

Budget Listening Sessions to Continue this Month

Franklin Residents Encouraged to Take Part

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

There will be three more Joint Budget Subcommittee Listening Sessions in March, and Franklin residents are encouraged to attend and learn more about what is going into the evolving document that encompasses the town budget. At the February 12th Listening Session, Jamie Hellen presented a preliminary FY26 budget model that illustrated a structural budget deficit of \$3,637,787 million, not a final number, but one that is closer what a final budget deficit might look like for this year. Updated figures to this preliminary model would take place at Town Council meetings on March 5th and March 19th. The Town expects to file a budget in mid-April (either April 11th or April 18th).



Franklin resident Paula Lombardi presents her questions to Franklin's Joint Budget Subcommittee at one of their Listening Sessions last month. Residents are encouraged to attend the three planned for this month on March 4th, March 8th, and March 12th.

Some of the factors influencing the updated figures include:

- State aid figures are not as robust as the Town expected, but Governor Healey's FY26 budget proposal will give Franklin an increase of \$272,024 over previous Town budget models.
- Local receipts, or revenue generated or processed by municipal staff, have in-

creased by \$1 million over previous budget models.

- New Growth has been slightly lowered due to a stagnant business climate.
- Employee health care costs are expected to increase.

Hellen's memo broke down cost increase requests of de-

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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 let-

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partment budgets that exceed \$1,000,000 (which he called the Big Six), including:

- Police Department: increase of \$213,200
- Fire Department: increase of \$253,820
- DPW: increase of \$261,000
- Public Property & Buildings (Facilities): increase of \$551,000 (does not include or reflect savings achieved through Parmenter/Kennedy redistricting, as logistics still need to be worked out
- Franklin Public Library: increase of \$63,810
- Account 300 Franklin Public Schools: increase of \$2,929,810, assuming “level service.”

In his memo, Hellen noted the General Government encompasses 35 additional town departments, boards and committees with an aggregate increase of \$1.6 million, and the model assumes some increase in personnel line items for the COLA for all union and non-union municipal and school staff as well as one additional municipal staff for Board of Assessors. The memo further discusses an-

ticipated cost increases and encourages residents to review the DPW’s Infrastructure report up on the town website.

Lucas Giguere, Superintendent of Franklin Public Schools, confirmed the School Committee’s approval of \$80,395,33 million on February 11th, a 3.78% increase from last year, structured around balancing rising costs and allocating resources. (The district currently has 4,589 students and employs over 1,200.) He noted FPS will save costs unifying three middle schools under one roof, having two elementary complexes and repurposing the empty middle school complexes in part to expand an early childhood program that has outgrown its space, as well as faculty and staff restructuring to optimize resources.

Attendees to the February 12th meeting raised questions about administrative support, public safety, and education for the town’s children, with many advocating for restoration of theatre classes, more diverse language offerings and fewer teacher cuts, as well as frustration about misinformation shared on social media and other channels, the need to present facts in a way the community clearly understands, the rising costs of housing and utility costs as well as that anticipated costs in future years, such as the Tri-County school rebuild and the state’s Chapter 70 “Hold Harmless” expectations for Franklin.

The Town encourages the public to attend the following upcoming Joint Budget Subcommittee Listening Sessions:

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This article first appeared in and is used courtesy of The Franklin Observer, https://franklinobserver.town.news, with some minor updates by Local Town Pages

What You Don’t Know About Hold Harmless Could Hurt You

BY ALAN EARLS

Understanding Hold Harmless: What It Means for Franklin

The financial future of Franklin is deeply tied to a provision known as “hold harmless,” a part of Massachusetts’ Chapter 70 education funding formula. Since Fiscal Year 2017 (FY2017), Franklin has been classified as a hold harmless district. Understanding what this means and how it impacts our community is crucial as we continue Joint Budget Subcommittee Listening Sessions and Legislative Forums in the coming weeks.

What Is Hold Harmless?

The hold harmless provision ensures that districts do not receive less state aid than they did in previous years, even if student enrollment declines. While this protects districts from immediate financial loss, it also limits their ability to receive additional funding to meet rising costs.

In Franklin’s case, the town has been in a steady enrollment decline since 2011. Former Superintendent Sara Ahern confirmed that Franklin entered hold harmless status in FY2017. This means Franklin receives the minimum amount of state aid under the Chapter 70 formula.

“When we (the MA State Legislature) redid the formula under the Student Opportunity Act, that changed the formula for districts throughout Massachusetts,” says Rep. Jeff Roy, of Franklin, adding, “That could have had the effect of taking communities like Franklin, who

got very generous state aid for so many years – it could have put them in the notion that Franklin is supposed to pay more. But we’re going to ‘hold you harmless,’ but moving forward, you’re only going to be eligible for the minimum aid until you catch up.” That minimum aid has ranged from a low of \$30 per student to a high last year of \$105 per student, Roy explains.

As of FY2023, Franklin received \$11.89 million in hold harmless funding, making it the second-largest hold harmless community in Massachusetts. This funding has been essential to maintaining school operations but has also created challenges for long-term planning.

Year-by-Year Hold Harmless Funding

Below is a breakdown of Franklin’s Chapter 70 and hold harmless funding over the years, showing how this provision has affected the town’s financial stability:

• **FY2017:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$68,835,293
- Foundation Budget: \$64,847,925
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$5,487,459

• **FY2018:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$71,882,718
- Foundation Budget: \$66,730,878
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$7,034,793

• **FY2019:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$75,354,105
- Foundation Budget: \$68,504,972
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$8,623,227

• **FY2020:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$76,174,958
- Foundation Budget: \$69,568,684
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$7,669,986

• **FY2021:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$78,398,099
- Foundation Budget: \$71,018,218
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$8,829,415

• **FY2022:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$80,449,980
- Foundation Budget: \$73,686,081
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$9,431,762

• **FY2023:**

- Chapter 70 Allocation: \$85,577,186
- Foundation Budget: \$76,427,456
- Hold Harmless Amount: \$11,891,105

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ting 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 impor-

tant 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 or call the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources at (617) 626-1795.

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These figures highlight the increasing reliance on hold harmless funding as Franklin's enrollment has continued to decline, making the town more dependent on local contributions to sustain operations.

To learn more visit DESE Chapter 70

The Financial Realities of Hold Harmless

The reliance on hold harmless has significant implications for Franklin's finances:

- **Declining Enrollment:** Franklin's student population has been shrinking since 2011, reducing the amount of aid the town would otherwise receive under the Chapter 70 formula.
- **Stagnant State Aid:** While operational costs—such as salaries, transportation, and special education—have increased, Franklin has not seen corresponding increases in state funding since FY2017.
- **Local Tax Burden:** With limited state support, the town has relied more heavily on local contributions to fund schools, resulting in a structural budget deficit.

Legislative Context

Franklin has hosted Legislative Forums since the 2017-2018 School Year to discuss critical issues like Chapter 70 funding and hold harmless. These forums have been a platform for residents to engage with elected officials and understand the town's financial landscape. While the 2022 forum was canceled, the forums have provided valuable insights over the years.

Some notable quotes from past forums highlight the challenges Franklin faces as a hold harmless district:

2018 Legislative Forum

Senator Karen Spilka addressed the complexities of hold harmless funding, stating:

"When some communities lost significant funds due to changes [in the definition of economically disadvantaged students], \$11 million was allocated to 'hold them harmless' to prevent immediate financial losses."

She also acknowledged the temporary nature of hold harmless:

"The goal is to phase in changes gradually while ensuring no community faces a drastic financial cliff."

Representative Jeffrey Roy emphasized equity in funding during the same forum:

"We've made progress, but there's still more work to do to ensure that all districts—whether growing or declining—have the resources they need to provide a quality education."

2019 Legislative Forum

During this forum, Senator Spilka spoke about the importance of addressing funding inadequacies:

"The funding formula does not adequately reflect the true costs of education today. We must ensure that economically disadvantaged students, special education, and other high-cost areas are properly funded."

Representative Roy also highlighted Franklin's reliance on hold harmless funding:

"Franklin has done well to manage its resources, but we need to think about the long-term implications of relying on a funding model that doesn't keep pace with our schools' needs."

Here's a timeline of past and upcoming Legislative Forums:

To review past Legislative Forums and prepare for this year's discussion, you can listen to recordings:

2017 - 2018: This school year marked Franklin's first Legislative Forum on education funding and its new status as a hold harmless district. This forum was a pivotal moment for the community to understand the long-term financial implications of declining enrollment and stagnant state aid. It was also an opportunity for residents to engage with local and state leaders to question how Franklin's leadership planned to manage the challenges of relying on hold harmless funds.

During this period, Franklin received \$5.49 million in hold harmless funding, a figure that has grown significantly over the years. At the forum, Senator Karen Spilka underscored the temporary intent of hold harmless, stating, "The goal is to phase in changes gradually while ensuring no community faces a drastic financial cliff." Representative Jeffrey Roy added, "We've made progress, but there's still more work to ensure all districts—whether growing or declining—have the resources they need to provide a quality education."

Residents were encouraged to consider whether local leadership had taken adequate steps to prepare for the town's growing financial reliance on local taxes to fund education, despite early warnings about the limitations of hold harmless.

2018 - 2019: The community is deeply concerned about the current charter school funding formula and the "long-term hold harmless" clause because it underscores the growing gap between educational needs and available resources. As Franklin faces rising costs for special education, mental health services, and classroom support, the outdated funding model threatens to leave public schools underfunded. This could lead to higher taxes for local residents without improvements in educational quality or services. If the funding structure isn't adjusted, the community may feel frustrated by a system that continues to disproportionately support charter schools at the expense of the public schools that serve the majority of students.

Additionally, the "hold harmless" provision could prevent schools from addressing critical issues like mental health support and special education costs. Public schools might struggle to provide adequate resources, staff, and manageable class sizes, especially as costs rise. Families with children who need more support could feel their needs are being overlooked. The community would be upset if schools continue to operate under these financial constraints, leading to dissatisfaction with both the

educational outcomes and the financial burden placed on local taxpayers.

(Some links to Franklin Matters archives)

- 2019 - 2020
- 2020 - 2021
- 2021 - 2022: Canceled
- 2022 - 2023
- 2023 - 2024: NOT RECORDED
- 2025: The next forum is scheduled for Monday, February 24, 2025, featuring Senator Becca Rausch and Representative Jeffrey Roy.

Preparing for the Legislative Forum

As Franklin faces these challenges, it is vital for residents to understand the implications of hold harmless and ask thoughtful questions about its future. Consider these questions as we approach the upcoming forum:

1. What steps can Franklin take to prepare for potential reductions in hold harmless funding?
2. How has the town used hold harmless funds over the years, and what has been the impact on schools and town services?
3. What reforms to the Chapter 70 formula could benefit communities like Franklin?
4. How can residents advocate for more equitable and sustainable funding solutions without necessarily taxing their residents?

This forum provides an opportunity for residents to learn

more about the state's funding system, engage with elected officials, and voice their concerns. With the future of hold harmless funding in question, it's more important than ever for the community to stay informed and actively participate in these critical discussions.

Franklin Garden Club Presents Hydrangea Program

The Franklin Garden Club, in partnership with the Franklin Public Library, will offer a talk on Hydrangea Ps and Qs on Tuesday, March 4, at 7 p.m. at the Franklin Library located at 118 Main Street, Franklin, MA. The program is open to the public at no charge.

Hydrangea Ps and Qs Covers Planting, pH, Pruning, Problems and audience questions. The program will be presented by Lifetime Master Gardener Kathie Skinner and will address common issues related to growing beautiful hydrangeas, including when and how to plant; how to raise or lower the soil PH to control bloom color; when and how to prune hydrangea that bloom on old wood and new wood; and common fungal problems and pests. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions.

Skinner is the past Education Coordinator and past Master Gardener Training Coordinator for the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association. She is a retired K-12 educator and administrator who currently does education and policy research and writing for various state and national education organizations.



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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.



Christine West, "Another Green World".



Christine West, Architectural Collage

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.

Her work can be seen at True Grit Gallery in Middleboro, MA. And she has exhibited in 'Member shows' at Attleboro Arts Museum, Hopkington Art Center and the Morini Gallery.

The free-to-the-public-meetings are held at the Franklin Senior Center at 6:30 p.m. FAA

welcomes the public to attend. 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. And we can be viewed on Facebook and Instagram.

Franklin Announces Launch of New Website

Enhancing Citizen and Government Communication & Incorporating New Town Logo, Tagline

On January 29, 2025, the Town of Franklin, Mass. announced that it had launched its new website (<https://www.franklinma.gov>).

"As part of our biennial town goals, I am excited to announce the launch of the Town's new website", said Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. "The new site will help community members stay connected to town resources, accurate and timely news, and serve as a one-stop for all official town information."

The website went live on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at noon. The project team took the following week to work out some imperfections on the site and respond to user feedback, as residents begin to utilize the site. In conjunction with the Town Branding Project which created a new Town of Franklin logo and tagline, the project team worked on the website redesign process over the last eight months with website developer CivicPlus, a leading government website provider.

The website now has additional mobile-responsive functionalities and enhanced accessibility features, as well as a cleaner, easier layout to help

visitors better navigate the site. CivicPlus' content management system will allow Franklin the ability to increase resident engagement by offering more dynamic content and more timely news through its set of robust features, well-designed layout, accessibility and functionality.

"It is our hope that with the new website the Town of Franklin will be able to increase its community engagement and enhance the communication between residents and the local government." said Tom Mercer, Chair of the Town Council. "One notable area is a Town Budget website with up-to-date information on the town budget process and archival information for residents to have all of the information they need as the community discusses the FY26 Budget."

Through featured modules on the new site, citizens will be able to view agendas and minutes, report a concern, view job and volunteer opportunities, and sign up for notifications more easily. To sign up to receive notifications from the Town, please visit the Town website at <https://www.franklinma.gov> and click the "Notify Me" button on the left side of the page.

Users must create an account to receive notifications, and once the account is validated users will be able to log in and select what notifications they would prefer to receive.

"The Town encourages residents to assess the new site and share observations with the Town Administrator's office," said Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti. "Looking forward, we aim to use the new website as a tool that will grow and evolve to meet the needs of the community. We ask users to check back frequently for new information and features."

While the Town's official seal will remain an image of Benjamin Franklin with his well-known quote, "Industry Need Not Wish", the website promotes the new Town logo and tagline - "The First of Many" - a nod to Franklin's history as the first town named after Benjamin Franklin, the first town to have a public lending library and the birthplace of public education, through Franklin native Horace Mann. This slogan is also an acknowledgment of Franklin's pursuit to be a leader - with excellent public schools and first-rate public safety.

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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," says the Chamber President and CEO.

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)



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.

- 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>.

county-chamberma.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.tricounty-chamberma.org/family-fest-sponsors>.

For updated information on this year's event, visit

<https://www.tricounty-chamberma.org/family-fest>.

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Session 4: Mar 4, Franklin Senior Center, Common Grounds Cafe, 10 Daniel McCahill, 9:30 am (coffee and light refreshments provided)

Session 5: Mar 8, Franklin Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 355 East Central, 10:00am (Virtual and in-person participation options)

Session 6: Mar 12, Franklin High School Auditorium, 7 p.m.

To see all of the budget documents in more detail, click the center "Town Budget," button at the bottom of the Town's home page, www.franklinma.gov, or go directly to <https://www.franklinma.gov/168/Town-Budgets>, then hit the link for Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Materials.

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Family-Run Affordable Junk Removal Takes the Stress Out of Cleanups

By CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you



call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible, properly disposes of non-recyclables and resells many items at the Schadlers' secondhand store, Resellables. "We opened that store in Bellingham because we hated to see things thrown away," Schadler says. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early

Business spotlight

days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back-end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and

do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Franklin in particular, Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. The Schadlers' oldest daughter lives in Franklin, and their kids attended softball camp and learned how to skate in town. Prior to starting Affordable Junk Removal, Christine worked for years in Franklin as well.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call (774) 287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

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Medway's new Treasure Box, a true 'mom and pop' shop

Treasure Box is a new "antique and vintage mini-mall" located at the Medway Plaza Shopping Center, to the right of the main entrance.

The 2,000 square foot shop opened in December and is owned by Sully and David Dang who are New England locals.

"We are family-operated, and you'll often see our little ones visiting us in the store," said Sully. "We're a true 'mom and pop' shop."

Between the two owners, they have more than 40 years of experience in collectibles and memorabilia, and both have business backgrounds.

"We have been selling online for many years, then we decided to go brick-and-mortar because we think the best way to get people interested in an item is to get it into their hands," said Sully, noting the COVID-19 pandemic affected both her and David's previous employment so they decided to take on this new adventure.

"We both grew up antiques and thrifting with our parents and digging for treasures," said David.

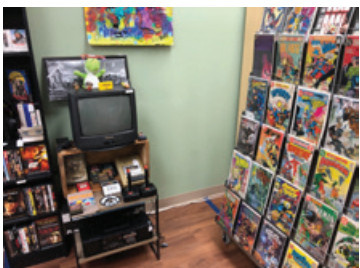
The shop includes space for over 30 individual vendors who feature antiques, art (from local artists), books, coins, collectibles, curios, jewelry, sports memorabilia, toys and games, trading cards, limited clothing items, and much more. All items are handmade, vintage or antique and are consigned or donated.

As you walk into the store, you encounter several glass display cabinets, items for sale on the walls, and traditional vendor booths. There is also a black bookcase that features various items Sully pulls from each vendor to create a temporary seasonal display.

After you pass the front half featuring the iconic 'treasure' chest from the 1800s, you'll enter the second half of the sprawling shop.

Since Treasure Box opened this past December, there are only a few rental spaces left, including a booth, individual locked shelves, and one wall space to hang items.

"We get to know our vendors really well, and we're able to promote them through traditional sources and our social media," said David, noting that personal



Business spotlight

Inventory changes often at Treasure Box. Spotted recently were:

- Atari game system
- Books
- Boombox
- Oil & Watercolor paintings
- Sports & Pokémon Trading Cards
- Comic Books
- Housewares
- Women & Children's Clothing
- Cabbage Patch dolls
- Pez & Die Cast Car collection
- Military & Americana items
- Asian antiques
- Vintage jewelry
- Cameras



touch can be difficult for large antique mills and shops.

"And we are selective about the types of vendors and items we incorporate," said Sully. "We don't want to create competition between vendors within the store. At the moment we're specifically looking for a vintage toy vendor and coin/stamp vendor."

Treasure Box also accepts donated items, including decor, cards, comics, men's and women's accessories, clothing, small housewares, collectibles, memorabilia, vintage toys, old records and more. They do not accept textiles, and are very selective on furniture given the space available in the shop.

Donated jewelry is bagged and put inside the antique "Treasure Box" and sold for \$4 per grab bag. "You never know what treasure you'll find in there, that's part of what makes it fun."

They also offer consignment and house calls.

"If people would like the freedom of mind from pricing, setting up and selling, consignment is a great idea. Sometimes people just have a few items and it's more economical to consign."

In general, Sully says prices at Treasure Box are very competitive. "Because of the independent vendors, the pricing runs the gamut, we have something in every price range."

The store, located to the right as you drive into the main entrance to the Medway Shopping Center, is kid-friendly and ADA-friendly with wide uncluttered aisles that are easy to maneuver.

They accept all forms of payment (cash, check, credit cards, Venmo, and Apple Pay). They offer gift certificates as well, and are also offering a free gift with purchase if you mention this article, while supplies last.

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Treasure Box also accepts donated items. Donated jewelry is bagged and put inside the antique "Treasure Box" and sold for \$4 per grab bag. "You never know what treasure you'll find in there, that's part of what makes it fun."

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A Winning Addition – Dr. Kylee Eagles Brings Sports Medicine and Nutrition Expertise to Medway

By JENNIFER RUSSO

If you have ever experienced muscle or joint pain, you know that it greatly impacts quality of life. It can limit mobility, make daily tasks seem almost impossible to complete, and cause an incredible amount of frustration and stress. Maybe it was a rotator cuff tear in a baseball game or a pulled hamstring while out on your morning jog. Perhaps it was a strained back muscle caused by shoveling snow, knee pain caused by something you aren't sure of, or a case of tendonitis or arthritis. Whatever the malady, it is important to seek the care of a specialist to analyze the root cause so that further damage is avoided.

Dr. Kylee Eagles, renowned for her expert and compassionate care on the South Shore, has recently moved her practice to Medway, offering a welcoming space nearby for those looking to heal, regain their mobility, or achieve their personal health

Business spotlight

goals. She is looking forward to continuing along the path that she believes she was born to follow.

“I grew up in the healthcare world, with both of my parents being chiropractors. I remember when I was twelve, I was helping my dad over the summer and one of his high school patients had some shoulder pain during a personal training session. He took him aside and adjusted his rib since it had misaligned, and I remember looking at him and telling him that this was what I wanted to do. I thought it was awesome that the patient was able to continue with his workout and not cause any additional injuries because of a doctor having that knowledge and fixing it right away. Every decision I have



made since that moment has been toward becoming the best sports medicine doctor I can be,” shares Dr. Eagles.

And she truly loves what she does, believing that medicine isn't just about treatment, but building strong and meaningful relationships with her patients. With everything she learned in school, her residency and fellowship, she still credits patients with teaching her new things every day.



“I believe in lifelong learning. You need to constantly learn new things in order to be great at what you do. In medicine, there are always advancements being innovated every day. Sometimes I will have patients come in with a unique issue and I'll investigate treatment options. If there is a new procedure that I think would be beneficial to them, I will do everything to learn that procedure so I can help. I want to fix their problem, that is my ultimate goal,” says Dr. Eagles.

Dr. Eagles is triple board certified in family medicine, sports medicine, and obesity medicine, and has an additional certification in sports nutrition, so comprehensive care is the main focus of her practice.

“If an athlete has an injury or finds that there are repetitive injuries, it is critical to get to the root cause of the problem. Sometimes there is a nutrition deficiency, or they are not fueling themselves properly, or another issue that needs to be addressed. So, factoring in the nutritional conversations are just as important,” shares Dr. Eagles.

As a runner, weightlifter, and former competitive swimmer herself, she genuinely strives to ensure that her patients have all the tools they need to remain strong and healthy. Understanding what her patients are going

through, she will try to find ways to help them (both athletes and non-athletes) stay active so that they don't become sedentary and find themselves injured again.

“We aren't meant to sit still. Not being active throughout our lives causes all of the side effects of that. Obesity, depression, diabetes, heart disease, joint pain, and even anxiety can all be caused by not moving our bodies. And injuries often happen when someone isn't being consistent in their movement,” says Dr. Eagles.

When might you seek treatment for pain? Here's what to pay attention to.

“Any sharp pains, stiffness, weakness or limitations to being able to move around easily are red flags,” she says. “Early care can ensure the ability to stay strong and active, enjoying all of life's moments as they come.”

Dr. Eagles is now accepting patients of all ages at her new office, located at 68A Main Street in Medway. The building also includes a lab, x-ray, and urgent care so patients don't need to travel to multiple locations for treatment. Call to schedule an appointment at (508) 321-2844 or visit <https://www.milfordregionalphysicians.org/doctors/eagles-kylee-do> for more information.

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Board-certified in family medicine, sports medicine, and obesity medicine, Dr. Eagles offers a unique blend of expertise. She is certified in sports nutrition and has advanced training in exercise physiology, osteopathic manual therapy, trigger point therapy, nerve blocks, and ultrasound-guided diagnosis and treatment.

Whether you're an athlete looking to return to peak performance or someone seeking relief from chronic pain, Dr. Eagles provides personalized care and empowers you with the tools to stay active and feel your best.



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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 unex-

pected, 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. 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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Congressman Auchincloss Holds Town Meeting in Franklin

On February 18th, Congressman Jake Auchincloss visited the town of Franklin to hold a Town Meeting at Franklin High School with local residents. Congressman Auchincloss addressed the fast-moving changes taking place at the federal level by Executive Order, how they would impact the Commonwealth, and measures he and others were taking to protect Massachusetts' interests. Residents lined up to voice their concerns, including some Federal employees impacted by layoffs, parents of children whose hospitals would be moving or closing, and others upset by the rapid pace of drastic action by the current administration.

A few days earlier, 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 hos-



Congressman Jake Auchincloss addressed swift changes at the federal level and their impact on Massachusetts at a Town Meeting he held at Franklin High School on February 18th.



So many residents lined up with concerns for the Congressman not all questions could be addressed at the meeting.

pitals. 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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A Year of New Friendships and Fur-tastic Adventures at Dogtopia

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Whether you added a new pup to your home over the holidays, are planning on doing some travel without your furry friend or have been looking for just the right place where you can leave your favorite canine companion for the day, Dogtopia understands that dogs are more than just pets, they are a part of your family.

Dogs are unique in that they are full of unconditional love, they give all of themselves to the people who care for them, expecting nothing in return except some food and attention. They bring a joy to their owners that can't really be described, so finding a caregiver for them is an important choice for any pup-parent.

Dogtopia is committed to giving these extended family members a happy, loving, and safe environment to play and learn in. With their state-of-the-art facility, impeccable safety standards, and certified animal-loving team members who are expertly trained to meet the needs of every pup, dog moms and dads can rest assured that their animals are very well taken care of and having a fabulous time.

Dogtopia, located in the Franklin Village shopping area, aims to be a haven for dogs by creating a fun and engaging environment for them while their owners are busy with work, errands, vacations, or other responsibilities.

"We want your pup to look forward to coming here. Nothing makes us happier than when one of our furry clients shows up and their tails are wagging in excitement to start their day with their friends," says Dogtopia Director Amy Hughes.

The Franklin Dogtopia location has three spacious playrooms where the dogs are placed based on their size, temperament and play style. Safety is always the first priority, and there are a number of protocols in place to ensure the pups' wellbeing, such as certified staff, compressed rubber flooring to reduce impact on the dogs' joints, soundproofing, a climate-controlled environment, and pet-friendly cleaning supplies.

Dogtopia requires a meet and greet for new clients, so that they can find the best placement for

Business spotlight



the pup, since all dogs are different. Each dog needs to be fit for an open play environment, and they conduct a thorough temperament test during this visit to better understand how the pup prefers to interact with others.

"We want to safely socialize the pups so they can release their energy, while getting lots of exercise and having fun," shares Hughes. "We have agility exercises, brain games, and more. It's an activity-filled day that will leave pups happy and fulfilled, so when they go home, they can relax and snuggle with their families."

All dogs need to be at least 12 weeks of age and must be up to date on all required vaccinations (Rabies, Canine Influenza, DHPP, and Bordetella). Dogs 7 months old and up must also be spayed/neutered. If you don't have the records on hand, Dogtopia is able to call your vet and obtain them for you.

For those who welcomed a new pet to the family this year, Amy shares some important tips:

- 1) Early socialization is extremely important so that the pup understands how to act within different environments and becomes more desensitized to distractions.
- 2) Be consistent with everything and have a routine in place that the pup can expect. A certain mealtime, play time, bedtime, potty time, etc. can make all the difference.
- 3) Be patient and calm while training. All dogs are different, and no pup is perfect. Praise for good behaviors and calmly correct those that need improvement.



"If the dog is still a puppy, we do offer a puppy pre-school that can help dogs acclimate early and be more adaptable," she says. "Bringing any pup into Dogtopia is always a win, because they will learn to safely socialize, have fun playing in a structured way, and reinforce good behaviors that make home life even smoother."

Dogtopia promises peace of mind for dog parents, with live webcams in every playroom that can be looked at any time, and periodic report cards to keep them in the loop.

In addition to daycare, boarding and spa services are also available. Homestyle crates are set up comfortably for rest and that feeling of "home away from home" and pups can even be pampered with a bath, nail trim and blueberry facial!

Dogtopia operates with a community mindset, with events that clients can take part in with their pups, such as a craft day where pups create gifts for their human parents, themed dance parties, Mini Mondays which offer specialized play for small dogs, and more. They even recently had a Santa and pup photo op and an ugly sweater party.



In addition to helping the community by caring for local pets, the Dogtopia Foundation also comes together to raise money for important causes, such as service dogs for Veterans. Stay tuned to learn how to help them with these efforts.

Does your pup need a place for socialization, exercise, love, and endless fun? **Take advantage of a special, limited time offer – for just \$99 a week, your pup can enjoy unlimited daycare visits.** This deal won't last long, so grab it while it's available!

Learn more about Dogtopia of Franklin Village and their amazing services by visiting <https://www.dogtopia.com/massachusetts-franklin-village/> or check out their Instagram at @DogtopiaFranklinVillage.

Check out our March Events!

- **Scruffy Awards** - March 3-7th, Winners announced on March 7th.
- **Puppy Pre-school** every Saturday 10-10:45am
- **National Pi Day** - March 14th
- **St. Patrick's Day** - March 17th
- **National Puppy Day** - March 22nd
- **Wellness Wednesday** - March 26th
- **Foundation Friday** - March 28th

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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. They can be cut, colored, and styled just like your own. Advanced craftsmanship, such as lace fronts and monofilament tops, creates a lifelike hairline

Beauty is our Business!



HAIR LOSS SOLUTIONS

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.

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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.

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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.

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Sports

Kuphal Happy to Guide Younger Teammates to Success

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up and playing hockey in Franklin, a town where the high school has been a division one powerhouse on the ice for many years, made Jason Kuphal's decision where to attend high school difficult. Eventually, Jason felt he made the right decision when he took his skills to Tri-County Regional Vocation High School, also in Franklin.

"Living here in Franklin and deciding to go to Tri-County was a tough decision for me," Kuphal said. "Franklin had a real good division 1 team, but I felt that it was a far better situation going to Tri-County, where I would be able to learn a trade and get my diploma while also playing hockey."

Second-year Cougar Coach Steve Smith is glad that Kuphal made the choice to come to Tri-County.

"As one of three captains on the team, he is the leader of the three. He is a true leader on and off the ice," Smith said. "He leads us in all of our drills, and here at Tri-County we have a hierarchy, and the captains are responsible to bring the underclassmen up to speed while helping them both on the ice and in school. I can't say enough about Jason. Everyone looks up to him."

As a senior, Kuphal is a three-time captain for the Cougars; something that he takes very seriously.

"When our senior captain left during my sophomore year, I was voted in by the players to replace him. Being named a captain as a sophomore was difficult, because although they voted me in, I was still only a sophomore and an underclassman," Kuphal said. "By my junior year, I was much more comfortable, and now, as a senior who has been in the position for three years now, everyone understands what I expect from them."

Kuphal got involved with hockey, because he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps (he played hockey at Blue Hills).



Tri-County senior Jason Kuphal, three-time hockey captain, does his part to lead the team to success.

"I wanted to follow in his tracks," Kuphal said. "Hockey is a contact sport, and I tried playing basketball and baseball, but there is nothing like having a stick in your hand and getting physical on the ice."

As a youngster just getting started, Jason went through the basics of learning how to play hockey, but his father wanted him to start out playing defense before he got to shooting the puck and trying to score.

"My father wanted me to learn how to skate backwards before I had anything to do with offense. Originally, I was upset with his decision, but now I am thankful and appreciative that he had me do it," he said. "It was tough and not easy for a young hockey player; you want to a score goals, not play defense."

After playing defense for 3-4 years, Kuphal was finally able to make the transition to the offensive side of the ice. He noted that as a defender, you get your occasional chances to score, but your main priority is to protect the house. As an 11-year-old winger, he was finding the transition to be a bit of a struggle.

"Having played defense for all those years, I realized and understood why things were being done the way they were," Kuphal said. "You just have to trust your teammates, but at times, my instincts would take over, and I was helping out on the defensive end of the ice."

When he eventually got the opportunity to play offense, his coaches were looking for him to play center, but he wanted no part of that position. To Kuphal, center is just an extension of the defense, and he already had his share of defense. He had a lot of catching up to do to get his offensive game up to speed, so he wanted to play wing.

Although now playing offense, the Tri-County senior doesn't consider himself to be a goal scorer – he would prefer to pass the puck and get the assist. He has gotten his share of goals but finds it much more rewarding to dish the pass to one of his teammates and see them have the success of scoring.

Four years ago, Kuphal found himself to be a young, intimidated freshman when he first came to Tri-County and laced up his skates for tryouts, but things have changed over the years.

"Tryouts were at 6 a.m., and there definitely was some butterflies and a lot of bigger kids than I was used to playing with. I was used to kids my own age, and now I was going up against kids up to four years older and much bigger than I was," he said. "Things passed as soon as I got onto the ice, and after making varsity, I found myself on the second line. I believe I had a goal my first game, but I wasn't going all out. I was easing into my new role on the ice as well as my schooling."



Last year, Smith took over the TC hockey program and upped the morale of the players.

"We had been losers for such a long time, we all knew that it was a reality, but under a new coach, we wanted to strike at the opportunity and try to turn things around," he said. "Our first game under Coach Smith was against Attleboro, a division 1 team that was very intimidating, but coach had us believing in ourselves, and we went out and go the win. That win just set the tone for the rest of the season."

Under Smith, the Cougars went 11-6, posting their best season in nine years and earned themselves a trip to the Division 4 State Tournament. Unfortunately, their first game was against the number one seed, Winthrop, and they were sent home immediately, but it was a playoff game, nonetheless.

Getting to the tournament was a special moment for the Cougar hockey team, Kuphal noted, but a learning experi-

ence, as the thousands of people in the crowd had an effect on the players.

Third-year captain Kuphal hopes that he can help guide his team back into the tournament with better results this season. In order to get there, TC is going to have to take their game to the next level and beat some of the teams that they lost to last year.

"We practice at 6 a.m. three times a week and are in the weight room another day while watching film on our opposition the last day," Smith said. "We are trying to grow the program here at Tri-County; it's a new culture to the hockey program."

Individually, Kuphal wants to have fun during his final season on the ice. Although he likes to score, he is looking to having a season where he can get as many assists as he can.

"I had my time, now it's their turn," he said. "As a senior I will not be here next year, so they need to take their game to the next level to keep the program trending in the right direction."

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Franklin Fallen Heroes' Remembrance Ceremonies

In honor of the 45 Franklin Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, remembrance ceremonies are held on the anniversary of their KIA date. The ceremonies are led by members of the American Legion Post 75 and VFW Post 3402 and

are held at 9 a.m. on the Veterans Memorial Walkway on the Franklin Town Common. Family members, friends and members of the community are all welcome to attend. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be postponed to the following day.

MARCH

March 10 – Marshall E. Rollins – WWII

March 10 – John A. Schur – WWII

March 18 – Elton E. Ekstrom – WWII

March 30 – W. Franklin Lynch – WWI



Rep. Roy Calls for Primary Seat Belt Law at Brain Injury Advocacy Day

(Boston-MA) On February 4th, 2025, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) hosted their annual Brain Injury Annual Advocacy Day at the Massachusetts State House. They were advocating for bills requiring commercial health insurers to cover cognitive rehabilitation services for survivors of traumatic brain injury (TBI), continued funding for the Statewide Head Injury Program, and State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy's primary seat belt bill.

Rep. Roy attended the Annual Advocacy Day to show his support and addressed the crowd about HD. 1180 An Act establishing a primary seat belt law. As he noted in his remarks, "Seatbelts offer the best defense from injury or death in car crashes. Seat belts promote safety, save lives, and save money."

Roy cites statistics that a primary seatbelt law could save 45 lives, prevent 500 injuries, and save \$525 million over 5 years with a primary seat belt law in effect. According to a recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine, the single greatest opportunity to improve health and reduce premature deaths lies in personal behavior and seat belt use is yet another form of impaired driving that must be addressed. Massachusetts ranks 46th in the nation in seat belt use, lagging the national rate by nearly 10 percent, reinforcing the need for this legislation.

Held at the state house every year, the BIA-MA event provides information on legislative ambitions to constituents, survivors, and elected officials. The push for advocacy does not stop with their policy agenda; the event

also provides a platform for survivors of traumatic brain injuries to share their personal story on the significant impact of TBI.

During the event, Franklin's Ali Rheaume, a traumatic brain injury survivor, shared her own experiences, stating, "Brain injuries are 'invisible', meaning you cannot see what the impact is simply by looking at someone. I may look good, but you have no idea that I actually feel confused, foggy, or even in pain."

"You may get up, get dressed, eat breakfast, drive to work, navigate work all day, and not have to think twice about any of those actions or decisions. For someone who sustained brain injury, every task is a big deal. Choosing your clothes, remembering a schedule, and problem-solving along with sudden issues that arise such as traffic, can all be extremely difficult. It takes cognition, which is affected by brain injury, and that is why we are strongly advocating for new laws, such as Rep Roy's bill."

The BIA-MA also presented attendees with an "Unmasking Brain Injury" exhibit. This offered compelling visual insight into TBI survivors' everyday experiences through their artistic works. Through the speeches of Massachusetts Legislators, BIA-MA, MassAbility, and other survivors, the annual Brain Advocacy Day hopes to ensure stories like Rheaume's are heard throughout the state.

For more information on the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, please visit <https://biama.org/>.



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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

year?

- 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?

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 an-

swer 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

the same list of questions so they can make accurate comparisons, 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?

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

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

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, TikTok, 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

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

example, 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

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/

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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

Coursera [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. 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/

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/

This article includes original content and information from the American Association of University Women, coursera.org, forbes.com, 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 industry,

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

skills this job is looking for and list where they come up on my résumé. 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

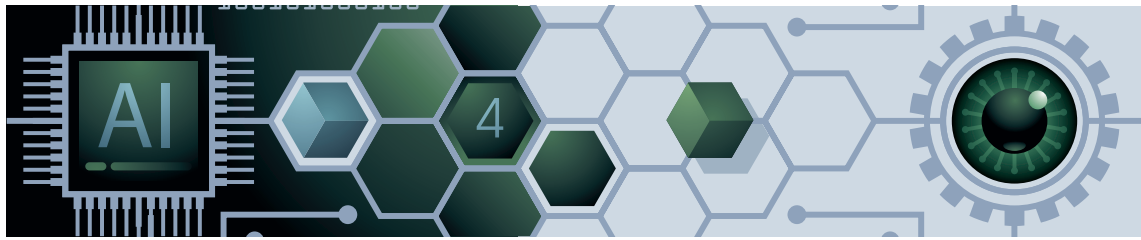
WHAT IS "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE"

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

search time on reconnecting with their 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.



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

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

résumé 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

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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 franklincwp@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!

Franklin Garden Club Presents Hydrangea Program

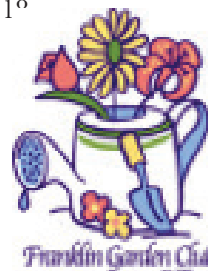
The Franklin Garden Club, in partnership with the Franklin Public Library, will offer a talk on Hydrangea Ps and Qs on Tuesday, March 4, at 7 p.m. at the Franklin Library located at 11^o Main Street, Franklin, MA. The program is open to the public at no charge.

Hydrangea Ps and Qs Covers Planting, pH, Pruning, Problems and audience questions. The program will be presented by Lifetime Master Gardener Kathie Skinner and will address common issues related to growing beautiful hydrangeas, including when and how to plant; how to raise or lower the soil PH to control bloom color; when and how to

prune hydrangea that bloom on old wood and new wood; and common fungal problems and pests.

There will also be an opportunity to ask questions.

Skinner is the past Education Coordinator and past Master Gardener Training Coordinator for the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association. She is a retired K-12 educator and administrator who currently does education and policy research and writing for various state and national education organizations.



Save the Date!

3rd Annual SAFE Gala: An Evening of Giving
5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 8, 2025,
Lakeview Pavilion, Foxboro, MA
Info at www.tinyurl.com/safe-gala

Zoom Into Health & Fitness!

Classes begin the second week of April.

This spring, UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center is offering live-streamed wellness classes to enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

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- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
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| Therapeutic Qi Gong | Pilates Barre Fusion |
| Zumba Toning® | Strength Training |
| Shaping Up with Ease | |

For More Information/To Register:

Visit milfordregional.org & select "Classes and Events" on the homepage.




UMass Memorial Health
MILFORD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
14 Prospect Street • Milford, MA • milfordregional.org

Living Healthy

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 myo-

opia, 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.

- **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.

The Future of Vision Care:

Researchers are actively exploring new prevention and 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.

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.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center: Your Partner in Eye Health

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, our dedicated team of ophthalmologists and optometrists, supported by highly trained staff, are available to treat various eye problems, including refractive errors. We offer a dedicated optical shop with a children's boutique, providing quality glasses

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Call for Artists: Create a Fairy House for the Franklin Sculpture Park!

Deadline to Sign Up March 22nd

The Franklin Sculpture Park Fairy House Exhibit is dedicated to fostering environmental awareness and strengthening community connections through public art. This exhibit invites participants of all ages to create and enjoy fairy houses crafted from eco-friendly materials, celebrating both creativity and environmental respect. By making art accessible and free to everyone, we aim to inspire a shared appreciation for nature, encourage sustainable practices, and build a welcoming community space where imagination and conservation come together.

The Town of Franklin's Department of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy invites artists and creators of all ages to craft an environmentally friendly fairy house for display in the Franklin Sculpture Park! As part of our Fairy Trails & Tales of

Franklin exhibition, we're looking for imaginative and sustainable designs that harmonize with the park's natural beauty.

Please note: All materials used in the creation of this sculpture should be environmentally friendly. We encourage the use of sustainable, recyclable, and non-toxic materials to ensure the sculpture minimizes its environmental impact while enhancing our public space responsibly [keeping our animal residents at the park safe from consumption of materials, etc.]

Guidelines for Submission:

Theme: Fairy house designs should embrace the wonder of nature and inspire curiosity in visitors of all ages.

Materials: We encourage the use of eco-friendly and natural materials—think recycled wood,

leaves, twigs, stones, and other sustainable resources that blend with the natural environment.

Size: Houses should be small and low-impact to maintain the park's landscape.

Safety and Stability: Ensure that your fairy house is sturdy and can withstand outdoor weather conditions. *Fairy architects must understand that their designs will be placed in an exterior setting with unpredictability of natural elements and public interactions; which is part of the charm of outdoor art.*

Fairy house artists and architects will have their fairy houses on display throughout the fall season, welcoming visitors to experience the magic of Franklin Sculpture Park. Accepting all entries transforms the park into a living, ever-evolving tapestry of community spirit, creativity, and collaboration.

Guidelines for Creating Fairy Houses that honor the Franklin Sculpture Park Natural Environment: Each fairy house will be

installed in ways that align with conservation principles, ensuring minimal disturbance to the landscape and its wildlife.

Installations will follow careful guidelines:

Environmentally Friendly Materials: Fairy houses should use nature-inspired materials that will blend harmoniously with the park's natural setting. **Gentle Installation Techniques:** All structures will be placed without digging, drilling, or attaching anything that could damage plants, trees, or soil. This keeps roots, vegetation, and habitats undisturbed. [Installation will be handled by the Town of Franklin].

Animal Safety Awareness: Designs should avoid materials that could harm animals, birds, or other inhabitants of the park. By following these guidelines, each fairy house will enhance the park's charm while honoring and preserving its natural beauty.



Submission Process: Although all houses will be accepted, Fairy Architects and artists must submit their initial idea/sign up for the program: Visit <https://form.jotform.com/243083654745058>

Submission process: Asks artists to fill out contact information for marketing/label creation and asking artists to share brainstorm of the fairy house design/list materials. *Deadline to submit is Saturday, March 22nd*

Have questions? Please reach out to the Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy Cory Shea [cshea@franklinma.gov]. Let's bring a touch of magic to the park and celebrate nature through art.

Installation is scheduled for April 2025. Fairy houses will be on display from May through November 2025. Artists pick up November 2025.

Franklin's Ladybug Spring Trail Walk is set for April 26

Save the date! April 26th is the 3rd Annual Ladybug Cultural & Historical Trail Spring Walk through downtown Franklin. The rain date will be Sunday April 27th.

The event will start at Franklin Historical Museum on 80

West Central Street (Route 140) where you can get your trail map. Lots of activities are scheduled during this year's spring walk. Stay tuned for more details. Check for updates at the Franklin Downtown Partnership website at www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.

Or follow the Downtown Partnership on social media for details:

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

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

The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501c3 organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents can join the Downtown Partnership for only \$25. The Partnership manages

events like the Strawberry Stroll, the Harvest Festival, the Ladybug Historical & Cultural Trail, and initiatives such as beautification, streetscape design, greenspace, alley murals, and sculpture projects. For more information go to www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.



EYES

continued from page 20

and contacts. We also provide world-class cataract surgery and advanced treatments, including procedures that can eliminate the need for glasses in select cases. All surgeries are performed in our accredited surgical facility. Our in-house optical shop crafts glasses while you wait, and new patients receive a complimentary pair of select

frames. We offer after-hours, same-day emergency appointments and Saturday availability. With over four decades of dedicated service, Milford-Franklin Eye Center is committed to delivering advanced eye care close to home.

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Franklin High School Celebrates Student Success

From the classroom to the performance stage and on the athletic fields, Franklin High School students succeeded in academics, athletics, clubs, extracurriculars, and in the community.

“We are continually impressed with our students’ dedication and determination,” Superintendent Giguere said. “They work extremely hard and constantly exceed the day-to-day requirements expected of them. We are thrilled to celebrate their success stories.”

Some of the highlights over the last few months at Franklin High School include the following:

Academics

- Forty-seven Franklin High School students have either

earned the Seal of Biliteryacy or are in line to earn it when they graduate. The award recognizes students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by graduation. Last year, four Franklin High students were awarded college credit for earning the Seal.

- More than a dozen Franklin High School students participated in a Poetry Out Loud competition on Thursday, Jan. 23. Students recited two poems from memory during two rounds of competition. Senior Ella Mahoney won the competition and plans to move forward and compete at districts at the Hopkinton Center for the Arts on Sunday, March 9, at 1

p.m. For the next round of the competition, she must select a third poem from the Poetry Out Loud website to memorize. Sophomore Abigail Schmellick came in second place and will serve as a backup to Ella for districts.

Athletics

- Franklin High School Athletics teams celebrated several successes in the fall 2024 season, including a Massachusetts School Administrators’ Association Div. 1 2024 Fall Cheerleading State Championship. The Cheerleading team will compete at the national level this spring.
- Three Franklin High School coaches received MIAA 2023-24 Coach of the Year awards: Boys Basketball coach CJ Neely, Unified Track coach Lisa Burger, and former Boys and Girls Swim coach Jess Pridham.

DECA

- The Franklin High School DECA Chapter participated in the regional Mas-

sachusetts DECA District Two Conference on Jan. 9 and 10 in Mansfield.

- On Jan. 9, over 100 Franklin students competed in the Written Event, facing intense competition from more than 700 students across various districts, all vying for the top five spots in each category. Franklin advanced one individual and 14 teams to the next stage.
- On Jan. 10, Franklin High School had over 50 students competing in the Role Play Event, which featured over 450 students from other districts, competing for the top five spots in each category. Franklin advanced five individuals and four teams.
- Franklin DECA will proudly send over 50 students to the State Competition, which will take place at the Seaport Boston from Feb. 27 to March 1. The team aspires to advance to the International Career Development Conference in Florida, the pinnacle of DECA competitions.

Visual & Performing Arts

- The Franklin High School Theatre Company (FH-STC), directed by Chloe Selznik, performed *The Outsiders* in November.
- Twenty-seven Franklin High School music students have been accepted into the Massachusetts Central District Honor Band, Jazz Band, Chorus, and Orchestra. Eight students placed first chair in their sections. Eighteen of the students scored high enough to be recommended for auditions for the Massachusetts All-State Festival.
- Franklin High School music student volunteers performed at various community events to help celebrate the holiday season, including performances at Walmart, Shaw’s, and Birchwood Bakery & Kitchen.
- In collaboration with the Salvation Army, Franklin High School Chorus members sang Christmas carols at Stop & Shop on two occasions, raising \$484 for the cause.



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Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. CLOSED Sunday

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 (Nor-

folk, 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.



Calendar

March 4

Hydrangea Ps and Qs, 7 p.m. presented by Franklin Garden Club and Franklin Public Library, 118 Main Street, Franklin, with Lifetime Master Gardener Kathie Skinner at library

March 5

Community Conversation with Michael Bobbitt, of Mass. Cultural Council, regarding ArtPharmacy in Franklin, 12-2 p.m., THE BLACK BOX, 15 W. Central St., Franklin

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

Second Sunday Speaker Series presents Historical Commission Chair, Alan Earls on the 100+ year story of Clark Cutler, McDermott, the very successful local maker of (mostly) non-woven textiles, 1:15 p.m., Franklin

Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, doors open 1 p.m.

Poetry Out Loud Districts Competition (FHS student to compete), 1 p.m., Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe, Hopkinton

March 12

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 13

Franklin Arts and Culture: Volunteer and 2025 Grant Recipient Reception, 7 p.m., Dean College Guidrey Center in Paula Rooney Student Center, rsvp at <https://tinyurl.com/FranklinRecipients>

March 14

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

March 15

Irish in America free concert, 3 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

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

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/Upcoming Events](https://www.fuse.org/upcoming-events) or at door. \$5 for students 13-18, \$10 adults.

Children under 12 free.

March 16

"Third Sunday" Music at the Museum presents program on 12-tone or serial composition, 1:15 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, doors open 1 p.m.

March 20

JUNTO Non-Fiction Book Club, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Eve, by Cat Bohannon

March 21

Medway Marathoners Dance Party, 7-10 p.m., Franklin Elks Lodge #2136, <https://tinyurl.com/medwaymarathoners>

March 29

Party for the Pantry, THE BLACK BOX, 15 W. Central St., Franklin, benefit for Franklin Food Pantry

Franklin Rotary 3rd Annual Comedy Show, Doors open 5 p.m., 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. show, purchase tickets online: ci.ovationtix.com/35936/production/1212640?performanceId=11520198, (508) 284.9598, or rotarycluboffranklinma@gmail.com or visit www.franklinmarotary.org.

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>

Franklin & Weymouth Food Pantries' "SOUPer Bowl" Yields 4,967 Cans of Donated Soup



The Franklin Food Pantry and the Weymouth Food Pantry participated in a friendly "SOUPer Bowl" competition, collecting nearly 5,000 cans of soup to help fight food insecurity in their communities. From January 9 to February 9, 2025, residents, local businesses, and even state senators rallied behind their local pantries, resulting in a combined total of 4,967 cans of soup. The final tally was Franklin 2,586 cans, Weymouth 2,381 cans.

"The SOUPer Bowl's success exceeded our expectations, and we are incredibly grate-

ful to everyone in Franklin and Weymouth who came together to support their local pantry. Thanks to their generosity, we collected nearly 5,000 cans of soup but also raised awareness and brought communities together to take action against hunger," said Tina Powderly, Executive Director of the Franklin Food Pantry.

"The way our communities rallied was so heartening," said Pam Denholm, Executive Director of the Weymouth Food Pantry. "Weymouth may have been 'edged out' of a win, but

we are better positioned to support neighbors coming to us for help as winter endures and that still feels like winning to us."

If you or someone you know is experiencing food insecurity, local food pantries are available to help. For assistance in Franklin, please visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org. For Weymouth residents, visit www.weymouthfoodpantry.org. You can also find additional resources through the Greater Boston Food Bank's Partner Agency Locator at www.gbfb.org/need-food.

College Admission Trends for 2024

One word to describe the 2024 college admission cycle - unpredictable! From increased competitiveness at state flagship universities and the confusing role of standardized test scores, to the growing interest in southern schools and the heightened selectivity of certain majors, the landscape is shifting rapidly. These trends are reshaping how students and families should approach the college search and application process. We will explore three of these key trends.

Trend #1: State Flagship Universities Are Becoming More Selective

State universities have traditionally served as strong, accessible, and affordable options for students. However, increased applicant numbers, both in-state and out-of-state, have significantly intensified competition. Using UMass Amherst's 2024-2025 admission cycle, preliminary data shows over 50,000 applications submitted. A 3.5 weighted GPA, which was once competitive, is no longer a guarantee for admission—not just to the Isenberg School of Management, but even for general admission. The average submitted SAT score is 1397, ACT is 31, and the GPA average is 4.05. Strong grades and test scores are no longer enough; students must show other strengths.



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

Key Points:

- **Engage in activities that align with your intended major** to demonstrate commitment and interest in your field of interest.
- **Demonstrate interest** by visiting campuses, attending virtual sessions, and engaging with admissions representatives.
- **Consider alternative campuses or honors programs** within the state system that may offer a strong education with slightly less competition.

Trend #2: The Heightened Popularity of Southern Colleges

Southern colleges have become increasingly attractive to students nationwide. A September 2024 Wall Street Journal article, "Sorry, Harvard. Everyone Wants to Go to College in the South Now," says it all. Students are drawn to affordability, warm weather, and the quintessential large-college experience filled with fun and football. Schools such as the UNC Chapel Hill are seeing skyrocketing demand, with an in-state acceptance rate of approximately 40% to ultra-competitive 7% out-of-state rate.

Key Points:

- **Look beyond the well-known schools**—consider strong yet less competitive options like East Carolina University and High Point University, which offer impressive academics and facilities.

- **Ensure cultural and academic fit**—the southern college experience can be different from that of the Northeast; consider factors such as campus environment and student body culture.
- **Understand the competition**—out-of-state students often face steeper odds, so apply strategically to multiple southern schools.
- **Visit campuses if possible**—seeing a school in person can help determine whether the location, community, and lifestyle align with your preferences.

Trend #3: Increased Competition for Selective Majors

Certain programs, such as business, computer science, engineering, and nursing, are becoming more competitive, especially in schools with direct-admit programs. Even universities with higher overall acceptance rates can have significantly lower admission rates for these specific majors. Students often assume they have a "safety" school, only to find that gaining acceptance into their desired program is much harder than expected.

Key Points:

- **Have a viable backup plan**—if your first-choice major is business, consider a second major that also aligns with your career goals, such as economics; international relations or political science; or English (which provides transferable skills in communication and analysis).
- **Explain major flexibility in your application**—use the "Why this Major" supplemental

essay to explain how you can reach your goal with either major.

- **Highlight interest alignment in extracurriculars**—demonstrate academic and career interest through clubs, internships, research, or a part-time job.
- **Be open to transferring into a desired program later**—some schools allow internal transfers into competitive majors after the first year if students meet the requirements.

In a college admissions landscape that is increasingly difficult to predict, families must rethink the concept of "safety" and "probable" schools. Applicants can no longer assume admission based solely on GPA and test scores. Instead, college choices must have a thoughtful and authentic plan.

One of the most important messages I share with my students is to approach their applications as if they are telling a story about themselves. Each section of the application should highlight different strengths, passions, and values. The goal is not just to get into a college but to find the right fit. By aligning personal achievements with what each college seeks, students increase their chances of success in this evolving admissions process.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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**LETTERS OF APPOINTMENT
(GUARDIANSHIP OF A MINOR)
Docket No. N024P2949GD
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trail Court
Norfolk Probate and Family Court
35 Shawmut Rd. Canton, MA 02021
781-830-1200**

IN RE: Guardianship of: **Charlotte 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 01/12/2024, 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:

The Guardian's authority is specifically limited as follows: The Guardian is prohibited from permanently removing the child from the Commonwealth without an Order from the Court.

Date: January 28, 2025

Colleen M. Brierley, REGISTER OF PROBATE

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.

\$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 for more information.

Rotary Club of Franklin MA Holds 6th Annual Valentine's Brunch

The Rotary Club of Franklin MA held their 6th Annual Valentine's Brunch on February 18, 2025. Franklin seniors packed the Franklin Housing Authority Hall for delicious breakfast fare, served by Rotary members and teen members of the Franklin's Lion Heart youth leadership organization. Nurse Amy Evers, Aim to Care Senior Advisors, explained that



Benchmark Senior Living at Forge Hill residents provided centerpieces for the event. Shown are a few pics from the event.



Franklin Rotary 3rd Annual Comedy Night

Saturday March 29 @ Franklin Elks

5 p.m. Doors Open, 6 p.m. Dinner, 7 p.m. Comedy Show

Enjoy dinner and a show featuring three great Boston area comedians for a great cause!

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Franklin to Welcome Mass. Cultural Council's Michael Bobbitt, March 5th

Community Conversation to Focus on Franklin ArtPharmacy Initiative

The Town of Franklin is excited to welcome Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and Emily Devlin, LICSW, Head of Strategic Partnerships & Clinical Innovation at Art Pharmacy, for a Community Conversation on how the arts can play a vital role in supporting health and well-being in Franklin.

With funding from the Town opioid settlement funds, Franklin is launching Art Pharmacy—a nationally recognized program that connects individuals to arts and cultural engagements as a tool for healing, social connec-

tion, and overall wellness. The Town is piloting a program in Franklin specifically for substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support.

We are seeking partners from across Franklin's arts, culture, and social services sectors to help bring these programs to life. Whether you're part of a cultural organization, a wellness or mental health provider, a social services agency, or a business focused on community well-being, this is an opportunity to collaborate and make a difference.

Wednesday, March 5th 12-2pm

At the Blackbox Theater, 15 W Central Street, Franklin, Massachusetts 02038

Join us to learn more about:

- How Art Pharmacy programs will positively impact Franklin
- Opportunities for local arts & culture organizations, social service providers, and community-focused businesses to become program partners
- The role of arts and culture in strengthening mental health, wellness, and social connection

RSVP to the conversation at <https://tinyurl.com/Franklin-ArtPharmacy>

This community conversation is free and open to the public. Parking available onsite. For accessibility needs, please reach out to Cory Shea at cshea@franklinma.gov.

About Art Pharmacy:

Art Pharmacy connects people to arts and culture engagements in their communities to support their health and well-being.

Art Pharmacy works with a wide variety of cultural organizations.

- Creative or cultural programs that are open to the public.
- Programs may include a range of arts experiences from 'receptive' (e.g., admis-

sion to a museum, tickets to a performance) to 'participatory' (e.g., dance classes, open mic event).

- Practice any arts discipline/genre (visual & performing arts, literary arts, history & culture, etc.)

Who are Art Pharmacy members?

Art Pharmacy serves a wide range of individuals, ages 12+. The majority fall into two main groups, older adults (55+) showing risk factors for social isolation, loneliness, and depression, and young people (12-26) with behavioral health conditions, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

Rep. Roy Honored at Mass Save Ceremony for Work in Energy Efficiency

State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy (D-Franklin) was among those honored at the 2024 Mass Save Climate Leaders ceremony held at the State House on Tuesday, January 21st.

The annual event, co-hosted by the Sponsors of Mass Save (National Grid, Eversource, Until, Berkshire Gas, Liberty, and the Cape Light Compact), celebrated 19 "Climate Leaders" across a range of industries for partnering with Mass Save to make substantial and innovative energy efficiency investments. Representative Roy also received an award honoring him for his unwavering commitment to advancing energy efficiency in Massachusetts.

Collectively, the Mass Save Climate Leaders avoided 47,500 metric tons of CO₂, which is equivalent to the amount of en-



Roy speaks at the Mass Save ceremony.

ergy used by over 6,300 homes in one year. The awardees represented industries across a wide array of sectors such as health-care; municipalities; community organizations; cultural institutions; hospitality; industrial & agricultural energy efficiency;

post-secondary education; developers; the food industry; and school districts. Among those honored was the Acton Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD). ABRSD Superintendent Peter Light, formerly Principal at Franklin High School, was at the ceremony on behalf of the district to receive the award.

The ABRSD was honored for their work as one of the first-ever U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools awardees. Their Boardwalk Campus is a newly constructed, fully electric project that relocated two separate elementary schools into one energy efficient building. With the help of their Mass Save partner Eversource,



(L-R) Katherine Peters, Director of Residential Energy Efficiency at Eversource, Rep Roy and Chris Porter from National Grid, Director of Customer Energy Management at National Grid.

the project exceeded an Energy Use Intensity goal and installed energy-efficient measures such as ground-source heat pumps, enhanced insulation, demand-control ventilation, energy recovery, as well as a commercial-scale electric kitchen.

Representative Roy spoke at the awards ceremony along with Elizabeth Mahony, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, as well as leaders from Eversource and National Grid, each a Mass Save sponsor.

"I applaud the 2024 Mass Save Climate Leaders for under-

taking innovative, climate-driven solutions to reduce their energy use and carbon footprint," said State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy (D-Franklin). "I especially want to thank the Mass Save Sponsors for honoring me with an award and for their strong partnerships with entities across the Commonwealth to facilitate tangible, measurable, and impactful climate action that moves Massachusetts forward into its clean energy future."



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Historic Happenings at Franklin Historical Museum for March

Sun. March. 9--Second Sunday Speaker Series:

Historical Commission Chair, Alan Earls, will lead a presentation and discussion about the 100+ year story of Clark Cutler, McDermott, the very successful local maker of (mostly) non-woven textiles at the Franklin Historical Museum. Originally founded in 1911 to manufacture horse blankets, Clark Cutler became a pioneering supplier of “grass” for the newly popular amusement, Miniature Golf, developed patented vibration reduction material still used in industrial processes today, and became a key supplier to the global auto industry. If you or a family member worked at the company, please bring your stories! Museum is open from 1-4, program starts at 1:15. FREE

Sun. March 16, “Third Sunday” Music at the Museum program

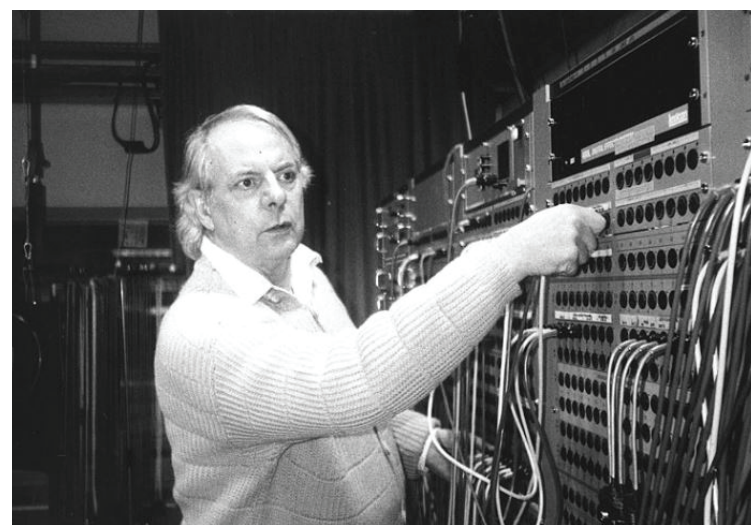
Our March Third Sunday “Music at the Museum” program offers a deep (but acces-



A group photo of Clark Cutler employees around 2010

sible!) dive into 12-tone or serial composition -- a very influential aspect of “modern” music that emerged in Vienna about a century ago and was widely championed by composer Arnold Schoenberg. Over time, the technique increased greatly in popularity and eventually became widely influential on Mid 20th-century and later compos-

ers. Many important composers who had originally actively opposed the technique, such as Aaron Copland and Igor Stravinsky, eventually adopted it in their music and its influence even appears at times in popular music. Historical Commission Member and Music Educator Randy LaRosa will lead the discussion of the mysteries and



Karlheinz Stockhausen, a practitioner of serial or 12-tone composition, in October 1994 in the Studio for Electronic Music of WDR Cologne, during production of the Electronic Music from FRIDAY from LIGHT.

pleasures of this musical philosophy that continues to challenge and inspire creatives. Museum open 1-4, program starts at 1:15. FREE

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central Street, Franklin. The museum is open Saturday mornings from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (except

as noted above) and Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m.

When visiting the museum, please consider donating a non-perishable item for the Franklin Food Pantry. Questions? Contact Alan Earls at (508)560 3786.

Visit us online at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.com>

ENERGY

continued from page 26

“I’m happy to be here to celebrate the Mass Save Climate Leaders and their good work to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and lower energy use through efficiency measures,” said Elizabeth Mahony, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. “The 2024 Climate Leaders are undertaking impressive projects including electrification, energy efficient upgrades, sustainable building projects, energy conservation, net zero buildings, and two all-electric geothermal schools.”

“It is our pleasure to recognize the 2024 Mass Save Climate Leaders, all of whom have distinguished themselves as true leaders in our collective missions to help Massachusetts achieve a net zero future,” said Tilak Subrahmanian, Vice President of Energy Efficiency at Eversource. “The impact each has had – individually and collectively – cannot be overstated.”

“Thank you, honorees, for being leaders not just in your in-

dustries, but for the entire Commonwealth,” said Christopher Porter, Director of Customer Energy Management at National Grid. “Your commitment to innovation, sustainability, and climate action is a testament to what can be achieved when we all work together towards a common goal.”

In recent years, the Legislature has taken significant steps to help decarbonize the Commonwealth while maintaining affordability and energy reliability.

In 2021, the Legislature set bold goals to reduce emissions with the Next Generation Roadmap Law, which required clean energy and climate “roadmap” plans every five years through 2050 to ensure the Bay State stayed on track.

In 2022, they built on this work by creating clean energy policies and programs to help meet these limits.

Recently, in 2024, the Legislature passed a climate bill which makes historic changes that streamline the state’s siting and permitting processes for clean energy infrastructure projects, and promotes clean energy, battery storage, and electric vehicle

policies to build a robust charging network, among many other reforms.

They also passed a climatetech bill which provides significant

levels of funding and tax incentives to support the growth of the climatetech industry, making the Commonwealth a competitive hub for this innovative and

critical sector. This bill was modeled after legislation that helped launch the successful life sciences industry in Massachusetts.

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American Revolution 250th Celebration Gets Boost in Wrentham and its "Daughter" Towns

Muster of Wrentham-Area Militia in 1775 to Be Highlighted By History-Minded



The inaugural meeting for the Wrentham-area April 19 Revolutionary War commemoration: Geri Tasker, Norfolk Historical Commission Chair, Jan Prentice, Franklin Historical Commission, Alan Earls, Franklin Historical Commission Chair, Rian Chace, Vice Chair, Plainville Historical Commission, Kristine Moore, Plainville Historical Commission.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, Wrentham (which then also included the modern towns of Franklin, Norfolk, and Plainville), was a quiet farming town, but one where local patriots were well aware of the tensions building with the mother country, Great Britain, and most were determined to protect what they saw as their most basic rights.

On the morning of April 19, 1775, news began to filter in about the British Army's march

to Lexington and Concord and then the fearsome news that fighting had broken out. Locals were ready and, according to historians, two groups of local Wrentham-area soldiers were soon on the march, to support their fellow Minutemen and militia members.

To commemorate that important local historical event, groups and individuals are pooling resources.

An organizational meeting of a group calling itself the His-

toric Huddle-- Norfolk & Bristol County, met at the Franklin Historical Museum last month to share ideas and begin to plan a Wrentham-area commemoration event for April 19 and for other future historical events connected to the American Revolution.

If you would like to help plan this commemoration event, contact Alan Earls at alan.r.earls@gmail.com.

58 Tri-County Seniors Awarded John & Abigail Adams Scholarship

Franklin, MA – Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School honored fifty-eight students from the graduating class of 2025 who have been awarded the prestigious John & Abigail Adams Scholarship. This honor not only celebrates these students' outstanding academic achievements, but also provides them with incredible opportunities for their future education.

The John & Abigail Adams Scholarship is awarded to Massachusetts public high school students who have demonstrated exceptional performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. To qualify, students must score at the Advanced level in either the Mathematics or English Language Arts section, and at least Proficient in the other section. Additionally, their combined MCAS scores must place them in the top 25% of their school district.

Recipients of the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship are eligible for an undergraduate

tuition waiver at any Massachusetts state college or university. This scholarship is valid for up to eight consecutive semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts public college or university provided students maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher during their college years.

Congratulations to the following Franklin recipients from the Tri-County class of 2025! Your achievements inspire us all and we look forward to seeing the amazing contributions you will make in the years to come.

Franklin - Sydnie Anagnos, Conor Cadorette, Sunny Dion, Jaimin Farrington Leet, Nicholas Harootunian, Clancy Harrington, Jesse Rogers, Eric Talamini, Ethan Trudel

For more information about the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship and its benefits, please visit the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/john-and-abigail-adams-scholarship>).

1776 Financial Services Offers the Scott Dittrich Memorial Scholarship

1776 Financial Services, of Franklin, is proud to offer a scholarship to one Franklin High School senior who will pursue a business-related major at a 4-year college or university. The scholarship is a progressive one that will be given out over the four years of study.

The scholarship is given in memory of 1776 Financial Services co-founder Scott Dittrich who passed away in March 2023. Throughout his lifetime, Scott demonstrated the extraordinary ability to regularly engage others and influence change and was dedicated to serving the community.

For more information or to apply for the scholarship, students should contact the Franklin High School guidance office.

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Knights of Columbus Scholarship Program 2025

The Knights of Columbus 1847 St Mary Parish Franklin is accepting applications for *The Robert Simmler PGK, Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart Council Scholarships*. They are offering two scholarships, one in the sum of \$3000 and the second \$1000 scholarship. The applicants must be a registered member of St Mary's Parish in Franklin and must be graduating from High School in Spring 2025 and progressing onto their first year of study at a 2- or 4-year college/university. All interested applicants please submit a completed scholarship application post-marked on or before the application deadline of March 28, 2025

The application form is available from the banner on the

St Mary parish website www.stmarysfranklin.org or on the Knights of Columbus website <https://www.kofc1847.org/>. Please fill in ALL information accurately and clearly, and then submit the completed application to Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council 1847, St Mary's Parish c/o Michael Swan 38 Madison Ave. Franklin MA 02038

The scholarship recipients will receive payment upon completion of their 1st semester of studies and upon proof of enrollment in the 2nd semester.

If more information is needed, please contact Mike Swan: (508) 404-4792

Remington MS Student Cade Taccini Named Project 351 Ambassador for Franklin

Remington Middle School eighth grader Cade Taccini has been selected as Franklin's Project 351 Ambassador. Remington Middle School nominated Cade for her willingness to help whenever needed, strong leadership skills, and ability to serve as a voice of reason among her peers.

"Cade is the first person to volunteer when she sees something that needs to be done. She completes her work with integrity, seeks to learn, and showcases her creativity and strengths," said Principal Williams. "She is an active member of our school community, and we are incredibly proud of her commitment to service."

Project 351 is a statewide youth-led service initiative that brings together eighth-grade students from every city and



Remington Middle School eighth grader Cade Taccini has been selected as Franklin's Project 351 Ambassador and will take part in a year of leadership development and community service. (Photo courtesy Franklin Public Schools)

town in Massachusetts for a year of leadership development and community service. Ambassadors are chosen for their dedication to helping others, commitment to service, and leadership potential.

On Jan. 25, Cade joined fellow Ambassadors from across the state at Project 351's annual Launch Day in Boston, where they participated in a day of service and leadership training.

After gathering at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum for a morning of celebration, attended by Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, the Project 351 Ambassadors were mobilized by Service Hero teams for an afternoon of volunteerism at La Colaborativa, Brighton High School, and Cradles to Crayons. In partnership with these community leaders, Ambassador service on Launch Day impacted more than 34,000 neighbors.

For more information about Project 351, visit <https://project351.org>.

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Franklin, MA Town Administrator Jamie Hellen Voted as MMA President

Franklin Town Administrator voted by statewide municipal colleagues to serve as President

The Town of Franklin is pleased to announce that our Town Administrator, Jamie Hellen, has been voted by his colleagues throughout Massachusetts as the 2025 President of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Board of Directors. The MMA Board of Directors are made up of municipal leaders, including Town Managers, Mayors, City Councillors, Select Board and Finance Committee members from throughout Massachusetts.

“I am deeply honored that my colleagues throughout Massachusetts chose and voted to have me serve as MMA President this year”, said Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. “Make no mistake, this appointment is less about me personally, but more so recognizes the deep respect that municipal officials across the entire state have for the Town of Franklin. This is a reflection of the creativity, innovation and leadership every single member of our town and school staff have across Massachusetts. This is a team win; the entire town and school staff and Franklin Town Council should be exceptionally proud of their

continuous work to distinguish Franklin.”

Mr. Hellen was appointed at a Board of Directors meeting last weekend at the Connect 351 annual conference of municipal leaders in Boston. Over a dozen officials from Franklin attended the conference, including Massachusetts Municipal Councillors Association (MMCA) member and Franklin Town Councillor, Melanie Hamblen.

“I am really proud that Franklin has a leadership role in the MMA and a seat at the table with respect to state policy impacting local government” said Town Councilor, Melanie Hamblen, who serves as a member of the MMCA and on many committees, including the Nominating Selection Committee for City Councillors to the MMA Board of Directors. “It is clear many communities across Massachusetts view Franklin as a role model given the leadership the Town has demonstrated over the years. Few people have as much passion, dedication and commitment to public service as Jamie. I am personally very happy for him and our community to be recognized in this way.”



Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen (left) will serve as president of the MMA and Amesbury Mayor Cassandra Gove (right) will serve as vice president. (MMA Photo)

As President of MMA, Mr. Hellen will serve a one-year term through next year’s annual conference in 2026. The main responsibility of the President is to Chair the monthly Board of Directors meetings, as well as facilitating the Local Government Advisory Council (LGAC) with Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll. Each LGAC meeting features top state officials, such as state cabinet sec-

retaries to collaborate on policy decisions at the state level that affect cities and towns.

Mr. Hellen will serve as the 49th President in MMA history. Many longtime residents may also recall that Mr. Hellen’s predecessor, Jeff Nutting, also served as the 33rd MMA President in 2009. The President role rotates between Municipal Mayors, Managers, City Councillors and

Select Board members annually. Mr. Hellen will serve as the 15th Town Manager/Administrator in history.

A list of Past MMA Presidents is here: <https://www.mma.org/about-mma/leadership/mma-past-presidents/>

“I’ve been fortunate to serve this community for over four decades on both the Town Council, School Committee and many other town boards. It is never lost on me how fortunate this town has been with respect to leadership and management in our town administration, department heads and school administration” said Tom Mercer, Chair of the Franklin Town Council. “Jamie stepped in for Jeff right away, even before Day 1, and this recognition shows how respected the Town of Franklin is across Massachusetts. The entire community should be really proud of the dedication and success we have had from both Jeff and Jamie over the past 25 years.”

The MMA announcement is here: <https://www.mma.org/jamie-hellen-is-new-mma-president-kassandra-gove-is-vp/>

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Sen. Rausch Files Host of Bills

Boston-MA State Sen. Becca Rausch (D-Needham) filed a suite of legislation last month to advance justice, fairness, and democracy on issues like elections, human and environmental health, education, and civil rights. Find more at <https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/RLR0>.



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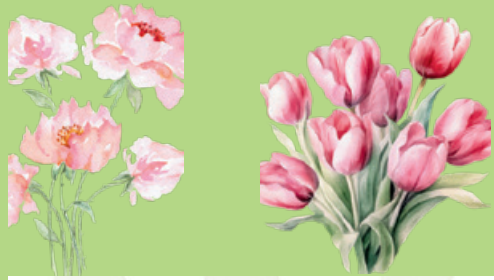


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