**Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage.**

This shows sellers that you're a serious buyer and can afford the property. Pre-approval also helps you understand how much you can borrow. Don't confuse pre-approval with ability to pay, as an underwriter is viewing your financial situation today - not what you have planned.

**Explore Loan Options.**

When buying a home, securing the right mortgage is critical. Here are some common types:

**Conventional Loans** – Not backed by the government, these are offered by banks or private lenders. Down payments are 5-20% with required credit scores higher than 620, best rates for scores 780+. Benefits

include competitive rates and flexible terms, however, there are limits on the amount borrowed.

**FHA Loans** – Government-backed Federal Housing Administration loans are designed to help first-time homebuyers or those with lower credit scores qualify for a mortgage. Down payments are as low as 3.5% for credit scores of 580 or higher. While lower down payment and easier to qualify, Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) is required, which increases overall costs.

**Jumbo Loans** – A type of mortgage that exceeds the conforming loan limits set by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). Down payments are often 20%+ with higher credit scores, incomes, and investment assets.

**Adjustable-Rate Mortgages (ARMs)** – Offer a lower initial interest rate for a fixed period, typically 5, 7, or 10 years, then adjusts based on market conditions. Down payments are 5% or more with eligibility similar to conventional loan requirements. Ideal for those expecting to refinance or move again in 5-7 years. There's a risk of higher payments as rates adjust or if the refinancing or move doesn't (can't) occur.

**Understand the Full Costs.**

At closing you may need

more than the down payment, this includes escrow (property taxes and insurance), prepaid interest, and other closing costs for \$5-15K additional. This can be rolled into the mortgage, so get a breakdown from your lender to avoid surprises.

**About that Financial Plan.**

As a CFP, I've helped many clients with their homebuying (and selling) process. What eases stress is knowing what happens AFTER moving into your new home. Knowns include a new monthly budget, adjusted cash flow expectations, spending timelines on renovations, and any short-term lifestyle compromises. Additionally, we've run scenarios planning for the unexpected, family additions and/or desire to change jobs for greater work/life flexibility.

Through planning, you're confident in aligning your home with your financial independence.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of Plan-Dynamic, LLC, [www.PlanDynamic.com](http://www.PlanDynamic.com). Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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# Chamber's Family Fest & Home Show Returns to BVT

**Tri-County Regional Chamber Event to Be Held March 29th in Upton**

By J.D. O'GARA

Gather up the family and head on over to the Tri-County Regional Chamber on Saturday, March 29th, for the Family Fest & Home Show, to take place at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 65 Pleasant St., Upton, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. The event will feature over 100 local vendors as well as activities for the entire family. Admission is free for each guest with a non-perishable food item for a local food pantry.

Laura O'Callaghan, President of the Tri-County Regional Chamber, explains that BVT has previously served as a location for the long-running Family Fest & Home Show. "I've been working at the chamber since 2007, and it had been going on for years before I came, over 20 years for sure," she explains. Last year, the event took place at Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical

High School in Franklin, and the Chamber hopes to alternate every other year to accommodate folks from the 10 towns it serves, which include Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Medway, Mendon, Milford, and Millis.

"Blackstone Valley Tech people are amazing to work with," says O'Callaghan, "They're very supportive of us and are long-time Chamber members."

O'Callaghan says it's a Chamber tradition to hold the event at the end of March each year. "People are looking for fun things to do before the kids' activities begin, before families start gearing up for the sports season," says O'Callaghan. "We want to have an interactive day for the whole family, where it won't cost an arm and a leg to have fun," she says the Chamber President and CEO.



A pie-eating contest is a regular feature of the Tri-County Regional Chamber's annual Family Fest & Home Show, this year at Blackstone Valley Tech (BVT) in Upton on March 29th.

In addition to a wide array of vendors and great bargains, family friendly events continue to be added to the Family Fest & Home Show. At press time, the following features were tentatively confirmed:

- Ed the Wizard
- Free digital photos with the Easter Bunny, courtesy of the Chamber
- Face painter, Art by Simone
- BVT Robotics Club
- Pie-eating competition (always a riot, says O'Callaghan)
- Smokey the Bear
- Local Bank Mascots
- Mac and cheese competition



O'Callaghan notes that many of the exhibitors will have free giveaways as well.

"The kids will have a great time, and the parents can walk around and meet the local businesses. There's nothing like meeting face-to-face and having that conversation."

The networking benefits both potential customers and local businesses.

"People do business with people they know and like," says O'Callaghan, adding, "There's so much in the power of conversation, and there's great potential to get new leads."

While over 100 vendors are expected, there's still time to sign up. Space, and access to electricity, is first-come, first-serve. The cost for booths varies by size, business, and membership, with discounts for members. For more

information on getting a booth at the event, visit <https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/vendor-registration>.

"Any type of business can join in," says O'Callaghan, "If your product and service caters to homeowners and families, this is where you should be."

The Family Fest and Home Show also needs sponsors. Those interested in ramping up their brand's promotional efforts and customer base can choose from five different levels of sponsorship. Deadline for sponsoring the event is March 15th. Visit the sponsorship page for more details at <https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/family-fest-sponsors>.

For updated information on this year's event, visit


<https://www.tri-countychamberma.org/family-fest>.



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# Republican Leaders Gather to Celebrate Lincoln’s Legacy

On the evening of February 12th—Abraham Lincoln’s birthday—over 100 Republicans and Independents from across Massachusetts gathered at La Cantina Winery in Franklin for a successful Lincoln Dinner, celebrating the life and legacy of America’s 16th president.

The event brought together local Republican Town Committees (RTCs), state committee members, and elected officials, emphasizing Lincoln’s principles of unity, freedom, and opportunity. The evening featured Sheriff Lew Evangelidis of Worcester County as the keynote speaker, along with remarks from Republican leaders highlighting Lincoln’s impact and the importance of grassroots activism.

“This dinner is not just about history—it’s about continuing Lincoln’s work by standing for liberty, personal responsibility, and a government that truly represents the people,” Dashe Videira, Franklin Republican Town Committee Chair.



Representatives from nine RTCs attended the event, including: Bellingham, Foxboro, Franklin, Medway, Milford, Needham, Wrentham, Sandwich, and Barnstable.

In addition to the RTCs, several state committee members and elected officials were in attendance:

State Committee Members

- Amanda Peterson, State Committee Woman (Norfolk, Worcester & Middlesex

District) & Secretary of the State Party

- Leanne Harris, Committee Woman (Middlesex & Norfolk District)
- Ryan Chamberland, State Committee Man (Worcester & Hampden District)

Elected Officials

- Michael Chaisson (1st Bristol District)
- Marcus Vaughn (9th Norfolk District)



- Mike Soter (8th Worcester District)
- Steven Xiarhos (5th Barnstable District)

A Night of Celebration & Momentum

The Lincoln Dinner was a testament to the strength and unity of Massachusetts Republicans, with engaged discussions on how to continue fighting for the values Lincoln stood for.

The evening’s success would not have been possible without the dedication of the Republican Town Committees, State Committee members, musicians, and local community members, who helped create a meaningful and impactful gathering.

As attendees left, the message was clear: Lincoln’s legacy is alive and well, and Massachusetts Republicans are ready to carry his vision forward.



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# The Blurry Truth: Understanding and Addressing the Rise of Refractive Errors

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

Have you noticed more people wearing glasses these days? It's not just a feeling. Refractive errors, those eye conditions that blur our vision, are becoming increasingly common, particularly nearsightedness (myopia). This article explores what these errors are, why they're on the rise, and what we can do about it.

## What are Refractive Errors?

Our eyes are intricate organs, acting like sophisticated cameras. Light enters, is bent (refracted) by the cornea and lens, and ideally focuses perfectly on the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This focused image is then sent to the brain, allowing us to see clearly.

Refractive errors occur when the eye's shape prevents light from focusing correctly on the retina, resulting in blurry vision. Common types include:

- **Myopia (Nearsightedness):** Close objects are clear, but distant objects are blurry. This happens when the eye is too long, or the cornea is too curved, causing light to focus *in front* of the retina.
- **Hyperopia (Farsightedness):** Distant objects are clear, but close objects are blurry. This occurs when the eye is too short, or the cornea isn't curved enough, causing light to focus *behind* the retina.
- **Astigmatism:** Vision is blurry or distorted at all distances. This happens when the cornea or lens is irregularly shaped, preventing proper light focus.
- **Presbyopia:** This age-related condition makes focusing on close objects difficult. As we age, the lens loses flexibility, hindering its ability to change shape and focus up close. This is why many over 40 need reading glasses.

## Why the Rise?

The increasing prevalence of refractive errors, especially myopia, is a global concern. While the exact causes are still being researched, several factors are believed to contribute:

- **The Screen Time Surge:** Our modern lives involve significant screen time – smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. This constant close-up focus strains the eyes and may contribute to myopia development and progression.
- **The Great Indoors:** Studies suggest that spending time outdoors, especially in childhood, has a protective effect against myopia. The wider range of distances the eyes focus on outdoors, along with increased natural light exposure, may be beneficial.
- **The Genetic Factor:** Genetics play a significant role. If your parents or siblings have myopia, you're more likely to develop it.

- **The Urban Influence:** Urban environments often have limited green spaces and encourage indoor activities, potentially contributing to the myopia rise.
- **Lifestyle Shifts:** Changes in diet, like increased processed food consumption, and reduced physical activity may also play a role, though more research is needed.

## What Can We Do?

While we can't entirely eliminate the risk, we can take steps to minimize the impact and potentially slow myopia progression:

- **Limit Screen Time:** Encourage children and adults to take regular breaks. A helpful tool is the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This allows the eye muscles to relax and refocus, reducing strain.
- **Embrace the Outdoors:** Aim for at least 1-2 hours of daily outdoor activity, especially for children.
- **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** A balanced diet and regular physical activity are crucial.
- **Regular Eye Exams:** Comprehensive eye exams are essential, especially for children. Early detection and treatment are key.
- **Corrective Lenses:** Glasses or contacts are the most common and effective correction.
- **Myopia Control:** For children with progressive myopia, doctors may recommend treatments like atropine eye drops, multifocal contact lenses, or orthokeratology.
- **Surgery:** Refractive surgery like LASIK or PRK may be an option for some, but consult with an eye doctor to discuss risks and benefits.



treatment methods, investigating the roles of genetics, environment, and lifestyle. New technologies, such as advanced lens designs and drug therapies, are also being developed.

The increasing prevalence of refractive errors is a significant public health issue. By understanding the causes and taking proactive steps, we can protect our vision. Remember, regular eye exams are essential. If you have any concerns, consult an eye care professional.

## Milford-Franklin Eye Center: Your Partner in Eye Health

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# Bellingham Public Library News & Events for March

For updates about library programs and services, please see the library website, [www.bellinghamlibrary.org](http://www.bellinghamlibrary.org).

Additional details about library programs are available on the library calendar at <https://bit.ly/4eJRLSh>

## Highlighted Programs

**Bi-Weekly Lego Builders** – Every other Monday beginning March 3rd from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. We will save and display your creations for two weeks, then take them apart to make something new. This is a drop-in program. For Grades K to 3

**Fact Finders** – Tuesdays beginning March 4th from 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. for 6 weeks.

A 6-week program for home-school families where we will practice researching a topic and presenting information! We'll practice using the library catalog, use the kid-safe search engine Kiddle.co, and have a variety of materials available. For families - Please register.

**Crazy 8s Math Club** – Tuesdays beginning February 25th from 4 - 5 p.m. for 8 weeks.

Each week offers a different set of hands-on math activities that appeal to kids in grades K-2 of all math abilities. (If you participated in Crazy 8s with us last year, don't worry - it's an all new set of math activities!) Registration required - you'll only need to sign up once.

**Cardboard Cars Drive-In** – Friday, March 14th from 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Come decorate your own cardboard car and then settle in for a movie. Bring a box big enough for you to sit inside, and we'll have the materials you need to turn your cardboard box into a cardboard car! For families - please register.

**Chat & Craft for Adults** – Monday, March 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Make book spine bookmarks! Registration required.

Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage Plans? – Monday, March 24th from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

This presentation will discuss the differences between Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advantage plans, show real-life case studies, and provide resources to help in the decision process. Great for people new to Medicare and existing Medicare members. This program will be facilitated by Susan Flanagan, Senior Plan Consultant with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Please register.

## English Conversation Groups

Practice speaking English with other adult English language learners in a relaxed, comfortable setting, and meet new friends as we learn by talking together. Conversations will be facilitated by a library staff member or volunteer. This is not an English class, but a place to practice speaking to become more fluent in the English language. Drop-in classes offered weekly on the following dates/times. Attend as often as you wish!

Monday, March 3rd from 1-2 p.m.

Tuesday, March 11th at from 6-7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19th from 11 a.m. to 12 noon

Thursday, March 27th from 5-6 p.m.

**Bellingham Genealogy Club** – Monday, March 24th from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Bring your laptop or use one of our Chromebooks on the fourth Monday of the month to work on your family history in the company of other family historians! Run by librarian Catherine Perreault, a former genealogical researcher at the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Use the free resources provided by the Bellingham Public Library. Registration preferred but not necessary.

**Coming in April! 3rd Annual Bellingham Business Expo** – Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Applications are open for Bellingham businesses, Bellingham residents with businesses in other towns, and members

of the Bellingham Business Association. Applications on the library calendar under the April 5th event: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/792/Library-Event-Calendar>

## Ongoing Children's Programs

**The Baby Bunch** – Mondays at 9:30 a.m. A space for infants 0-18 months and their caregivers to come play and socialize.

**Ring a Ding** – Mondays & Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. For ages 0-5. Songs, dancing, instruments, beach balls, a parachute, and a story = a lot of noisy fun! Join us!

**Read to Freedom the Reading Dog** – Mondays from 5:30-7 p.m. Check the calendar for details and to sign up for a 15-minute time slot!

**Sensory Story Time** – Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m. Join us for a story, sensory activities, and open play! For children ages 2-5 of all abilities (younger siblings always welcome). Please register for each session.

**STEAM Saturday** – Saturday, March 8th from 11 a.m. – 12 noon. Join us for some STEAM activities! For families.

**Adult/Child Book Clubs** – For kids in grades 1-3, 4-6 or 7-10 and an adult in their life who loves to read. Meets monthly. If you are interested in joining, those in grades 1-3 should contact Melissa Denham, [mdenham@cwmar.org](mailto:mdenham@cwmar.org), grades 4-6 should contact Amanda Macclure, [amaclure@cwmar.org](mailto:amaclure@cwmar.org), and grades 7-10 should contact Diane Nelson, [dnelson@cwmar.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmar.org). Check the library calendar for details for March.

## After School Programs

Registration is mandatory for children in grades 4-6 to attend the ASK program. Registration for new participants takes place each day after school between 2:30 and 4:45 p.m. Hours vary for both programs on early release days, so please check the library calendar.

• ASK Program hours 2:30-4:45 pm

• The Teen Room is open for grades 7-12 from 2-4:45 pm

• Check the library website for details on the programs.

For ASK: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/288/Elementary-Middle-School>

For Teen Room: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/354/Programs>

## Adult Programs

**Book Discussion Group** – Generally meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Attend in person or on Zoom. Contact Cecily Christensen at [cchriste@cwmar.org](mailto:cchriste@cwmar.org), for more information.

Our upcoming titles are:

March 3: *Still Life* by Louise Penny

March 31: *Small Mercies* by Dennis Lehane

May 5: *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by Victoria Schwab

## LIBRARY

continued on page 14



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### LIBRARY

*continued from page 13*

**A Novel Idea: Book Club for Adults** – Tuesday, March 4th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

This is a new book club designed for adults who love to read. Light refreshments. This month's discussion: *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson. If interested, please contact Diane Nelson at [dnelson@cwmar.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmar.org).

**Yoga for the Seasons** – Spring Thaw. Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. beginning March 11th. Check the library calendar for details and to register.

**Writing Group for Adults** – Tuesday, March 11th at 6:30 p.m. Writers, readers, listeners – come join us! Local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman welcome the public to an evening of reading and listening. Works of fiction or non-fiction are welcome. Reading limit is 9 minutes per reader, with a brief opportunity for posi-

tive, personal comments only. To participate contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at [marjorie@marjorieturner.com](mailto:marjorie@marjorieturner.com).

**Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting** – Tuesday, March 11th at 7 p.m.

**Library Board of Trustees Meeting** – Thursday, March 13th at 7 pm in the Conference Room at the library

**Virtual Ask-A-Lawyer Program with Attorney Brian T. Salisbury** – Monday, March 17th, free 20-minute appointments 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Local attorney Brian T. Salisbury of the law firm Doherty, Dugan, Cannon, Raymond & Weil, PC will meet with you through Zoom to discuss any legal questions you may have. Register to receive the Zoom link close to the appointment date. Please note: Unless otherwise agreed in writing, Attorney Salisbury will not provide legal representation in any legal matter discussed.

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

Recordings of these talks are also available on the library website in the days following the event.

Wednesday, March 12th at 2 p.m. In Conversation with Author Dan Heath

Thursday, March 20th at 2 p.m. Virtual Conversation with Author Clara Bingham

Wednesday, March 26th at 7 p.m. Virtual Author Talk with Novelist Jennifer Weiner

### New Online Resource!

The library is now subscribing to Fiero Code, a learn-to-code platform that uses gamification to teach coding skills to people of all ages. The curriculum covers a range of coding languages from HTML to Python and more! It also includes projects for Raspberry Pi and Makey Makey devices, as well as codable robots like Ozobot and Sphero. Patrons with a Bellingham Library card can access Fiero Code at: <https://app.fierocode.com/sign-in?club=1450>.

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# HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

## You've Landed an Interview, Now to Prepare

By THERESA KNAPP

Congratulations, the company has noticed your résumé and they've scheduled an interview with you. Now what?

Now you prepare. Getting a job is difficult and time-consuming. The more prepared you can be, the more confident you can be, and the more successful you can be.

For the employer, the purpose of the job interview is to assess the candidate's skills, their motivation, and to see if they are a good fit with the company's culture and mission.

For the candidate, the interview can help assess if the job description is accurate, if you're comfortable with the "feel" of the company and its representatives, etc.

### Your "elevator pitch" should be "u-nique"

An elevator pitch is your introduction. The pitch should be 30 to 60 seconds long and should address your professional history, accomplishments of which you're most proud of, and relevant career goals which tie in with the job for that you're applying.

The pitch should end with a fun fact about yourself, something that can help you stand out from the other candidates. It should be positive and not too personal.

Many employers receive hundreds of applications for each job. It will help your chances if you have a memorable interview. What makes you "u-nique"? Employers often ask each candidate the same list of questions so they can make accurate comparisons,

- What skills do you have that you've noticed differentiate you from your peers?
- What would your past or present colleagues say is the best thing about working with you?
- Where do you want to be in three or five years?

Take some time to think about your answers. An interview is the time to shine, to identify areas in which you are proud, and to share those accomplishments. Let the employer know what skills and energy you'll bring to their company.

If you're wondering how to highlight your strengths in an interview, Indeed [[bit.ly/IndeedPersonalStrengths](#)] says focus on quality not quantity, back up your strengths with examples, and provide original answers to routine questions – you want to provide the answers they're looking for while standing out from the competition.

### 10 common job interview questions and how to answer them

According to the *Harvard Business Review* [[bit.ly/HBR10CommonInterviewQuestions](#)], the following questions are often asked during a job interview:

- Could you tell me about yourself and briefly describe your background?
- How did you hear about the position?
- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?
- Do you prefer working independently or on a team?
- How do you keep yourself organized when balancing multiple projects?
- What did you do in the last year to improve your knowledge?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Are you applying for other jobs?
- Can you explain a time gap on your résumé?

### Five questions to ask yourself as you prepare

According to the job search engine Indeed.com [[bit.ly/Indeed5questions](#)], five questions to ask yourself before a job interview include:

- What past accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What three things do you want to get better at this year?



Be prepared to respond to these questions with the answer and, when appropriate, why that is the answer.

For helpful detailed responses, visit [bit.ly/HBR10CommonInterviewQuestions](#).

### "What is your greatest weakness?"

Another often-asked and often-dreaded interview question is, "What is your greatest weakness?" The purpose of this question is to see if you're honest, self-aware, and open to self-improvement; it gauges your emotional intelligence.

According to [themuse.com](#) [[bit.ly/MuseGreatestWeakness](#)], there is a simple formula to answer this question:

- Clearly describe your weakness [ex. Delegating]
- Give a short example of a time your weakness affected your work [ex. The meeting started late because I did all the prep work myself, I should have delegated.]
- Talk about what you've done to improve your weakness. [ex. I now look to my team or coworkers to ask for assistance at the beginning of a project.]

When answering the question, be sure to answer concisely and focus on the solution, not the weakness. And always leave the answer on a positive note.

### "Do you have any questions for us?"

At the end of most interviews is one last question: "Do you have any questions for us?" Your answer should always be "yes" even if the employer has

answered every question you had. It is important you ask at least one question, preferably 1-3 questions as time allows. Suggestions include:

- How would you define success in this role?
- How is success measured in this role?
- What is the most challenging aspect of this role or this team?
- What do you like about working here?
- How many other members are in this department?
- How would you define company culture?
- What opportunities do you offer for professional development?
- Questions related to information on their website, blog, or social media
- What are the next steps in the hiring process? [this should not be your only question]

It's always best to ask some of these questions during the interview but be sure to save one or two questions for the end.

For the "70 best questions to ask in an interview," visit [bit.ly/Indeed51QuestionsToAsk](#).

*This article includes original content and information from Indeed.com, themuse.com, Harvard Business Review, and PositivePsychology.com*

### First impressions count

According to the American Psychological Association, first impressions can have a real impact on your professional success. Ways to strengthen your chances of making a good first impression include:

1. **Know your audience:** Know who you're interviewing with so you can speak to them directly
2. **Exude confidence:** Speak slowly and calmly, make eye contact
3. **Field questions gracefully:** Don't get defensive, you don't know an answer, it's okay to say so
4. **Prepare and practice:** You cannot overprepare
5. **Be a good listener:** Pay attention, make eye contact, nod, don't interrupt or finish their sentences

Source: [www.apa.org/gradpsych/2012/11/first-impressions](#)

### Preparation is key

- Read the job description thoroughly, research unfamiliar terms and acronyms
- Research the company through its website, blog, and LinkedIn page
- Search for company reviews on sites like GlassDoor, Indeed, Jobcase, etc.
- Search for the company in the news, is there anything about the culture, stock, etc., you should (or should not) discuss during the interview? A quick Google search could reveal important information
- Be familiar with the office location (even if it's a virtual position or interview)
- Have your elevator pitch ready

and they often hear similar answers from each applicant. By sharing something unique about you – that you can directly relate to the job responsibilities – your chances of standing out can increase. Do you speak several languages? Do you have a unique hobby? Did you audition for American Idol? Were you at the 2004 Red Sox World Series Game?



# HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

## Digital Footprints, Yours and Theirs

By THERESA KNAPP

According to *Business News Daily*, “It’s no longer that a great resume and a solid interview dictate whether you get a job offer. Your personal social media profiles can potentially seriously affect your professional life.”

*Business News Daily* suggests the following tips for passing social media screenings:

1. Don’t erase your profile: This can imply you have something to hide and does not guarantee the profile is completely deleted (but do

- remove inappropriate content)
2. Use social media to your benefit: Use your socials to promote content that shows your knowledge, professionalism, achievements, etc.
3. Google yourself to see what others will see when they do the same
4. Consider making your profile private: It is legal for employers to check public social media accounts, and be wary of hiring managers

requesting information beyond what’s available online (this is similar to employers asking inappropriate questions during interviews and should raise a red flag)

Source: [www.businessnewsdaily.com/2377-social-media-hiring.html](http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2377-social-media-hiring.html)

There are ways to make social media work to your advantage during the interview process, including updating your social media profiles with up-to-date information, this includes Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tik-

Tok, X – anywhere you have an active account; and like/follow companies that interest you and companies where you are interviewing.

LinkedIn.com offers the following tips to improve your LinkedIn profile:

1. Choose the right profile picture
2. Add a background photo
3. Make your headline more than just a job title
4. Record and display your name pronunciation

5. Grow your network
  6. List your relevant skills
  7. Request recommendations
  8. Showcase your passion for learning
  9. Add comments
- Follow relevant influencers in your industry
- Source: [bit.ly/LinkedInProfileTips2024](http://bit.ly/LinkedInProfileTips2024)
- This article includes original content and information from Business News Daily and LinkedIn.*

### INTERVIEW PREP

continued from page 15

#### “What’s your greatest weakness?” possible responses

When a potential employer asks this question, and they usually do, the following topics can be good answers as long as the ‘weakness’ is not directly related to the job you’re seeking. For ex-

- ample, if you’re applying to be a salesperson, you would not say your weakness is cold calling; and if you’re applying to be an auditor, you would not say your weakness is math.
- Other possible responses relate to:
- Public speaking
  - Delegation
  - Time management
  - Writing

- Organization
- Attention to small details
- Cold calling
- Confidence
- Decision-making
- Explaining complex or technical topics
- Feedback, giving or receiving
- Grammar
- Math

- Patience
- Self-esteem
- Understanding when and how to say no

*A full list can be found at [bit.ly/MuseGreatestWeakness](http://bit.ly/MuseGreatestWeakness)*

#### What is emotional intelligence?

Questions like “What is your greatest weakness” test your emotional intelligence, to see how you would behave, engage, and react in certain situations. Other questions used to gauge emotional intelligence, and could easily be asked during an interview, include:

1. How do you de-stress after a bad day at work?
2. What’s something you’ve achieved that you’re most proud of and why?
3. Who are some of your top role models, why do they inspire you?
4. How do you celebrate success?
5. How do you respond when a co-worker challenges you?
6. Have you ever had to change your behavior, either at work or home, if so, why did you have to change, and how did you change?
7. How do you recover from failure?
8. When have you felt demotivated, and what did you do to overcome this?
9. How would some of your closest friends describe you?
10. What kind of behavior makes you angry/annoyed?

Source: [positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-interview-questions/](http://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-interview-questions/)

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# HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

## Résumés, Cover Letters, and References

By THERESA KNAPP

Résumés and cover letters are important because they help job seekers convey their qualifications, experiences, and skills to potential employers. Your resume and cover letter should be tailored to each specific job and should mention several of the qualifications listed in a job description.

Many companies use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) so it is important to use as many keywords from the job description as possible as this will increase your chances to make it past the initial filter.

### Résumés

Résumés provide a first impression to the employer and should put your best foot forward. The ideal resume is one page long, but two pages is common.

The layout should include your name, email address (be sure it is a professional email address), and phone number at the top of the page, your home address is not necessary. The next section can be a Professional Summary or Objective (optional), then Experience (in reverse chronological order) in paragraph or bulleted list form. Follow this with Education, and end with an optional Achievements or Skills section.

Do not include a Reference section on your resume. According to indeed.com, resume tips to help you land an interview include:

- Look for keywords in the job posting and include those on your resume
- Review resume examples for your industry
- Résumés should be simple and brief
- Include concrete achievements and metrics when possible
- Include only relevant information
- Use a professional font, 12 points, black font (unless your industry prefers color and creativity)
- Margins should be one inch (expand to 1.15 or 1.25 inches if you don't have a lot

- to fill the document)
- Call attention to important achievements within a job description or in a separate "Achievements" or "Skills" section at the bottom of the resume
  - Proofread, proofread, proofread
  - Make multiple versions of your resume

Source: [www.indeed.com/career-advice/Résumés-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips](http://www.indeed.com/career-advice/Résumés-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips)

Coursera [[www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)] suggests using action words such as *generated, reviewed, crafted, analyzed, developed, compiled, arranged, secured, collaborated, documented, presented, administered, refined, produced, accomplished, increased, grew, improved, managed, delivered, transformed, fulfilled, engaged, negotiated*, etc.

For 150 resume action words, visit [www.coursera.org/articles/resume-action-words](http://www.coursera.org/articles/resume-action-words). According to Forbes.com, the top skills to put on your resume in 2025, if applicable, are:

- Data analysis and project management
- AI and machine learning
- Software engineering and IT infrastructure
- Critical and strategic thinking
- Problem-solving
- Adaptability and agility
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication skills

Source: [www.forbes.com/sites/rachelwells/2025/01/10/top-skills-to-put-on-your-resume-in-2025/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/rachelwells/2025/01/10/top-skills-to-put-on-your-resume-in-2025/)

### Cover letters

If a job description says a cover letter is not required, you don't have to submit one. If it says a cover letter is optional, it's in your best interest to submit one.

A cover letter is a short letter that accompanies your resume and illustrates how your experience would directly relate to the

specific position to which you're applying.

According to the Columbia University Center for Career Education, the goal of a cover letter is to highlight your qualifications, showcase your motivation, and reflect your voice and written communication skills. To write an effective cover letter, you should review the job description and research the company and its values and mission. The Columbia website says, "As you craft your cover letter, use examples that demonstrate your relevant skills, knowledge, and interests."

The standard format includes a heading that matches your resume (centered), the address of the company (against left margin), then a salutation (if no name is given use "Hiring Manager or the title mentioned in the job description). The first paragraph is the introduction where you say what job you're applying for and why; and the second paragraph (this could be two paragraphs, if need be) can highlight one or two skills or experiences and how they are relevant to the job for which you are applying. The last paragraph is a conclusion where you recap what you would bring to the organization and your interest in the position, and thank them for their consideration.

Source: <https://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/how-and-why-write-great-cover-letter>

### References

References are typically not requested until a job offer is pending, though some companies may request them up front.

Be sure to alert the people you are using as references so they are not surprised when they receive an email or phone call related to your application.

Carefully consider who in your current job you can use as a reference that will not compromise your current work situation.

When choosing your references, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) says you should find colleagues you can trust, pay attention to titles, be prepared (always keep

an updated list of references, keep them updated with current information), follow up after they provide a reference with a thank you note and tell them if you got the job. And finally, never misrepresent your references or yourself.

Source: [www.aauw.org/resources/career/boost-your-career/providing-references/](http://www.aauw.org/resources/career/boost-your-career/providing-references/)

This article includes original content and information from the American Association of University Women, [coursera.org](http://coursera.org), [forbes.com](http://forbes.com), [indeed.com](http://indeed.com), and Columbia University.


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# HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

## Job Search and Technology, What you Need to Know about AI

By VICTORIA RAYEL  
CAREER COUNSELOR AND  
LIFE COACH

If you're thinking about starting the new year with a new job, it's important to be clear about your job targets, ideal in-

them quickly find top applicants and expedite the process.

To stand apart in this market, you need to know what to expect when it comes to technology in the job search. Three tips to ensure you don't get lost in the application 'black hole' include

application materials match the job for which you're going. You can use tools like Jobscan and free AI Chatbot's (ex. ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini) to help make sure you match the skills and experiences the job requires.

For example, upload your ré-

sumé. Put this list in a grid"

### Consider "Apply for me" Tools

Sites like Ladders and Lazy-Apply apply to jobs on your behalf for a fee. You will fill out a series of questions, select the jobs that are interesting, then the tools will submit your application. Job searching can be a tedious task, and technology can help you save time in applying. Now you can spend more time on important things like interview preparation, upskilling, and the next tip.

### Networking

Roughly 15% of positions are filled through online applications, so it is suggested job seekers spend at least 50% of their job search time on reconnecting with their

### WHAT IS "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE"

According to NASA, citing the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019, "Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems that can perform complex tasks normally done by human-reasoning, decision making, creating, etc."

[www.nasa.gov/what-is-artificial-intelligence](https://www.nasa.gov/what-is-artificial-intelligence)

existing networks and building new relationships. If online applications are not helping you get interviews, start having conversations. Coffee chats, phone calls, networking events, LinkedIn Group discussions, Discord, Facebook and any community groups you're involved in can be an amazing resource to connect to people.

Finally, don't let AI intimidate you. It's time to embrace the new normal and leverage technology to help you succeed.



dustry, location, pay, and have a résumé. With an increasing number of applicants due to a changing business environment, geo-political landscape and overall economic changes, recruiters use tools like AI to help

using artificial intelligence (AI), helpful automatic tools, and networking.

### Use AI to Beat AI

When applying for a position, it's important to make sure your

sumé and the job description into ChatGPT, then try these prompts:

Type "Select three accomplishments from my résumé that match this job best" or

Type "Create a list of key skills this job is looking for and

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# Rep. Soter Files Amendment to H.57 for ICE Detainment for Immigrants in Custody; Introduces Bills for Seniors & Tipped Workers

Last month, Governor Maura Healey filed *An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2025 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects*. The bill, which would appropriate \$425 million from the Transitional Escrow Fund for services related to providing shelter for unhoused families, was reported favorably by the temporary committee on House Ways and Means as H.57.

Many legislators have actively been voicing their concerns with the status quo of the State’s emergency shelter system, demanding serious reform from both the legislature and executive. Representative Michael J. Soter (R-Bellingham) believes that now is the time to take these steps, filing an amendment which would allow local, county and state law enforcement officers to detain those already in lawful custody, for up to 36 hours beyond their release, if a request for detainment is received from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Soter further commented that this amendment is a necessary step to protecting the citizens of the commonwealth— “It is time to protect our state by allowing our law enforcement to co-operate with these federal detainer requests so that they have the opportunity to effectively communicate with federal partners and remove dangerous criminals.”

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis supports the amendment, stating “There is no point in delaying issues of public safety. Passing this amendment, at this time, immediately provides law enforcement the ability to close a major loophole that allows criminals who are in custody with ICE detainers to be released without time to notify our federal partners.”

H.57 will make its way to the house floor.

Soter (R-8th Worcester) also has filed two significant pieces of legislation aimed at easing financial burdens for two key demographics in Massachusetts: senior citizens and tipped workers. The bills, HD.4223 and HD.4224, focus on tax relief measures that could have a meaningful impact on the economic well-being of thousands of residents across the Commonwealth.

The first bill, HD.4223 – An Act Relative to Income Tax Relief for Senior Citizens, is designed to provide targeted tax relief to older residents who are often living on fixed incomes. The legislation seeks to allow seniors to retain more of their hard-earned money. Specifically, this bill would mean seniors pay no income tax on the first \$50,000 of their earned income.

The second bill, HD.4224 – An Act to Exclude Tipped Wages from Taxable Income, aims to provide much-needed tax relief for service industry workers who rely on tips as a major source of their earnings. By excluding tipped wages from state income tax calculations, the bill would allow workers in restaurants, hospitality, and other tipped professions to take home more of their income.

“This last election, the service industry made it clear that they would rather keep tips than have the government set an hourly rate. This is an industry full of hard-working individuals that deserve to keep all their hard-earned money by not taxing tips.” Soter further concluded that, “these servers and the industry were hit the hardest after COVID, this would give much relief to these hard-working citizens who deal with such unpredictable weekly incomes.”

These bills will be referred to the appropriate legislative committees for further consideration. For more information about these bills, please visit: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD4223>; and <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD4224>.

## Joe Crookston to Play at Circle of Friends March 8th



The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse in Franklin is thrilled to welcome Joe Crookston back on Saturday, March 8th at 7:30 p.m. Joe is a force of nature on stage. Pure magic. He’s in his power and communes with his audience. He’ll surprise you. He awakens the cynics. His rhythm is infectious. In concert, he is funny as hell one moment and transcendent the next. Whether he’s weaving through lap slide songs or fiddling an American Southern tune, he’ll draw you in.

Joe has toured with Gordon Lightfoot, headlined major US festivals, and received a Folk Alliance International “Album of the Year” award. He’s played with Suzanne Vega, Dar Williams, David Francey, John McCutcheon, John Gorka, Judy Collins and 100’s more. Please join us at this outstanding show. <https://www.joecrookston.com/>.

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

Franklin, and begin at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available. Admission is \$25.

Please visit <http://www.circlefolk.org/> to purchase tickets or for more information.

Upcoming Shows: Apr. 5, The Kennedys, May 17, John Gorka





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# Sen. Rausch Files Host of Bills on Elections & Democracy, Human & Environmental Health, Education, and Civil Rights

State Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) filed a suite of legislation last Friday to advance justice, fairness, and democracy across a host of policy issues, including elections and democracy, human and environmental health, education, and civil rights. Among the 50 bills she introduced are measures to protect and uplift abortion rights, reduce plastic waste, modernize our elections infrastructure, implement safeguards to avert outbreaks of preventable disease, and many other bills designed to defend against coming attacks on freedoms and safety from the new federal administration.

“Now more than ever, we need bold legislation to ensure the future of our elections, democracy, civil rights, reproductive freedoms, and environment,” said Senator Becca Rausch. “As those in power in Washington roll back so much of what my constituents hold near and dear, I’m proud to put forward a strong agenda that pushes for progress on our shared values, including keeping our families and communities healthy, improving critical infrastructure, and promoting transparency and accountability in government.”

Senator Rausch’s legislative priorities include four lead bills: The Abortion Access Act, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD1858>, aims to break down barriers to reproductive care in Massachusetts. Building on last year’s successful banning of ultrasounds by unlicensed fake women’s health centers, the 2022 abortion shield and protections law, and the 2020 ROE Act, the bill would ensure that life-saving care is provided, eliminate parental consent requirements, and empower patients and providers to choose the clinical setting for abortion procedures. It also introduces a state-level emergency care requirement for hospitals, as a complement to and, if necessary, replacement for federal law currently requiring hospitals to provide appropriate stabilizing care regardless of patient’s ability to pay.

The Plastics Reduction Act, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD2134>, a version of which passed the Senate in a sweeping 38-2 bipartisan vote in 2024, tackles the twin crises of plastic pollution and climate change. The bill will reduce single-use plastics, boost bulk recycling, and support our communities and small businesses.

The Elections Modernization Act, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD2441>, centralizes election infrastructure, lessening the burden on small towns, local clerks, and municipal budgets. It will give citizens more time to register to vote, provide a permanent vote by mail option, ensure ballots mailed on time will be counted, and move the date of state primaries to June. It also improves municipal reimbursement for voting expenses.

The Community Immunity Act, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD2441>, supports student and public health by creating consistency and standardization in public health reporting. The bill will track vaccination data and protect against future outbreaks and pandemics while engaging with communities through immunization education and outreach.

Additional bills in the Senator’s portfolio would significantly reduce the need for legislative review of routine local home rule petitions, address hostile learning environments on college campuses, expand the jurisdiction of the state’s ballot review commission, enact a state press shield law, and create a choreographer laureate of the Commonwealth.

## Garden Club Continues Podcasts, Plans Spring Sale & Runs Clothing Drive

Our Podcast, “Garden Tea Talk,” hosted by the “Bellingham Garden Club of MA,” featured Rep. Michael Soter, 8th Worcester District & John Keeler, Legislative Aide last month. The subject was the State’s efforts addressing budgetary funding challenges to food insecurity, WIC, SNAP and the Mass Wildlife/Fish Hatchery Shad programs.



Bellingham Garden Club of MA’s “Garden Tea Talk” Podcast recently interviewed Rep. Mike Soter last month regarding budgetary funding challenges to food insecurity, WIC, SNAP and the Mass Wildlife/Fish Hatchery Shad programs.

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Community residents can listen to any of our Podcasts for FREE on our website at: <https://bellinghamgardenclubofma.com/>.

We have also entered our Fundraising season and our lovely Spring Plant Sale is on Saturday, May 17, 2025 this year, where all can purchase beautiful seedlings, veggies, herbs, floral plants or seed packets just in time for Spring Planting. An excellent opportunity for all to support local. (See our website for further details.)

Our Clothing Drive is also underway supporting food security and our nonprofit public charity BGC Mission. Residents that would like to donate clothing, shoes, hats and other textile items can also see our website for further details to show their support for the clothing drive or to donate to our Mission.



The garden club’s Spring Plant Sale will take place on Saturday, May 17th.



# Collage Artist Christine West March 5th at Franklin Art Association

The Franklin Art Association invites the public to our Wednesday, March 5th meeting. We will greet Guest Demo-Artist, Christine West, our collage painter for this month's public demonstration. She will be giving a talk about her work and a step by step demonstration of her collage production technique. She creates monotypes and mixed-media collages using acrylic mediums, inks, photography and various papers. Her work has been inspired by modern architecture, the textures of nature, mid-century style and science-fiction. She's particularly moved by Abstract Expressionism and collages of the mid-century type.

In 2015, she enrolled in classes at the Holliston Mills where she focused on painting city and abstract landscapes. Under the present day instruction of Paula DeSimone, she's undertaken various medium painting, printing and drawing. She continues currently following DeSimone's tutelage at the Danforth Art Museum.



Christine West, "Another Green World".

Her work can be seen at True Grit Gallery in Middleboro, MA. And she has exhibited in "Member shows" at Attleboro Arts Museum, Hopkinton Art Center



Christine West, Architectural Collage

and the Morini Gallery. The free-to-the-public-meetings are held at the Franklin Senior Center at 6:30 PM. FAA welcomes the public to attend.



Christine West, Collage

Refreshments are served at the break. We have an on-going FAA Scholarship Fund to which attendees are invited to contribute.

The FAA is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Franklin Cultural Council, Franklin Cultural District and [www.franklinart.org](http://www.franklinart.org). And we can be viewed on Facebook and Instagram.

# Bishop Feehan Announces Second Quarter Honor Roll 2024-2025

Vice Principal for Academics, Charlotte Lourenco, is proud to announce the Honor Roll students for the second quarter. Honor Roll is a recognition of high-performing students based on the student's overall average in any given quarter, regardless of the levels of their classes. Bishop Feehan has three levels of Honor Roll. First Honors is awarded to

students whose overall average in that quarter is grade 93.00 or higher; Second Honors is grade 90.00 or higher; and Third Honors is 85.00 or higher, with no individual grade below 80.

Full release available here: <https://www.bishopfeehan.com/apps/news/article/2033019>

# Party for The Pantry March 29th

Come to Party for The Pantry, a musical fundraiser for the Franklin Food Pantry! Local bands, silent auction, and door prizes for one great cause.

When: Saturday, March 29, 2025, at 7 p.m.

Where: The BLACK BOX in Franklin, 15 W. Central Street

What: Performances from local bands: JP Royer, Matt Zajac, and The Pub Kings

Appetizers, drinks, silent auction, and raffle

21+ event

Tickets are available on [www.franklinfoodpantry.org](http://www.franklinfoodpantry.org). \$50 each and include one drink coupon

This event sold out last year so don't delay in purchasing your tickets!

Sponsorships are available. Please email Jen Johnson, Development Coordinator, at [jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org](mailto:jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org) for more information.



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# The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

## Confidence From the Top – Wigs & Toppers for Hair Loss

By GINA WOELFEL

Hair is a big part of how we express ourselves, and if it starts to thin or fall out, it can feel disheartening. But there's good news! At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, we're here to help with compassionate, personalized solutions designed to restore not just your hair but your confidence, too.

Last year, Heather Cohen, the owner of b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio expanded its services by introducing natural and synthetic wigs and toppers to help address hair loss and thinning. Many women face hair loss due to various factors such as stress, alopecia, medication side effects, and cancer treatments, often without an easy, non-medical solution for support.

Two years ago, Heather was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, and the medication her doctors prescribed to help control her condition caused significant hair thinning. This experience gave her a deeper understanding of her client's struggles and a renewed passion for helping them feel beautiful.

"As a salon owner with access to the best hair care products in the business, I never imagined I would experience hair loss myself," Heather explained. "Over the years, I've worked with many clients dealing with this same issue, but I never had the right solutions to offer them."

Heather tried using extensions

but found them uncomfortable due to her fragile hair and not as versatile as she had hoped.

"That's when I discovered wigs and hair toppers," Heather revealed. "They completely transformed my look and boosted my confidence! I knew I wanted to offer these options at my salon."

With a small team of her most experienced stylists, Heather set out to obtain the education and certification needed to provide exceptional hair replacement and supplemental services.

The b.LUXE Studio now offers a wide selection of high-quality human hair and synthetic wigs and toppers, all designed to look and feel completely natural. With a diverse range of styles, colors, and textures available, you can book a consultation with our wig specialists to try on samples and discuss your options. During the consultation, we carefully take scalp measurements to ensure your wig or topper fits perfectly and securely. Each piece can be custom-colored and styled for a flawless, natural blend. You'll feel both confident and comfortable with your new hairstyle.

### Human Hair Wigs

Our human hair wigs offer a natural-looking and versatile solution for those seeking a realistic alternative to their own hair. These wigs are made from the highest quality human hair, closely resembling natural hair's texture, shine, and movement.

*Beauty is our Business!*



### HAIR LOSS SOLUTIONS

They can be cut, colored, and styled just like your own. Advanced craftsmanship, such as lace fronts and monofilament tops, creates a lifelike hairline and scalp. A monofilament wig features a transparent mesh layer with each strand hand-tied, providing a more natural look and feel that allows for versatile parting. These wigs offer a secure, comfortable fit that stays in place without shifting. While they do require some upkeep, human hair wigs are durable and long-lasting and can be heat-styled to provide various styling possibilities.

*Human Hair Wig Pricing: \$1000 - \$4000 | Includes cutting, coloring and styling*

*Human Hair Topper Pricing: \$400 - \$1800 | Includes cutting, coloring and styling*

### Synthetic Wigs

Modern synthetic wigs have transformed the hair loss experience by providing realistic, low-maintenance options that resemble natural hair. Advanced synthetic fibers now mimic real hair's texture, shine, and movement. Many of these wigs feature lace fronts and monofilament tops, which create a lifelike hairline and scalp appearance.

One advantage of pre-styled synthetic wigs is that they retain their shape even after washing, making them ideal for individuals seeking a quick and hassle-free solution. Additionally, they are lightweight and comfortable, and they hold their style well in various weather conditions, including humidity and rain. With proper care, synthetic wigs offer a convenient and affordable way to feel confident and polished every day.

*Synthetic Wig Pricing: \$200 - \$700 | Includes cutting, coloring and styling*



### Toppers

Human hair toppers are non-permanent hair accessories designed to enhance a person's natural hair's volume, length, or coverage. These toppers are made from real human hair and blend seamlessly with existing hair to create a natural, fuller look. They are available in various styles, colors, and lengths, can be dyed or cut to match your desired style, and are typically secured with clips, tape, or integrated bands. Toppers are ideal for individuals experiencing hair thinning, patchy hair loss due to alopecia, or anyone looking to change their hairstyle without making a permanent commitment.

### A Unique and Compassionate Approach

At b.LUXE, we take a unique and compassionate approach to hair loss, recognizing that each individual's journey is different. Heather's experience with hair loss due to rheumatoid arthritis medication has inspired the studio's commitment to providing realistic and empathetic solutions tailored to each client's needs. In addition to offering effective hair replacement options, b.LUXE embraces a holistic approach to beauty and well-being. We've designed our Scalp Spa Treatments to nourish and rejuvenate. They feature detoxifying scrubs, nutritive oil applications, and soothing massages to enhance scalp health,

calm the mind, and address issues such as dryness, itching, oiliness, clogged follicles, and hair thinning.

### Prioritized Client Comfort

At b.LUXE, we genuinely care about supporting you throughout your journey, offering a warm, safe, and welcoming space where you can feel at ease and valued. Our experienced team is here to guide you every step of the way, providing personalized one-on-one services in a private setting. We're deeply committed to your comfort and well-being, ensuring you receive the utmost care and attention with solutions thoughtfully tailored to your unique needs.

For clients experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatments, we are proud to partner with The MGH Cancer Center at Newton-Wellesley Hospital to provide effective hair loss solutions.

You're never alone here—we're with you every step of the way, offering expertise and compassion at every turn.

For more information and to view our introductory consultation video, scan the QR code to visit our "Hair Loss Solutions" page. To schedule a consultation, you can book online or feel free to contact our team directly at (508) 321-1624.

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# Library Resource of the Month – Business Materials

Whether you want to start a new business or need help in some aspect of a business you are already running or working in, the Bellingham Public Library has resources to assist you! From online tools, free virtual courses, books in print and electronic format, as well as a Meeting Owl for hybrid meetings, the library has a variety of ways to support your business needs.

The library’s website, [www.bellinghamlibrary.org](http://www.bellinghamlibrary.org), is a good place to start when seeking business-related help. Under the Resources link on the homepage is a menu item called Business Resources. In 2022 the library was awarded a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to help small businesses. A number of workshops were held and there are links to some of the presentations and handouts under the Business Resources menu. Some of the topics of the presentations and handouts include bookkeeping and financial management, legal and insurance information, banking, credit and loan information, conducting business in a virtual world, Google Workspace, graphics and design, Microsoft Office, social media, using video for advertising, and soft skills to enhance your business. Branding/marketing with descriptions of various marketing tools is also covered, such as Constant Contact and Mailchimp.

Additional resources that can be accessed through the library’s website are links to small business partners and databases. If you click the Resources link on the library’s homepage, there is a menu item called Research. This will give you links to the U.S. Small Business Administration and its partners such as the Center for Women and Enterprise, SCORE Business Mentoring, Small Business Development Centers, Veteran’s Business Outreach Center, and Women’s Business Centers.

There are 3 business-related databases that contain articles from reputable business journals.

- *Business* – articles on accounting, marketing, management, and other related fields.
- *Economics and Theory* – focuses on economics, interviews with CEOs and entrepreneurs, and more.

- *Insurance and Liability* – articles about mortgages, labor relations, legal issues, and more.

To access these databases, click Resources on the library’s homepage, then Research. Scroll down to Journal and Magazine Articles and then click Visit the Gale Website link.

The library subscribes to Universal Class, a database which offers hundreds of online continuing education classes facilitated by dedicated instructors sharing their knowledge on almost any imaginable topic. There are a number of business courses that you can take free-of-charge! You learn at your own pace and on your own timeline. Topics include:

- Accounting and Financial Management
- General Management
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Starting and Growing a Business
- Software/Computer Training

To access *Universal Class*, go to Resources on the library’s homepage and select Online Courses/Tutoring.

The library owns business-related books in print that might be helpful to you. Some topics include starting a home business, launching and building a brand, AI basics for managers, accounting, leadership, and e-business.

If you prefer to read in ebook format or listen to an eAudio-book, the library has access to digital books and audiobooks through the Libby app and Hoopla. They can be read/listened to on devices such as laptops, tablets, computers, and smartphones. To access these titles, you can either search the library catalog or go to the library’s website and click on the Ebooks and Digital Media link.

The library has a Meeting Owl Pro from OWL Labs, which can be checked out. The Owl Pro is a 360-degree camera, microphone and speaker that can be used for hybrid meetings and integrates with Zoom, Microsoft Teams and other online platforms. It can be checked out for up to 14 days.

If you need assistance with anything business-related, all you need is a Bellingham Library

card to give you access to a wide variety of information, both electronically and in print!

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# Bellingham Senior Center Highlighted Events February 2025

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

**Upper Charles Rail Trail Walk in Holliston:** Please join us (and dress warmly) for a two-mile walk on a picturesque horse farm, with lunch at Casey's Public House on Thursday, March 13, at 11 a.m. Meet at Cross Street parking lot. Please call ahead to register at (508) 966-0398.

**Exploring Medicare Advantage Plans:** Join us as a Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts representative unravels the options. Learn about Medicare Advantage plans, the differences between HMOs and PPOs, and get a closer look at the Blue Cross Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans. Tuesday, March 25, at 11:30 a.m. Please call ahead to reserve your spot.

**St. Patrick's Day Party:** The Bellingham Police Department will present its annual party on Wednesday, March 19, at 11:30 a.m. at the Coachmen's. Free corned beef and cabbage dinner! Space is limited so please sign up by calling the Center at (508) 966-0398. Bellingham residents can reserve first.

**March Birthday Party:** Our birthday party will be on Thursday, the 27th. It's going to be chicken pot pie by Mickey G. Just a reminder, you must sign up to attend the party by Friday, March 21.

**Fist Full of Teaspoons:** Don Bellunduno is a Bellingham resident finishing a master's degree in psychology. He's also taking care of his elderly mother and has written a book entitled *Fist Full of Teaspoons*. He'll be at the Senior Center on Friday, March 28 at 1 p.m., to talk about his journey. Join us and please call ahead to let us know you'll be coming.

**WWII Love Letters:** It started with the discovery of a trunk full of hundreds of letters in her parents' upstate New York home after they died. It led Paula Roberts of Needham, Massachusetts, down a deep path of discovery about their relationship and her father's service as a combat infantry officer during WWII. Now Roberts has compiled and annotated a selection of the letters into a book, *Sealed With a Kiss*. Join Roberts at the Senior Center on Friday, March 14, at 1 p.m. Please call ahead to reserve your seat.

**Spiritual Book Club:** The Club meets via Zoom on Mondays at 9 a.m. Discussion will be about *BREATH—The New Science of a Lost Art* by James Nestor.

Please call host Josie Dutil at (508) 657-2705 to join or for more information.

**Coffee & Conversation:** Join the clever, smart, sociable folks who turn out for C&C Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.!

**The Knitters & Quilters Group** meets each Monday at 9 a.m.

**Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment:** Just a reminder that if you currently are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan and would like to make a change to another plan or just compare other Medicare Advantage plans, you still have time. Through March 31st you can make changes to these plans. Medicare.gov is a great site to make comparisons, or you can set up an appointment with Judy Higgins by calling the Senior Center at (508) 966-3098.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** Senior Center programming and transportation this winter will be aligned with the Bellingham school's cancellations and delayed openings. The Center will remain open for information and referrals unless the Town Hall closes. If you requested transportation to a doctor's appointment, hairdresser, or shopping on a day schools are closed, we apologize for any inconvenience. Call the Center at (508) 966-0398 for the latest information.

## Events at First Universalist Society in Franklin

**Life's Journey: The Relationships We Build along The Way**  
March 2, 2025 @ 10 a.m.

Please join the First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) on March 2, 2025 for an inspirational service of music led by the band, "Critical Mass," comprised of members and friends of FUSF who have been playing together for over twenty years.

This service will include songs by James Taylor, Josh Radin and the Traveling Willburys, among others. Singing along is encouraged!

It is highly recommended that tickets be bought in advance since this is anticipated to be a popular evening, and only a certain number of dancers can be accommodated. Tickets can be purchased at [FUSF.org/Upcoming-Events](http://FUSF.org/Upcoming-Events). Admission is \$5 for students 13-18, \$10 for individuals. Children under 12 are free. Checks or cash will be accepted at the door.

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# Bellingham Students Make Worcester State Dean's List

The following students from Bellingham were named to the Dean's list for the fall 2024 semester at Worcester State University: Courtney A Barros, Gavin S Bourre, Samantha T D'Agostino, Jack A Hildred, Karlie E Jandrow, Kaitlyn E Little, Paige L St. Laurent



# Bridge Replacement Design Public Hearing March 20

MassDOT will hold a Public Information Meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 7 p.m., to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the preliminary design of the Bridge Replacement at Maple Street over I495 in Bellingham, MA. The event will take place at Bellingham Town Hall, Upper Level of the Arcand Meeting Room, 10 Mechanic St., Bellingham. Visit [www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events) for more information.

All views and comments made at the meeting will be reviewed to the maximum extent possible.

Currently, the bridge's superstructure is in poor condition. This project will replace the bridge to meet today's standards to maintain through-travel on Maple Street. To improve public safety, this project will widen the sidewalk on the bridge, install pedestrian access ramps, upgrade the guardrail, bridge curbing, bridge barriers, and provide bi-

cycle accessibility with a six-foot wide shoulder on each side of the roadway.

To ensure its meetings are accessible, MassDOT reasonably provides: translation, interpretation, modification accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services. To request such services, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer at (857) 368-8580 or [MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us).

For adequate time to process such request, please make them as early as possible, ideally 10-15 days prior the event.

Project inquiries may also be emailed to [MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us). Please submit any written statements regarding the proposed undertaking to:

Carrie A. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: PROJECT MANAGEMENT, PROJECT FILE NO. 612173

# Franklin LGBTQ Alliance March Events

**Thursday, March 6th from 6:30-8:30 pm at Franklin TV and Radio 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin**

Tonight, we will have a guest presentation called "Queer Resilience: Coping in 2025 and Beyond". Marissa Melnikov is a therapist here in Franklin who has specialized training in helping LGBTQ+ individuals. After her presentation, there will be a Q&A and a group discussion.

**Wednesday March 12th from 6:30-8:30 pm at Pete's Nerd Emporium, 10 Main St., Franklin**

This month we will be reading and discussing *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol. Set in Imperial Russia, the plot of *Dead Souls* follows scandalized government official Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov as he manipulates the inefficiencies of the Imperial Russian government by purchasing the rights of dead serfs from middle-class landowners to amass a personal fortune.

**Celebrate with Pride is coming up quick – June 21st with a rain date of June 22nd, from 12-4 p.m. on the Franklin Town Common.**

We are looking for volunteers and vendors! Email [franklinwp@gmail.com](mailto:franklinwp@gmail.com) to sign up! Vendors will be given paperwork to fill out. Volunteers don't have to be available for both days; just let us know which day and time works better for you! Sign up for setting up, breaking down, the actual event, or a mix!

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# Sports

## Elder: A High Profile Three-Sport Athlete at BHS

### Soccer Star Gets Scholarship to Lafayette

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Calleigh Elder has excelled in three sports at Bellingham High, relying on a relentless work ethic that's linked to dedication, desire and a high compete level.

A two-time National Honor Society student, she's an effective leader who's been selected to a variety of Tri Valley League all-star teams. A captain in basketball and track and a league all-star in soccer, basketball and track, she didn't have to wait long to get a scholarship to a Division 1 college.

Last May, when she was a junior, Lafayette College offered her a full athletic scholarship to play soccer.

The 5-foot-4 Elder got a phone call from Michael Statham, Lafayette's varsity soccer coach for the last 17 years. Statham told Elder that she'll be welcomed in Easton, Pa., the home of the Leopards, who play in the Patriot League. The welcome included a full scholarship.

"I was so excited to get that news," Elder said. "I love the

campus and like the school's academic programs. It's not super far but it's close enough to home. I want to be a physical therapist so I'll major in neuroscience and go from there."

The scholarship obviously is a great reward for Elder, who plays as a midfielder and outside back. "It was a testament to all my hard work," she said. "There's no doubt that the transition from high school Division 4 soccer to a Division 1 college ball will be challenging. But, it'll work out."



Calleigh Elder, playing as a midfielder and outside back, earned Tri Valley League all-star honors in soccer.



Calleigh Elder was consistent at the free-throw line, converting 70 percent of her attempts.

clude a 12.9-second clocking in the 100 and 110 feet in the javelin.

"I enjoy track," she said. "I like it because there's both an individual and team flavor to it. There's also a close-knit atmosphere where both your teammates and opponents applaud a good result. Plus, track helps me with my speed and endurance, which I'll rely on in soccer."

A polished point guard, Elder is now wrapping up her fourth varsity season of basketball.

At the Bulletin deadline, the Blackhawks were on the verge of clinching a playoff berth. They had a 10-10 record and a power ranking of 14. Elder was averaging 11 points, 7 rebounds and 3 assists.

"One of my goals at the start of the season was to qualify for the playoffs," Elder offered. "The TVL is a strong league, and every game has been a test that strengthens us. We're in a position where we can win some playoff matchups."

Elder displayed her ability in the Blackhawks opening game this season against Norton, winning 62-53. She scored 17 points, had 4 assists and 6 rebounds. "That's been the best game of my career," she emphasized. "And, it was the first time we've beaten Norton in my four years. I felt like I directed the offense well, kept the tempo fast and the energy high."

A captain who leads by example and by being communicative, her coach, Bob Pingeton, calls Elder "an amazing individual who I'm so proud of and

privileged to have known and coached."

Pingeton emphasized that "As a two-year captain, she not only leads by being vocal, but also by the way she conducts herself on and off the court. On the court, she doesn't just work hard, but competes at every practice and game while at the same time making her teammates better. She's our QB, and we want the ball in her hand as much as possible."

A native of Bellingham, Elder enjoys her role in the backcourt. "A point guard sets the pace and controls tempo," she noted. "I'm a pass-first point guard, always looking to find an open teammate. I'll shoot if I'm open, otherwise I'll regroup and try to make a good pass or drive to the basket."

Elder's highest scoring contest was a 25-point effort against Dighton-Rehoboth in the consolation game of the Barry Hutchinson Memorial Tournament in her junior year. "We won, and I was honored to be chosen as an all-star in that tournament," she said.

Elder likes having Anabella Barrasso as a co-captain and admires the way freshman Liz Glynn has played. "Anabella is a good captain, always supportive and positive," Elder said. "She's also a very good three-point shooter. Liz has competed nicely. She's focused and shooting well."

Elder admires the way Pingeton's turned the program around. "He changed the culture and brought excitement to the game," she emphasized. "He knows the sport, is a great motivator and he's built trust among the players."

How well the Blackhawks fare in the playoffs remains to be seen. But, one fact remains indelible. If a game's outcome is in doubt or if BHS is clinging to a slim lead, Elder will be the go-to player. Her consistency at the free-throw line (70 percent) and her calm and cool manner in controlling the tempo are major pluses.

Her future at the college level should be bright because Calleigh Elder's desire, dedication and compete level are off the charts.

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The 18-year-old Elder credits her club soccer experience for her good fortune.

"Evan Burokas was my club coach and his instruction was a big plus in my developmental years," Elder emphasized. "That's where I learned the fundamentals. That's where I built up my endurance, developed my skills and learned to be a read-and-react defender."

A five-year varsity soccer player at BHS, Elder recalls her top thrill and her best game. "Being a TVL all-star three times (twice as an honorable-mention) was thrilling," she said. "And, getting a goal in our second-round playoff game last fall against Sutton was memorable. We trailed, 2-0, but that goal kept us going, even though we lost, 4-1."

Elder will be competing in her fourth year of track in the spring, running in the 100 and 200-meter events and the 4x100-meter relay. She also throws the javelin. Her personal bests in-



Sports

Positive Culture Emphasized at BHS Grid Banquet

Gamble Wins MVP Award

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Bellingham High’s football banquet attracted a large crowd last month at Savini’s Restaurant in Blackstone, where 36 players at four levels received awards.

But, it was coach Dan Haddad’s message that not only set the tone for the night, but also explained why the varsity team was successful.

The 61-year-old coach stressed the importance and value of a positive culture that’s led to his program winning two straight Tri Valley League division championships — a culture that gets an A-plus for overcoming adversity.

The 2024 squad, which finished 8-3, won its last seven games after a 1-3 start. The players and coaches never allowed a lethargic beginning to dampen their season.

Haddad’s words focused on the value of intense practices, belief in a positive culture, and maintaining high standards.

“When you believe in yourself and believe in each other, you’re unstoppable,” he emphasized. “This group had no quit in them and they overcame plenty of adversity. When you love going to practice, great things can happen.

“A positive culture means standards are set and they’re executed. It’s not about talent, speed or winning. The standards are be early to practice, be great in school, be kind, be neat and keep the locker-room clean, keep your shirt tucked in, give back and do community service.”

Haddad’s son Chris, the team’s defensive coordinator, sent the players a message after the Blackhawks lost to Dedham, their third straight setback.

“Chris stood up and said: ‘We’re not going to lose another game and everyone has to have that mindset,’ ” Haddad revealed. “The kids all bought in and we increased the intensity of our practices.”

After hearing the defensive coordinator’s command, Haddad said the captains displayed

tremendous leadership by “never losing faith and setting the bar high for more energy and intensity.”

Haddad, who’s guided BHS to seven tourney berths and three TVL titles in nine years, also lauded his coaching staff for changing some things and adjusting to them.

The awards presented were numerous but it was the varsity MVP honor that seemed to be the most anticipated

Max Gamble, a captain who dominated at wide receiver and cornerback, captured the MVP Award. The 5-foot-7, 140-pound wide receiver had 820 total yards. He scored 11 touchdowns, caught 34 passes for an average of 18.4 yards, and had 27 rushes.

“Winning the MVP Award means the world to me,” Gamble said. “It’s a credit to a strong work ethic and people believing in me. I’m thankful for coach (Dan) Haddad believing in me and making this all happen.”

Two seniors were given the Offensive Player of the Year Award, and two juniors were chosen for Defensive Player of the Year honors. Running back Gabe Egan and quarterback Zach Berkeley took offensive honors while linebackers Wyatt Callery and Michael Demers were chosen for the Defensive Player of the Year Award.

Although the 2024 team won the TVL Small Division title, it did not qualify for a date in the Division 6 tourney. No. 16 was the final slot, but the Blackhawks finished at No. 18.

“That was hard to fathom when we got the news,” Haddad said. “What happened was when we started our winning streak, the teams ahead of us kept winning. We lost out because of the point differential in our three losses.”

The award winners:

VARSITY

BHS Coaches Award — Senior Jack Smelstor (wide receiver, safety).

Blackhawk Award — Senior Ryan Cochrane (running back,



Coach Dan Haddad and Most Valuable Player Max Gamble are all smiles at the football team’s annual banquet.

wide receiver, cornerback).

Unsung Hero — Senior John Doucette (wide receiver, cornerback).

Workhorse Warrior — senior Michael Labaki (wide receiver, safety).

King of the Weight Room — Sophomore Jacoby McCarthy (guard-tackle, defensive tackle).

Most Improved — Senior Landon Coutinho (tackle, defensive end).

Iron Man Award — Senior Thiago Oliveira (guard, defensive tackle).

Defensive Lineman of the Year — Sophomore Jacoby McCarthy.

Defensive Linebacker/Back Player of the Year — Junior Sam Sullivan (wide receiver, safety).

Defensive Player of the Year — Junior Wyatt Callery (tight end, linebacker) and junior Michael Demers (wide receiver, linebacker).

Offensive Lineman of the Year — Senior Hunter Knox (center, defensive end).

Offensive Back/Receiver of the Year — Senior Mason Jacques (wide receiver, cornerback).

Pancake Award — Senior Hunter Knox (center, defensive end).

Receiver/Back of the Year — Bryson Nicholson

Defensive Player of the Year — Brock Barry

Offensive Player of the Year — Mason Alger

Team MVP — Camron MacGregor

FRESHMEN

Unsung Hero — Jayden Viveiros

Most Improved — Anthony Barrasso

Lineman of the Year — Thomas Taylor

Defensive Player of the Year — Brett McRae

Offensive Player of the Year — Aidan Cullinane

Team MVP — Jaxen Elder

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Unsung Hero — Vance Dunbar

Blackhawk Award — Aiden Rich

Lineman of the Year — Colin Mooney

Most Improved — Gavin McCarthy

Defensive Player of the Year — Devin Healy

Offensive Player of the Year — Nathan Mckeon

Team MVP — Tyler Hayward

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# Sports

## BHS Football Notebook

### Cochrane Honored for Her Booster Club Efforts

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Last month's annual football banquet was the final event for Joslyn Cochrane as president of the Bellingham Blackhawks Football Booster Club. Cochrane was a member of the organization for six years and spent the last four as its president.

The Blackstone native was honored for her commitment and the countless hours she gave for so many efforts to promote the grid program. Besides flowers, she was presented a stunning framed collage of past events and experiences and a TVL championship sweatshirt with her name attached.

"Serving as a booster club member and its president has been a very rewarding experience," Cochrane said. "I made

a lot of friends and have great memories. The players were like my own family, and I enjoyed working with all of the coaches."

Varsity coach Dan Haddad heaped plenty of praise on Cochrane and expressed his thanks for the way she handled a very important role.

"Nothing rattled Joslyn," he emphasized. "She was always calm and cool under pressure and there was no drama during her years as a booster. She was the queen of the program and left an incredible mark on our program."

Emilee Whittaker and Jen Alger will now take the reins and serve as co-presidents of the club.

**BLACKHAWK AWARD**

Ryan Cochrane (Joslyn's son) won the Blackhawk Award,

which symbolizes a team-first attitude and a commitment to the program.

Cochrane's was a two-time captain and spent five years in the program, playing corner-back, running back and wide receiver. A senior, he also was a two-time captain for the wrestling team, competing in the 138-pound class.

"I'm honored to win the Blackhawk Award," he said, "and it feels pretty good. There was a lot of sacrifice involved."

Cochrane has been accepted at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island where he intends to compete in wrestling and will major in criminal justice.

**GIFT FOR HADDAD**

Dan Haddad received an unexpected gift at the team's annual banquet. A football encased in glass and signed by all



Joslyn Cochrane was honored for her years as president of the football booters club.

his varsity players was presented to him for his 10 years as head coach. His teams have qualified for seven tourney berths and won three TVL titles.

"I was blown away with that present," he said. "I was shocked, surprised, pleased and humbled by the honor."

#### 2025 CAPTAINS

Captains for next season were announced and they include Wyatt Callery (tight end/linebacker), Sam Sullivan (receiver/safety), Jacoby McCarthy (guard/tackle), and William Lahousse (guard/linebacker).

All four were honored at the annual Bellingham High football banquet last month. Callery was a co-winner of the Defen-

sive Player of the Year Award; Sullivan was chosen the Defensive Linebacker/Back of the Year; McCarthy was selected as the Defensive Lineman of the Year and he also received the King of the Weightroom Award; and Lahousse earned Jayvee Lineman of the Year.

#### STATE HOUSE HONOR

State Representative Mike Soter, whose district includes Bellingham, Uxbridge, Blackstone and Millville, presented citations to all of the 2024 football team's players and coaches.

The citations were presented in recognition of the Blackhawks' winning the Tri Valley League's Small Division Championship.

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# Public Invited to Offer Comments as Part of MassBay Reaccreditation Process

Massachusetts Bay Community College (MassBay), of Wellesley, will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit on April 6-9, 2025, by a team representing the New England Commission of Higher Education (formerly the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, NEASC).

The New England Commission of Higher Education is one of seven accrediting commissions in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Accreditation is voluntary and applies to the institution as a whole. The Commission, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, accredits approximately 220 institutions in the six-state New England region as well as several American-style institutions overseas.

MassBay has been accredited by the Commission since 1967 and was last reviewed in 2015. Its accreditation by the Com-

mission encompasses the entire institution.

For the past year and a half, MassBay has been engaged in a process of self-study, addressing the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. An evaluation team will visit the institution to gather evidence that the self-study is thorough and accurate. The team will recommend to the Commission a continuing status for the institution. Following a review process, the Commission itself will take the final action.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the institution to:

Public Comment on MassBay Community College  
New England Commission of Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100  
Burlington, MA 01803-4514  
E-mail: [info@neche.org](mailto:info@neche.org)

Public Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution. The Commission cannot settle

disputes between individuals and institutions, whether those involve faculty, students, administrators, or members of other groups. Comments will not be treated as confidential and must

include the name, address, and telephone number of the person providing the comments. Public Comments must be received by April 9, 2025. The Commission cannot guarantee that comments

received after that date will be considered.

To learn more about MassBay, visit [massbay.edu](http://massbay.edu).

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# Norfolk Registry Reflects on 2024

This past year saw some enhancements to the resources available to the public at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds as well as some significant Registry milestones:

- In the spring and summer of 2024, we were pleased to bring the Registry of Deeds office hours and talks as part of our Community Outreach Program to nearly every Norfolk County community.
- In June 2024 the Registry opened its new Genealogy Research and Resource Center at 649 High Street in Dedham. This includes research tools such as Ancestry.com.
- The Registry office hours, with outreach team available to assist, were held in

various town halls in communities throughout Norfolk County.

## About the Registry of Deeds

The Registry of Deeds is the principal office for real property records in Norfolk County, receiving and recording hundreds of thousands of documents annually. It houses more than 13.1 million land documents dating back to 1793. These land documents and the integrated Registry indexes to these land documents, are available to the public for online research at [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org).

The Registry of Deeds Customer Service and Copy Center helps with filing of Homesteads, accessing deeds, verifying recorded property documents, and assisting those in need of

obtaining a mortgage discharge notice. Customers can contact the Customer Service and Copy Center M-F at (781) 461-6101, between the 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We are located at 649 High Street in downtown Dedham.

In calendar year 2024, the Registry collected approximately \$ 54.3 million in revenue. Out of that money, more than \$ 48.5 million was apportioned to the Commonwealth, and more than \$5.7 million was disbursed to Norfolk County in the form of deeds excise taxes, recording fees, and surcharges. There was \$4,934,850 collected pursuant to the Community Preservation Act (CPA). In 2024 there were 103,165 documents recorded at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, a 1% increase from 2023.

The Norfolk Registry of

Deeds was the first registry in Massachusetts to electronically record registered land documents in the Land Court section of the Registry of Deeds in 2017. Electronic recording was crucial to remaining operational during the coronavirus pandemic. This year saw a record number of electronic recording filers, approximately 2,906. Nearly eighty percent of document volume is recorded electronically by these users.

In 2024, we shelved Registry of Deeds Book 42162. At the end of 2024, we were processing the documents for Book 42189. For the sake of security and redundancy, we store our documents in three different ways: hard copy, electronically, and on microfiche. There is a state law mandating that recorded documents be microfilmed.

The Registry's website, [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org), routinely updates the public on real estate statistics, answers to frequently asked questions, and consumer programs. We distribute a monthly column for various Norfolk County newspapers as well as a weekly information release to alert residents of the latest happenings.

The Registry's free Consumer Anti Property Fraud Notification Service is open to any county resident, who can be alerted when any land document – fraudulent or otherwise – is recorded against their name. Over 2,100 Norfolk County residents have signed up for this free service. For more information, please see our website at: [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org).

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# Calendar

## March 3

**Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *Still Life* by Louise Penny

## March 4

**A Novel Idea, 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, new book club for adults who love to read. *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson, contact dnelson@cwmar.org

## March 6

**Franklin LGBTQ Alliance presents "Queer Resilience: Coping in 2025 and Beyond" with therapist Marissa Melnikov, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin

## March 8

**The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse presents Joe Crookston, 7:30 p.m.,** Franklin's First Universalist Society Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin;; doors open 7 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts available. Tickets at <http://www.circlefolk.org/>

## March 9

**St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner, Doors open 3 p.m.,** Dinner at 4 p.m., VFW Post 7272, 940 S. Main St., Bellingham, \$25, with Scott Damgaard, tickets available at the post

## March 11

**Writing Group for Adults, 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, facilitated by Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman

## March 12

**Bellingham Business Association Membership Lunch,** visit [www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org](http://www.bellinghambusinessassociation.org) for more information, or email [contact@bellingshambusinessassociation.org](mailto:contact@bellingshambusinessassociation.org)

**Virtual Author Talk, 2 p.m.,** presented by Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register at : <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma>. In Conversation with Author Dan Heath

**Franklin LGBTQ Alliance book discussion, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,** Pete's Nerd Emporium 10 Main St., Franklin, *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol

## March 15

**Country Dance: Reels and More! 7 p.m.,** First Universalist Society in Franklin, Doors open at 6:45 p.m., includes 2 sets with a brief intermission. Tickets can be purchased at [FUSE.org/UpcomingEvents](http://FUSE.org/UpcomingEvents) or at door. \$5 for students 13-18, \$10 adults. Children under 12 free.

## March 17



## March 20

**Virtual Author Talk, 2 p.m.,** presented by Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register at : <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma>. Virtual Conversation with Author Clara Bingham

## March 26

**Virtual Author Talk, 7 p.m.,** presented by Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register at : <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma>. Virtual Author Talk with Novelist Jennifer Weiner

## March 30

**Family Bowling Event Santa Foundation Fundraiser, 4-6 p.m.,** North Bowl Lanes, 71 E. Washington St., North Attleboro, MA, <https://www.sfjoy.org/upcoming-events>

## March 29

**Family Fest & Home Show, 10-2,** 65 Pleasant St., Upton, presented by Tri-County Chamber, free with item for food pantry

## March 31

**Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *Small Mercies* by Dennis Lehane

# BWOT Spring Events

## Pot Of Gold

Let the Bellingham Women of Today surprise a child with our prefilled "Pot of Gold" bucket for St. Patrick's Day. Your child/children can receive a Leprechaun bucket filled with lots of toys and treats! Order deadline is March 9th, cost is \$20 each, delivered on March 16, 2025 (suggested ages 3-10).

Contact: [bellingshamwomenoftoday@gmail.com](mailto:bellingshamwomenoftoday@gmail.com) for order form and inquiries.

## Muffins with the Easter Bunny

The Bellingham Women of Today will welcome the Easter Bunny for their annual Muffins with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, April 5th, from 9-11:30 a.m. at St. Blaise Church Hall, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham.

Admission fee is \$5 per child with a maximum charge of \$15 per family. Children can meet the Easter Bunny while you are welcome to take your own photos. We will offer muffins, homemade cinnamon rolls, bagels, juice, milk and coffee. Food and beverage items are \$1-2 each. There will be free crafts and coloring pages for kids as well as raffle items. All proceeds will benefit local BWOT charities.

## Letters from the Easter Bunny

The Easter Bunny is so busy preparing for the big day the Bellingham Women of Today will be helping him send personal letters to anyone on your list. The cost is \$3 for each letter or two for \$5. Send the name and address of recipient before April 5th along with your name and phone number, including any information you would like added to the letter with a check made payable to BWOT. Mail to BWOT, PO Box 405, Bellingham, MA 02019



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