

State Champion Nipmuc Girls Soccer Team honored by Local and State Government Officials

The Nipmuc Regional High School Girls Soccer team was recently honored at the Massachusetts State House for winning the MIAA Division 3 state championship.

The recognition took place on Jan. 27, at the invitation of State Senator Ryan Fattman. Sen. Fattman, joined by state Rep. Brian Murray and state Rep. David Mura-dian, presented members of the team with a citation from the House of Representatives and a citation for the entire team from the State Senate.

Under the guidance of Coach Steve Khoury, the Nipmuc Girls Soccer team demonstrated exceptional teamwork, skill, and perseverance throughout the fall 2024 season, culminating in their championship victory.

As part of their visit to the



Members of the Nipmuc Regional High School girls' soccer team were honored on the floor of the State House in Boston on Jan. 27. The team was invited there by state Sen. Ryan Fattman, and joined by state Rep. Brian Murray and state Rep. David Mura-dian. Photo credit: Facebook @RepBrianMurray

State House, the team was recognized on the floor of the House of Representatives, treated to lunch, and given a guided tour of the

historic building.

"It was an honor to be

NIPMUC

continued on page 6

BVT senior named U.S. Presidential Scholars candidate

Honoring distinguished ability and accomplishment in career and technical education

UPTON – Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick is proud to announce Christopher E. Joiner of Grafton as a 2025 candidate for the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Candidates are selected based on academic performance, standardized test scores, and contributions to their schools and communities. Only a select number of students' nationwide progress to the finalist stage.

Chris, a senior in the Biotechnology program, has proven himself to be an extraordinary student who demonstrates academic excellence, leadership, service, and honorable character. His achievements include membership in BVT's National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society, serving as the president of both societies.



Christopher E. Joiner. Courtesy photo

Named most outstanding English, Math, and Chemistry student for earning the highest class grade. A silver medalist in the SkillsUSA Biotechnology Knowledge Bowl State Competition.

Chris is an enthusiastic school community member who participates in many extracurricular organizations. He is actively involved

BVT SENIOR

continued on page 17

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Mendon Senior Center news for March/April

Comedy Program: Jokes My Irish Father Told Me

Thursday, March 13 at 11 a.m. followed by a Customized Baked Potato Bar at 12 noon

You'll have lots of fun, as comedian Dave Kane brings you a laugh filled presentation of jokes, one liners and stories that celebrate the warmth and resilience of the Irish sense of humor. Call or stop by the senior center to register for this free program. Following the program, we will be offering a Baked Potato Bar for your enjoyment. This Tri-Valley offering will feature a selection of toppings including chili, broccoli, cheese sauce, salsa, sour cream, chives and bacon so you can customize your own stuffed potato. We also provide milk and dessert. Please sign up for lunch separately. Cost of lunch \$3.

Blackstone Regional Animal Shelter Talk & Tour

Tuesday, March 25 1 p.m.
The Mendon Senior Center invites interested animal lovers to join us for a brief meeting at our center to learn about opportunities to socialize and play

with shelter animals prior to their being adopted to their forever home. Current volunteer Janice Muldoon-Moors and shelter personnel will discuss this innovative program. Following this gathering, we will travel as a group on the Senior Center Van to the shelter for a brief orientation to the facility. Applications will be available at the shelter for anyone wishing to help. Please plan one and a half to two hours for this program- including travel. Please call or stop by the center to register for this program.

March is Judicial Outreach Month

Learn about the work of the third branch of government directly from judges who address a variety of challenging matters presented to the courts on a daily basis. We are awaiting the assignment of a judge to speak to our group on one of three dates we have provided: Wednesday, March 26 at 11 a.m. or 1 p.m., or Monday, March 31 at 11 a.m. Please call the center at 508-478-6175 to let us know of your interest and of the dates and times

you are available.

Tri-Valley Lunch Program:

Tuesday, March 18
Corned Beef, Boiled Potatoes, Carrots & Cabbage*
Thursday, March 20
Shepherd's Pie, Carrots & Peas*
Tuesday, March 25
Beef with Bell Pepper and Onions
Thursday, March 27
Swedish Meatballs & Mashed Potatoes

Friendly Reminder! Meals are served at 12 noon. The cost is \$3 donation per meal. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. Transportation is available. Call to schedule. Meals are subject to change.*Alternative meals.

The Friends of Mendon Elders News

The Friends of Mendon Elders is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization raising funds for the benefit of the senior center and the seniors it serves. New members are always welcome! Join us to learn more about the events and activities at the Senior Center. Catch up with members and enjoy some light refreshments prior to start of meeting! Our

next monthly Friends meeting is, on April 14 (Trader Joe's will be joining us during our refreshment time.)

Friends Dine Out

Wednesday March 19 ~ Roast House, Blackstone
Carpool with friends from the senior center the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. or meet at the restaurant at 12 noon. Please sign-up at the senior center.

Calling all Readers...

Our overcrowded bookshelves have undergone their annual "clear out" and the older books have been donated to a good cause. It is now easier to see what's there and to pick out a book. This added space also provides the opportunity to add newer books. If anyone has books with a copyright date of 2020—2025 that you are done with, please drop them off. This will help keep the shelves refreshed by adding to the selections available.

Learn How to Take Better Pictures -

This five-week photography class will begin Tuesday, April 22 at 1:30 p.m. Whether you want to perfect your Phone photography skills or are have a Digital camera of your own, our instructor Steve McGrath, an accomplished, professional photographer with over thirty years experience, has some-

thing to offer. Learn how to create great images on your phone. Digital camera beginners, learn from an expert. Android and Apple Smart phones are welcome, and all models. Info about our instructor stevemcgrathphotography.com/classes

The cost for this grant subsidized program is \$35 for five weeks. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register.

"A Program that Warms My Heart"

Our pen pal program has returned this spring; corresponding with local Girl Scouts. Next fall, we hope to partner with two fourth grade classes at Whitinsville Christian School where letter writing is part of their curriculum. This is in the planning stages. We ask you to reach out to senior relatives, neighbors and friends who might be interested in joining this endearing program. A sign up sheet is available at the Senior Center or you can call or text program coordinator Cheryl Lemon 508-685-1419 to sign up early. One letter a month is all it takes and you, too, will be saying "this warms my heart."

MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 4




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Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

29 North Avenue, Mendon • 508-473-3259 • TaftPublicLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues. & Wed. 10-7 • Thurs. 3-7 • Fri. 12-5 • Sat. 9-12 • Sun. & Mon. CLOSED

ADULT PROGRAMS

MARCH 2025

Upcoming Events:

To register for an event, click on the Library Event Calendar & Registration link at the top of the library's homepage (www.taftpubliclibrary.org).

Adult Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join us on Wednesday, March 19 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on! Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. No registration is required. Crafts are NOT supplied.

Adult Book Club

Upcoming books for the Adult Book Club are as follows:

Monday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m.: *Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper

Monday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m.: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and the poetry of Atticus

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club typically meets downstairs in the library on a quarterly basis. This year the group will read and discuss five nonfiction titles. Those interested are asked to stop at the downstairs desk to sign the Footnotes registration sheet and pick up a copy of the latest book. The book club will be discussing *The Mysterious Case of Rudolf Diesel* by Douglas Brunt on Thursday, March 27 at 7 p.m.

Upcoming books in the Footnotes series:

June (date TBD): *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith

Awards Book Club

New to our slate of adult book clubs is Awards Book Club! Hosted by Taft Library Assistant Jane Blackwood, the Awards Book Club meets on a quarterly basis to discuss fiction and nonfiction

award winners of the year. Jane selects from the books that took home the coveted Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Booker and more! Stop at the downstairs circulation desk to pick up the latest Awards book for discussion. The book club will be discussing the 2025 National Book Award winner for Fiction *James* by Percival Everett on Tuesday, May 6 at 7 p.m.

Sheryl Faye Presents Queen Elizabeth II

Queen Elizabeth II requests the honor of your presence at the Taft Public Library on Tuesday, March 18 at 7 p.m. Join reenactor Sheryl Faye as she presents Queen Elizabeth who reigned over the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms for almost 71 years, the longest for any female head of state in history. She was more than a monarch. She defined an era. In a world of constant change, she was a steadying presence and a source of comfort

and pride for generations of Britons, including many who have never known the country without her. Registration is required for this event. To register visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org and click on the Library Event Calendar & Registration link.

Slow Flow Adult Yoga with Katie Aissis of Sprouting Tree Yoga

Come join Katie Aissis of Sprouting Tree Yoga for Slow Flow Adult Yoga at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25 upstairs in the library. This Vinyasa style yoga class links breath to movement in a dynamic sequence of postures. Participants will build strength while also finding moments throughout the practice to quiet the mind and rest the body. This class is appropriate for all levels and no previous yoga experience is necessary. Please bring your own yoga mat. Please register for the program on our website.

German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun! Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. Registration is required. To register, visit our website! Next club date: Monday, March 31 at 6 p.m.

Check out Mango Languages at Taft Library!

Visit the Taft Public Library website for access to the Mango Languages platform. If you have an interest in learning a language, Mango provides lessons in over 70 languages. Children can try their hand at language learning with Mango Little PIM, a platform designed just for them, and for those interested in learning American sign language we provide ac-

TAFT LIBRARY

continued on page 14

<p>Brand Spankin' New 2025 TOYOTA</p> <p>RAV4 XLE SUV ADV AWD - 2.5L</p> <p>• 27/33 MPG City/Hwy • Lane Departure</p> <p>BUY FOR AS LOW AS: \$32,388⁺ MSRP: \$34,088</p> <p>LEASE FOR AS LOW AS: \$429[*] PER MONTH • PLUS TAX</p> <p>SAVE \$1700 50 RAV4s AVAILABLE</p> <p><small>*New 2025 RAV4 XLE AWD with MSRP: \$34,088. Lease requires approved credit; based on 10,000 miles per year. \$0.15 per mile excess. Lease for \$429 per month for 36 months with \$4,078 due at signing (including \$2,999 cash or trade down, first month's payment of \$429, and acquisition of \$650). Tax, title, registration, and inspection fees are additional. \$0 Security deposit. Lessee is responsible for insurance, maintenance, repairs, excess wear/tear, and \$350 disposition fee where permitted by law. Example Slt# TM25-366. Offer ends 03/31/2025.</small></p>	<p>Brand Spankin' New 2025 TOYOTA</p> <p>TACOMA SR5 4x4 - i-FORCE 2.4L</p> <p>• Double Cab • Alloys • Lane Departure • 5-ft bed</p> <p>BUY FOR AS LOW AS: \$41,149⁺ MSRP: \$43,749</p> <p>LEASE FOR AS LOW AS: \$399[*] PER MONTH • PLUS TAX</p> <p>SAVE \$2600 34 TACOMAs AVAILABLE</p> <p><small>*New 2025 Tacoma SR5 2.4L Double Cab with MSRP: \$43,749. Lease requires approved credit; based on 10,000 miles per year. \$0.15 per mile excess. Lease for \$399 per month for 36 months with \$4,048 due at signing (including \$2,999 cash or trade down, first month's payment of \$399, and acquisition of \$650). Tax, title, registration, and inspection fees are additional. \$0 Security deposit. Lessee is responsible for insurance, maintenance, repairs, excess wear/tear, and \$350 disposition fee where permitted by law. Example Slt# TM25-386. Offer ends 03/31/2025.</small></p>	 <p>READY SET GO!</p> <p>IMPERIAL TOYOTA</p> <p>300 FORTUNE BOULEVARD MILFORD, MA 01757</p> <p>508-488-2382 • IMPERIALTOYOTAMA.COM</p> <p>NOW SERVICING ALL MAKES AND MODELS MON-TH 9-9, FRI & SAT 9-6, SUN 12-6</p> 
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Publisher Chuck Tashjian

Editor Theresa Knapp

Send Editorial to: editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com

Advertising Sales Susanne Odell Farber 508-954-8148 sue@odellconsult.com

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Creative Design & Layout Michelle McSherry Kim Vasseur Wendy Watkins

Ad Space Deadline is the Friday 13 days prior to publication date.

Ad Artwork Deadline is the Wednesday 8 days prior to publication date.

Reader Submission Deadline is the 25th day of the month preceding the publication date. For example, items should be submitted by Feb. 25 to be included in the March issue.

Please submit to: editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com

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MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 2

New Players Welcome!

The Mendon Senior Center offers a variety of recreational activities including:

Cribbage - Wednesdays 9:45 a.m. The Cribbage group is always looking for new players, stop in Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m., all levels welcome.

Hand, Knee and Foot Card game - Tuesdays 1 p.m.

Mah-Jong - Wednesdays & Thursdays 1 p.m.

Brain Games - Thursdays 11:30 a.m.

Please check our schedule regarding days, times, and availability. Don't see your favorite game listed, please let us know what you'd like to see offered!

Mendon History

On Tuesday, March 18 at 11 a.m. local historian Jim Buckley will bring the following story to

our attention: Mendon's Wilkinson Family in time of war. Please call or stop by to register for this program.

SHINE Health Insurance Counseling

Turning 65? Certified SHINE counselors are available to assist you with questions about Medicare. SHINE services are free and unbiased: we are available to discuss all options related to Medicare and additional coverage, and we do not sell any plans. Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to make an appointment or call the Regional SHINE Office in Milford at 508-422-9931. We will be holding an in person EVENING presentation in May. Please let us know of your interest. Date to be determined.

Mendon Senior Walking Group ~ Update

The Mendon Senior Walking Group hopes to resume its routine M-W-F in April. If you are in-

terested in joining us or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact group leader Diane Howell at 508-473-3081 or email her at diane.m.howell@icloud.com

Volunteers Wanted!

Do you have an hour or two to spare? Do you find joy in helping others? If so, the Friendly Visiting Program is the right volunteer opportunity for you! You can make a difference in the life of a homebound senior. Please contact Outreach Coordinator Janet Hubener at 508-478-6175 for more information about this rewarding program. Lunch Servers are also needed once or twice a month on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. for the senior center lunch program. Please contact Director Amy Wilson Kent at 508-478-6175 for more information.

Food and Fuel Assistance - Help is Just a Call Away

If you or someone you know has had trouble making ends

meet this winter, please consider contacting the Mendon Senior Center. Our helpful Outreach Coordinator Janet Hubener is available to offer confidential assistance with fuel assistance applications and nutritional support to Mendon residents of all ages. The SMOC Fuel assistance program helps defray heating costs incurred between Nov. 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025 for eligible households (see household size/income guide.) Please call for guidelines for larger households. Additionally, the Mendon Food Pantry, housed at the senior center, is well stocked and available to ALL Mendon residents in need. Call the senior center at 508-478-6175. Help is just a phone call away.

Household size	Income Limit
1	\$49,196
2	\$64,333
3	\$79,470
4	\$94,608

Mendham Brush Association Elden H. Barrows Memorial Scholarships

The Mendham Brush Association (Brothers of the Brush) is pleased to announce the 2025 Elden H. Barrows Memorial Scholarship. \$500 scholarships will be awarded to two graduating seniors who reside in Mendon who attend a local high school with the intent to assist students with the cost of Higher Education, or tools and educational materials for entering a trade.

The late Elden H. Barrows was a founding member of the Brothers of the Brush and the first president and leader of the

organization during Mendon's 300th Anniversary Celebration. The awarding of scholarships is specific to graduating high school seniors who live in Mendon and who have provided service to their community and support to local organizations, families and or individuals in a manner consistent with the purpose of the Mendham Brush Association.

For an application to this scholarship, go to your school's Counseling Office, or email the Scholarship Committee Chair, Alan Greenberg at the following address: greenie175@verizon.net

Swandale Annual Meeting Notice 2025

Swandale Cemetery Meeting

The Annual meeting of the Swan Dale Cemetery Association will be held on Monday, April 7 at 7 p.m. in the Main Floor conference room, Mendon Town Hall, Mendon, MA. The purpose of the meeting is to listen to reports, elect officers and discuss any business which will come before the association. All lot owners are invited.

Separate Notice

Bids are being accepted by the Swan Dale & Quaker Cemetery Association for mowing and cleaning of the cemeteries. Duties include raking, cleaning of debris and mowing

every 2-3 weeks, starting with Mother's Day weekend. Copies of the contract may be obtained by contacting Swan Dale at rog07@verizon.net. Bids must be submitted by April 1 2025.

Separate Notice - From Swan Dale Trustee's

Notification to all lot owners of Swan Dale and Quaker Cemeteries in Mendon. Please remove any old plants or decorations left on the graves before April 20. Anything left will be discarded and disposed of at our discretion as cemetery cleaning will be taking place. To try to keep the cemetery well maintained your cooperation is appreciated.

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Women caregivers face financial challenges



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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On March 8, we observed International Women's Day. Although this event celebrates women's achievements, it's still true that women, especially caregivers, face significant financial hurdles. How can these challenges be met?

To begin with, let's look at some concerning statistics connected to American women in the "sandwich generation" — those who care for children and parents or other relatives —

from a study by Edward Jones and research firms NEXT360 and Morning Consult:

- Nearly half of women report feeling financially strained.
- Almost two-thirds of women say caregiving duties have harmed their ability to save for their own financial goals.
- More than half of women have had to reduce their professional responsibilities due to caregiving, resulting in the loss of potential income.

So, if you're a sandwich-generation woman, what can you do to improve your financial outlook?

Consider these suggestions:

- *Establish your own financial goals.* Depending on the length and complexity of your caregiving duties, your own financial goals could be affected. For example, you may need to change your retirement date from what you had originally intended, or else adjust the retirement lifestyle you had

envisioned. However, this doesn't mean you shouldn't try to establish your own short- and long-term financial goals and then create a strategy for achieving them. In doing so, you may find it helpful to work with a financial professional.

- *Contribute as much as you can to your retirement accounts.* Your caregiving obligations may be preventing you from working as many hours as you like, or perhaps even from accepting a higher-paying position. In either case, your ability to contribute to your retirement accounts may well be diminished. Nonetheless, each month try to put in as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. And if you do get salary increases, think about boosting your monthly contributions to your plan.
- *Don't rush into taking Social Security.* You can start collecting Social Security as early as age 62, and you might be tempted

to do so if you're feeling some financial pressure because of your caregiving responsibilities. But your monthly benefits can be bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which will be age 67 if you were born in 1960 or later. So, if you can find other ways to bridge this gap — possibly through a spouse's income or your own savings — it may well benefit you to wait as long as you can before collecting.

- *Maintain separate finances.* If your parents are concerned about falling behind on their bills, they might suggest combining their bank accounts with yours. This may not be a good idea — if your finances get tangled with those of your parents, you could end up paying for some of their expenses, even if they can afford to do so themselves. Consequently, try to keep your finances separate.
- *Create a financial power of attorney.* You may want to see whether your parents will

agree to give you a financial power of attorney, so you can make decisions on their behalf should they become incapacitated. Such an arrangement can help protect them and you.

There's no sugar-coating it: Caregiving can be financially taxing on caregivers. But by taking the appropriate steps, you may be able to help reduce some of the stress involved.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Hopkinton, MA
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Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

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Pet of the Month: Garth

Blame it all on his roots, he showed up in boots. The cutest little white ones. This cowboy is ready to settle down. Could he be your Mr. Right? Garth is a 2-year-old orange tuxedo cat with a laid back personality. He didn't have the easiest start in life, but you can't keep a good man down!

In the few weeks that Garth has been with us he has settled in nicely. He gets a long well with the other cats he has met and he is happy to share the attention of the volunteers with his other cat friends. Once he has had a walk about and investigated all corners of the room, Garth tends to find a nice spot to lounge. He is happy to watch the kittens playing wildly, but shows no interest in joining in. We think Garth could share a home with another laid back pet or be your one and only!

For more information on Garth or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, visit www.milfordhumane.org



NIPMUC

continued from page 1

invited by Sen. Fattman and recognized as a team," said senior soccer player Lily Killeen. "What a wonderful and welcoming experience."

"Our team's invitation to the state house is incredibly appreciated," said Nipmuc Head Coach Steve Khoury. "To be able to celebrate our success in this manner is a true honor. It is a testament to the girls' hard work, dedication and belief in each other."

The student-athletes were also honored locally on Jan. 21, when the Upton Select Board recognized the team for their outstanding achievements. As part of the celebration, the Select Board declared Nov. 24 as Mendon-Upton Girls Soccer Team Day.

Select Board member Brett Simas said the team is inspiring

younger athletes in the Mendon and Upton communities, noting that he brought his daughter to watch the championship final.

"It has been wonderful to see the community rally around this team. The players fed off that energy and were able to achieve the ultimate team accomplishment. Their run through the state tournament will be remembered for years to come," said Chris Schmidt, Nipmuc Athletic Director.

Mendon-Upton Regional School District Superintendent Dr. Maureen Cohen congratulated the players, coaches, and supporters who contributed to this memorable season.

"Their success is a reflection of their hard work, perseverance, and dedication," said Cohen. "We are thrilled to see them recognized at both the local and state levels."

Submitted by Mendon-Upton Regional School District

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Upton Senior Center news for March & April

FREE! Featured Class— Chair Yoga with Crystal Lee Thursdays in March at 9 a.m.

Chair yoga is a modified form of traditional yoga that is performed while seated in a chair. It is designed to make yoga accessible to individuals who may have difficulty standing or balancing on their own. Chair yoga poses are typically simpler and less physically demanding than traditional yoga poses. They focus on stretching, strengthening, and improving balance while seated. The poses can be adapted to suit individual needs and abilities.

Line Dancing

Class Wednesdays at 1 p.m. 5 weeks (March 19, 26; April 2, 9)

First session is free and then the cost to sign up is \$20 for the remaining 4 sessions. Beginner line dancing class!

"This class will start with basic steps so no experience is necessary & no partner needed. Just bring your enthusiasm and a comfortable pair of shoes. Line dancing is an extremely fun way to exercise while also reducing stress. These dances will be put to all different types of music. Come by yourself or bring a friend!" "With a passion for music and exercise Marcus Mancini will be the instructor. He has over fifteen years in both taking and teaching line dancing. It all started for him with a class just like the one we are offering".

Mindful Meditation

Friday, March 14 at 1 p.m.

Calm your mind and body so you can acknowledge and accept your thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment through Mindful Meditation with Robin Natanel.

St. Patty's Day

Monday, March 17 at 1 p.m.

Join your friends for a festive St. Patrick's Day celebration! Enjoy a delicious Country Sooper Reuben, crispy chips, and a sweet dessert generously donated by Representative David Muradian! We'll have Irish music and plenty of fun for everyone to enjoy. Don't forget to wear your green! \$8 fee. RSVP by March 12.

Upton Memory Café

Wednesday, March 19 at 2:30 p.m.

The Upton Memory Café was designed by Nipmuc High School volunteers to meet the needs of individuals affected by Alzheimer's and dementia in Upton surrounding communities. If you or your loved one are experiencing problems with memory or thinking, we encourage you to attend the Memory Café. It is a great opportunity for engagement, socialization and support.

Nipmuc Choral Group

Friday, March 21 at 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a performance by the Nipmuc High School Choral Group! Students will perform a selection from their upcoming March concert. This musical event is open to all ages—don't miss it!

Disability Commission - Volunteers Needed!

The Town of Upton is seeking volunteers to join the Upton Commission on Disability. The Upton Commission on Disability was created at the November 14, 2017 Town Meeting under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 8J to promote the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities in the activities and services and employment opportunities in the community.

Role of the Commission

To advise and assist municipal officials in ensuring compliance with federal and state disability laws. Review policies and activities of municipal departments and boards as they affect persons with disabilities. Provide information, referral, advocacy, and technical assistance to individuals, businesses, and organizations in all matters pertaining to disability.

If you are interested in applying for a position with the commission, applications are available at Town Hall, Upton Senior Center or online at <https://www.uptonma.gov/782/Appointments>

Senior Soiree

Friday, March 28 at 5 p.m.

Put on your dancing shoes and join us for a trip down memory lane as we celebrate the Happy Days of the '50s! Step back in time and enjoy an evening of nostalgic fun!

Cost: \$10 per person – includes a light dinner, music, games, and more!

Details: Reservations and payment must be received in advance.

Feel free to wear whatever makes you feel fabulous—greasers, poodle skirts, or anything that brings the '50s vibe to life!

Don't miss out on the fun—reserve your spot today!

A HELPING HAND...

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St. Gabriel the Archangel's Parish, 151 Mendon St., Upton, 508-603-1430
www.stgabrielma.org/2018/01/21/food-pantry

Food Pantry at United Parish of Upton

1 Church St, Upton, 508-529-3192
Hours: Every other Tues. morning (3/18), 9:30-11:30am
www.unitedparishupton.org/food-pantry

Upton Community Center Food Pantry

9 Milford St., Upton, 508-529-4558
Hours: Wed. 12am-2pm & Fri. 11am-1pm
Other assistance available by appt.
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556766580277

Community supper on March 20

March 20: Community Supper - on the third Thursday of each month from September through June at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., our Faith in Action committee provides a delicious and nutritious meal for the community. This month we are serving chicken parm casserole for dinner! Everyone is welcome. Please call the church office at 508-529-3192 by March 14 to make your reservation. If you forget to reserve, please come anyway. We always make extra and would love to serve you at United Parish Upton, 1 Church Street.

.....
If your nonprofit organization is located in Upton or Mendon and provides free services to Upton and/or Mendon citizens, email editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com for consideration to be listed in this section.

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The blurry truth: Understanding and addressing the rise of refractive errors

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.
Milford Franklin Eye Center

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

What are Refractive Errors?

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

Refractive errors occur when the eye's shape prevents light from focusing correctly on the

retina, resulting in blurry vision. Common types include:

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

shape and focus up close. This is why many over 40 need reading glasses.

Why the Rise?

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

- **The Screen Time Surge:** Our modern lives involve significant screen time – smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. This constant close-up focus strains the eyes and may contribute to myopia development and progression.
- **The Great Indoors:** Studies suggest that spending time outdoors, especially in childhood, has a protective effect against myopia. The wider range of distances the eyes focus on outdoors, along with increased natural light expo-

sure, may be beneficial.

- **The Genetic Factor:** Genetics play a significant role. If your parents or siblings have myopia, you're more likely to develop it.
- **The Urban Influence:** Urban environments often have limited green spaces and encourage indoor activities, potentially contributing to the myopia rise.
- **Lifestyle Shifts:** Changes in diet, like increased processed food consumption, and reduced physical activity may also play a role, though more research is needed.



What Can We Do?

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

- **Limit Screen Time:** Encourage children and adults to take regular breaks. A helpful tool is the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This allows the eye muscles to relax and refocus, reducing strain.
- **Embrace the Outdoors:** Aim for at least 1-2 hours of daily outdoor activity, especially for children.
- **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** A balanced diet and regular physical activity are crucial.
- **Regular Eye Exams:** Comprehensive eye exams are essential, especially for children. Early detection and treatment are key.
- **Corrective Lenses:** Glasses or contacts are the most common and effective correction.
- **Myopia Control:** For children with progressive myopia, doc-

tors 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.

EYE CARE

continued on page 9

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02/03/2025	4 Kinsley Lane	\$462,500
01/31/2025	157 Hartford Avenue	\$332,500
01/31/2025	12 Dudley Road	\$1.16 mil
01/31/2025	24 Bates Street	\$605,000
Date	Upton	Amount
02/19/2025	35 Hartford Ave. N	\$480,000
02/18/2025	10 Breton Road	\$575,000
02/13/2025	185 W River Street	\$540,000
02/05/2025	72 Westboro Road	\$630,000
01/30/2025	6 Chickadee Way #21	\$794,900

Source: zillow.com / Compiled by Upton & Mendon Free Press



The 3-bed, 2-bath, 1,916-square-foot home at 185 West River Street in Upton recently sold for \$540,000. Photo source: RobynAndSeanMyHouse

EYE CARE

continued from page 8

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 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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Psychic Gary McKinstry returns April 5 to Upton

On Saturday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. Gary McKinstry, a well-known Medium, Psychic, and Radio Personality will be returning to Upton by popular demand to the Nipmuc Rod and Gun Club, 88 Fiske Mill Road.

The evening will feature McKinstry's talents in channeling spiritual contact with passed loved ones. This event is generously sponsored by the Upton Bloomer Girls, a 501(c)4 women's charity organization that offers re-

sources, helping hands, or other assistance to current Upton residents who are in need of additional support.

There will be opportunities to win great raffle prizes and to be singled out by Gary for a personal experience. Seating is limited. To pre-purchase a ticket, call Ida at 508-529-2822 or visit Shear Excitement in Upton or Denise Smith at the Upton Town Hall.

For more information, please go to Facebook.com/Upton-BloomerGirls1.



Ask the Mendon Assessors

Senior Means Tested Tax Exemption (Circuit Breaker)

MENDON - Applications are now available at the Assessor's Office in Town Hall for the Senior Means Tested Real Estate Tax Credit derived from qualifying for the 2024 Massachusetts State Income Tax Filing Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. The deadline for submitting the applications is August 31, 2025.

The town's Taxation Aid Committee sponsored an article that was unanimously approved at the May 2021 Annual Town

Meeting to petition the State Legislature to grant Mendon the right to offer this exemption. It was signed into law by then Governor Charlie Baker as Chapter 241 of the Acts of 2022 on October 19, 2022. This coming fiscal year, which begins on July 1, is the third time it is being offered and will need to be revoted at the 2026 Annual Town Meeting for another three years.

Any Mendon resident age

65 or older as of January 1, 2024, who has applied for and received the Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit when they filed their calendar year 2024 State Income Tax return is eligible to apply for this new exemption. It does not replace any existing senior exemptions, but will be given as an additional exemption. For more information contact Principal Assessor, Sherrie Bates at 508-473-2738 or sbates@mendonma.gov

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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 suc-

cessful 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.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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INTERVIEW PREP

continued on page 11

HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

INTERVIEW PREP

continued from page 10

- 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 answer should always be “yes” even if the employer has an-

swered 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

“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, location, pay, and have a résumé. With an increasing number of applicants due to a

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

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

Type "Select three accom-

plishments from my résumé that match this job best" or

Consider "Apply for me" Tools

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

Networking

Roughly 15% of positions are filled through online applications, so it is suggested job seekers spend at least 50% of their job search time on reconnecting with their existing networks and building new relationships. If online applications are not

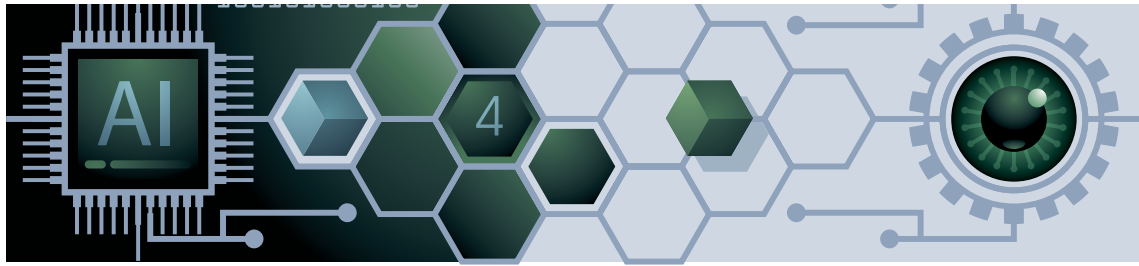
WHAT IS "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE"

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."

nasa.gov/what-is-artificial-intelligence

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.



changing business environment, geo-political landscape and overall economic changes, recruiters use tools like AI to help them quickly find top applicants and

Use AI to Beat AI

When applying for a position, it's important to make sure your application materials match the job for which you're going. You

plishments from my résumé that match this job best" or

Type "Create a list of key skills this job is looking for and list where they come up on my

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TAFT LIBRARY

continued from page 3

cess to Mango ASL. Mango's Intuitive Language Construction methodology helps build skills in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, culture, comprehension, and retention. To see all of the Mango options the Taft Library offers scroll down the left-hand side of our webpage to the Databases section.

Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. downstairs in the Art Holmes Community Room, unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend! If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library website.

Coming in April. . .

Ellen Henry Presents The Power of Becoming: Exploring

Your Soul

Join medium Ellen Henry for an in-person workshop at the library on Sunday, April 6 from 12:30 - 4:30 p.m. You are a multifaceted, multidimensional, soul being. Your soul is the true essence of Who You Are, and it is the part of you that is eternal and even wiser than you know.

This workshop will provide a safe and nurturing space for you to connect more fully with Who You Really Are. You will learn how to tap into your soul power, connect into the power of all that is, and explore the wisdom of your own soul and intuition through discussion, guided meditation, sound, and group exercises. For adults ages 19 and up. Space is limited. Register on the Taft website.

Mosaic Pendant Class with Cheryl Cohen

This online class will be held on Tuesday, April 15 at 6:30 p.m. Learn to make a mosaic pendant using adhesive putty. You will be instructed by Cheryl Cohen of the Cheryl Cohen Mosaics Art Center. Registration is required and supplies are limited. Mosaic kits must be picked up prior to the class at the upstairs circulation

desk in the library during regular open hours. An email will be sent out to all who have registered when the kits are ready for pickup. A Zoom link will be sent out to participants one day prior to the class.

A Tea-tasting and Reenactment of the Fourth First Lady Dolley Madison

The Friends of the Taft Public Library present a tea-tasting followed by a visit from First Lady Dolley Madison on Wednesday, April 30 at 6 p.m. The tea-tasting will run from 6 - 6:30 p.m. and will feature three teas from the period served by HMS Tea. Then at 6:30 p.m. sit back as Dolley Madison (portrayed by reenactor Lady J./Janet Parnes) visits with program participants to discuss her life in Colonial America as an early feminist, champion for women, and First Lady to James Madison. Registration for this free program is required as space is limited. Visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org and click on the Library Event Calendar & Registration link to register.

CHILDREN PROGRAMS MARCH 2025

Registration is required for all

programs. Please log onto our website: www.taftpubliclibrary.org and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.

Itty Bitty Story Time

Itty Bitty Storytime is designed for our youngest patrons birth to 3 years old. Join us for a lot of fun on Tuesdays and select Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Story & Craft Time

Join us for Story and Craft Time! Perfect for the preschool-aged child! All sessions take place on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

Alphabet Storytime

It's all about the alphabet! Each week we will focus on a different letter. We will read a couple of books, sing songs, and learn about the letter of the week! Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Please note there is no Alphabet Storytime the last Wednesday of the month.

Coffee and Conversations & Puppet Storytime

Dates: Wednesday: 3/26, 4/30, 5/28 & 6/25

Coffee & Conversations is from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m., Location: Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave., Mendon

Join us for an informal playtime where families will be able to build social connections and learn about early childhood development and family-friendly resources. The library will supply Muffin House Muffins!

Please stay for the 10:30 a.m. Puppet Storytime. Join Newton & Friends of Through Me to You Puppetry for songs & stories. At the end of the 30-minute show, children can greet the puppets. Geared for children 2 to 5 years, but all are welcome!

Lego Club

Back by popular demand!! During this one-hour building session we will be led by the "Lego Lady" Kim Steadman! No need to bring any Legos! This program is great for all ages...as long as they don't eat the Legos! Tuesday: 4/8, 5/13 & 6/10 at 4:30 p.m.

Puppet Storytime

Join Newton & Friends of Through Me to You Puppetry for songs and stories. At the end of the 30-minute show, children can greet the puppets. Geared for children 2 to 5 years, but all are welcome! Register today for Newton's visit back to the Taft on Tuesday 3/18, 4/15, 5/20 & 6/17 at 4:30 p.m.

Preschool Kidding Around Yoga

We will learn yoga poses, dance, sing, and meditate. This class is all about fun. All abilities are welcome! Mats are available, or feel free to bring your own. Wednesday April 9, May 14 and June 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins

Join Deb Hudgins for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants and preschool). Join us on Tuesdays: March 25, April 29, and May 27. The program starts promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Tutors with Tails

Meet Sprite! Sprite is a therapy dog who loves children and love books. Sprite & her owner Janet will visit the Taft on the last Tuesday of each month. Register today for the opportunity to read to Sprite! Spots are limited.

Book Clubs

Graphic Novel Book Club: Join us on Tuesday, March 18 at 5 p.m. to discuss this month's book pick! Pizza and refreshments will be served. This month we will be reading *Wagnificent: The Adventures of Thunder and Sage* by Bethanie Murguia Books are available at the upstairs circulation desk.

6-9 Book Club: We will be reading *Monkey Me and the Golden Monkey* by Timothy Roland. The book club discussion will be held downstairs in the library on Tuesday, March 25 at 5 p.m. The 45-minute book club will include a discussion, pizza and an activity. Books are available at the upstairs circulation desk.

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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

9 Milford Street, Upton • 508-529-6272 • UptonLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 9-8 • Mon., Fri. & Sat. 9-4 • Sun. CLOSED

By Matthew Bachtold, Library Director and Lee Ann Murphy, Children's Librarian

Friends of the Library Update Book Sale – Saturday, May 17

Friends of the Upton Town Library are holding their annual Spring Book Sale on Saturday, May 17. Donations and volunteers are welcome. Please bring any gently used books to the library so we can include them in our Book Sales. We are especially in need of children's books.

Bookshelf Bonus - Looking for a good winter read? Check out our bookshelf and the "mystery books" we have on display. Grab a wrapped book and enjoy a new surprise!

Monthly Meeting – Thursday, March 13, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

We would love to have you join us at our upcoming monthly meeting, held Thursday, March 13, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Upton Community Center.

New Tween Programs Ages 8-16!

Chess Club – 1st Tuesday/Thursday each month, 2 - 5 p.m. - NEW!

Learn to play chess or just play with new players. We will have a student from BVT to help teach those new to the game. For ages 8 to 16. No registration required.

Crafting Club – 2nd Tuesday/Thursday each month, 2 - 5 p.m. - NEW!

Feeling crafty? Join us as we create new projects each month. Beading, crochet, painting – the possibilities are endless! For ages 8 to 16. No registration required.

Gaming Club – 3rd Tuesday/Thursday each month, 2 - 5 p.m. - NEW!

We've got a Play Station 5 and tons of board games and we'd love to have tweens and teens join us! New games each session! For ages 8 to 16. No registration required.

Adult Events

Drum Circle with Dave Curry - Saturday, March 15, 7 - 9 p.m. Ages 8 - Adult

Join facilitator Dave Curry for an evening of freestyle drumming. Instruction and extra drums are provided, but you can also bring your own drums and percussion instruments. No prior experience is necessary, so the circle is suitable for beginners on up to experienced drummers. Registration is requested.

DNA & Genealogy - Wednesday, April 9, 6 - 7 p.m.

Come and learn more about this cutting edge science which can help enhance or confirm your paper based family research. A mix of history, available tests, testing companies, and using your test results, this hour will get you started on adding DNA as a genealogical resource.

This program is funded in part by a grant from the Upton Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Yarn Bird Craft - Wednesday, April 16, 6 - 7 p.m. Ages 12 - Adult

Join us in making cute decorative birds out of yarn! This program is free and all materials are provided. Register online at uptonlibrary.org.

Virtual Author Talk Series

View free online author talks, either live or recorded. Register and get more information at the library website, or at <https://library.org/uptontownlibrary>

Author Talk with **Jennifer Weiner**: Dreams We Chase - Wednesday, March 26 at 7 p.m.

Author Talk with **Jodi Picoult**: Wordsmith and Wonder - Wednesday, April 2 at 7 p.m.

Children's & Young Adult Events

PJ Drive – Feb. 1 through March 15

It's the Annual Boston Bruins PJ Drive to support Cradles to Crayons and our local Department of Children and Families! We are collecting brand new pajamas, with tags, in our lobby until March 15. Sizes can be for babies through adults and

items will go to local families in need. This is for donations only. If you are interested in receiving a donation, please contact DCF at 508-929-1000. This event is also sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). Please contact Children's & Young Adult Librarian Lee Ann Murphy at lmurphy@cwmares.org with any questions.

Movie Event: March 22 at 1 p.m.

Check the Upton library website for details about our monthly movie events! No registration required. For ages 5+.

Snacks will be available from the Friends of the Upton Town Library and monetary donations are welcomed.

Monthly Library Events – Register now!


All programs and events require pre-registration at uptonlibrary.org or call 508-529-6272. Registrations open the month prior to events.

Tabletop Game Night for Adults
Join our tabletop game series for adults! New games are


UPTON LIBRARY


continued on page 16


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UPTON LIBRARY*continued from page 15*

featured each month such as 7 Wonders, Mysterium, and Azul. Meets every third Thursday of the month from 5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Beginners and experienced players both welcome! Register at uptonlibrary.org.

Baby Storytime – Fridays at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Baby Storytime is for ages birth to 3 and is held on Fridays. This is a 20-30-minute lapsit program featuring stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. Pre-registration required.

Preschool Storytime – Thursdays

at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Preschool Storytime is for ages 3 to 5 and is held on Thursdays. This is a 45-minute program featuring stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft. Pre-registration required.

Saturday Storytime – March 15 at 9:30 a.m.

Once a month we offer a 30-45-minute Saturday Storytime, blending Baby and Preschool storytimes featuring stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft. Can't join us for our weekday programs? This event is just for you! For ages 0-5. Pre-registration required.

Music & Movement – March 17 and April 7 at 9:30 a.m.

This program features Deb Hudgins and her Pre-K Sing and Swing. It is an interactive program, perfect for children and their caregivers to enjoy together. This program is partially funded through a grant with Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. For ages 1 to 5. Pre-registration is required.

LEGO Club – March 19 and April 2 at 4 p.m.

This group meets the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 4 - 5 p.m. This group is led by Library Director, Matthew Bachtold, and is for ages 5 to 12. We provide the LEGOs while you have fun building and making new friends. Pre-registration is required.

Storybook Art Club – March 18 at 10 a.m.

This is a new program that will meet the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Children can enjoy a picture book and create a craft inspired by the story! This month will feature author and illustrator Oliver Jeffers. Participants will use materials such as scissors, glue, paint, and coloring materials. Pre-registration re-

quired. For ages 3 to 5.

Craftnoon – March 27 at 3 p.m.

This is a new drop-in program that will meet the 3rd Thursday of each month. Children can make a simple craft using materials such as crayons, scissors, paint, and glue. This month, we are making torn paper hearts! For ages 3+. No registration required.

Kids' Book Club – April 2 at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile chapter books on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m. We will be discussing *How to Be a Person* by Catherine Newman. **NEW AGE!** This group is now for ages 7 to 10. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

Tween Book Club – Feb. 20 at 6:30 p.m.

This club is especially for our middle grade patrons, ages 10 to 14. This group reads popular middle grade titles selected by our members. This month, we will be discussing the title *The*

Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman by Gennifer Choldenko. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

Upton Reads Book Group

An eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction with meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening of each month in the Community Center classroom, with a Zoom remote option.

Tuesday, April 8 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, April 10 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Wedding People* by Allison Espach.

Fic or No Fic Book Group

An adult book group led by Librarian Micaela that alternates fiction and non-fiction selections. Meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 6:45 p.m.

Wednesday, March 26 at 6:45 p.m.: *When Women Ran Fifth Avenue: Glamour and Power at the Dawn of American Fashion* by Julie Satow.

For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email mbachtol@cwmar.org

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Attorney General responds to Mendon by-law changes

Approves town meeting timing, delays ruling on accessory dwelling units

By Theresa Knapp

On Feb. 21, the Office of the Attorney General approved a by-law change passed by Mendon Special Town Meeting on Nov. 18, 2024.

Annual Town Meeting

In November, Special Town Meeting voted to approve a change in timing for Mendon's

Annual Town Meeting regarding "the transaction of business relating to the affairs for the town" from "the first Friday in May" to "within the first two weeks of May and before annual Town election."

According to a Feb. 24 letter from Mendon Town Clerk Ellen Agro to town departments, "On

February 21, 2025, the MA Attorney General's office approved this by-law without comment."

Zoning: Accessory Dwelling Units

At the November meeting, voters also approved an article related to zoning, specifically to add a new section related to "Accessory Dwelling Units," however, in its Feb. 21 letter, the Attorney General said it needed to extend the deadline on that change. It said it would issue its decision before April 25, 2025, and noted "neither general nor zoning by-laws take effect unless the Town has first satisfied the posting/publishing requirements of that statute."

To see the full letters, visit www.mendonma.gov/town-clerk.



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Friends of Mendon Elders planning trips

The Friends of Mendon Elders is planning several trips in the near future to destinations such as Cape Cod, Niagara Falls, and adventures on a Charles River Boat Cruise and Yankee Candle & Bright Nights tour.

The deadline to register for the Cape Cod Adventure is April 18. The trip will leave from the Mendon Senior Center on June 18 and return on June 20. The cost is \$405 per person or \$385 per person with

triple occupancy.

Transportation on a 54 seat, top-quality motorcoach equipped with video equipment and restroom; two nights lodging; four meals including two breakfasts and two dinners; guided tour of historic Hyannis, Sandwich, Provincetown and Chatham; boat trip to artistic Martha's Vineyard, and a visit to the JFK Museum.

Payments should be made payable to the Friends of

Mendon Elders and can be dropped off at the Mendon Senior Center and are due by April 18, 2025.

For more information, contact Bev Fior at 508-473-8382 or visit the Friends of Mendon Elders website at <https://sites.google.com/view/friendsofmendonelders/home> for updates on all planned Trips and Travel.

Submitted by the Friends of Mendon Elders

Seats available for Upton Men's Club first annual Texas Hold'em

By Scott Calzolaio

This ain't Texas but put on your poker face because the Upton Men's Club is hosting its first annual Texas Hold'em Tournament on April 5 at the Upton VFW.

The tournament will begin at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4 p.m.) and is sure to be a fun night of "playing cards, cash bar, barbecue, and raffles," said event organizer and previous president of the Upton Men's Club, Nathaniel Hahn. There will also be cash prizes.

Attendees must be at least 21 to enter and there is a \$100 buy-in to play. Participants will have a chance to buy back in for around \$150 within the first hour of the tournament.

The top three to five players will receive cash prizes, says Hahn, while the rest of the proceeds will be recirculated into the Men's Club for future events and public projects.

There's room for about 80 players, and Hahn said he hopes to fill the seats and have a good time.

The goal, Hahn said, is to make this an annual event, and to match the turnout at the Men's Club Cornhole Tournament, now going into its fourth year.

Hahn said he and the rest of the Upton Men's Club are always trying to come up with new ideas to engage the community, and raise money doing it.

"We just have a desire to bring new events to town," he said. "It was really just an idea to bring people together and raise money for the town."

To register for a spot at the table, visit uptonmensclub.org/event/holdem-poker-tournament/.

The Upton Men's Club is a local non-profit made up of about 50 residents. Annual events range from the locally famous fireworks show on the Fourth of July to annual scholarships for graduating students.

The Men's Club meets every third Wednesday of the month at the Rose Garden Restaurant. New members are always welcome.

BVT SENIOR

continued from page 1

in the LEO Club, Student Council, and SkillsUSA, having served as a delegate. He volunteers at Project Just Because (a local non-profit that helps families attain basic necessities) and Pawfect Life Rescue (a local animal shelter). His self-motivation extends to independently studying multiple Advanced Placement courses to challenge himself academically while employed through BVT's Co-operative Education program at UMass Chan Medical School, where he helps conduct novel Down syndrome research.

Having gained valuable industry experience, Chris intends to further his career training by studying biomedical engineering at a four-year college, earning a master's degree and then entering the industry. He aspires to start his own neural prosthetics company, focusing on minimally invasive neural prosthetics. This career path aligns perfectly with his passion for helping others, advancing science, and applying creativity to design life-changing medical devices.

On behalf of the school community, Dr. Fitzpatrick is proud to recognize Chris and the many accomplishments and contributions that have led to his nomination for this distinguished recognition, which will ultimately lead him to an incredibly bright future.

Submitted by Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

Local residents named to Worcester State University's Dean's List for Fall 2024

The following local students have been named to the Worcester State University Dean's List for Fall 2024.

Students include: **Mendon residents** Victoria L. Botoms, Nicole Braun, Drew Fleming, and Samantha Stephens; and **Upton residents** Giovanna G. Bruni, Grayson T. Campbell, Alexander J.

Guertin, and Chloe E. Kessler.

Dean's List honors are awarded to matriculated undergraduate students who have earned a 3.5 GPA or higher. Full-time students must have earned a minimum of 12 credits and part-time students must have earned a minimum of 6 credits.

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The Upton VFW - 15 Milford St.
Register at UptonMensClub.org



SPORTS

Young BVT Hockey establishing itself as a contender

Beavers have qualified for playoffs three straight years

By Chris Villani

Three years ago, Blackstone Valley Tech's hockey team split off from Grafton after a run that saw the co-op become one of the best teams in the state. Three years later, the Beavers are on their own but still winning, and the team qualified for the tournament once again this winter.

"The word is out that BVT is not only fielding an independent program, but we play a competitive schedule and our values of how I want the program to run are being met," said Head Coach Turk Chambless.

On the ice, Valley Tech captured the Colonial Athletic League title for the second year in a row and finished with a record above .500 to earn a spot in the state tournament. Their reward was a date with the defending champs and the top team in the state, Marblehead, and the Beavers came within six seconds of pulling off a shocking upset.

Chambless said the leadership of the captains has been instrumental in the program's growth and success. Seniors Christopher Bouvier and Jack Eastwood served as team captains and

were assisted by Jacob Selby and junior Max Krauss.

"They were four of our top players," Chambless said.

But the Beavers also had several impactful freshmen, continuing what has become a trend for the young program. Chambless said more than a dozen freshmen came out for the team and several of them played a big role. Three years ago, goaltender Finn Lozeau was one of those impact freshmen, and this year he was once again a stalwart for BVT in goal.

During that first season, Chambless was hoping for around 25 players. But he ended up getting nearly 40 to try out, which allowed Valley Tech the opportunity to field a junior varsity program from the start. The last two years, more than a dozen freshmen have come out for the team each winter.

Chambless is even prouder of his team off the ice. He said he wanted to instill a philanthropic spirit in his team and they have responded to that challenge. The team took part in a fundraiser called Hockey Fights Charity and raised over \$4,000. During the holiday season, the Beavers also sponsored



The four BVT hockey captains Jack Eastwood, Jacob Selby, Max Krauss, and Chris Bouvier. Courtesy photo

eight underprivileged children in the area and made sure they would all have presents to open on Christmas. It's all part of building a culture that aspiring

hockey players will want to be a part of.

"A lot of kids are looking at Valley Tech as an opportunity to not only go to a great school,

but also to play for a good hockey program," Chambless said. "That's something I am very proud of."

More photos available online



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SPORTS

Getman earns top-10 finish at state track meet

Nipmuc freshman qualified in two events in first season

By Chris Villani

Cam Getman remembers watching the Summer Olympic track and field competition a few years ago and seeing the hammer throw for the first time. Her father suggested that an event like that is one in which she might excel.

“I said ‘Oh, that’s kind of interesting,’” Getman recalled.

Fast forward four years, and the 15-year-old Nipmuc freshman is among the best in the weight throw, an event similar to the hammer, in Massachusetts. Getman placed 7th in the recent MIAA Meet of Champions in the event and also qualified in the shot put.

“It was a pleasant surprise,” Getman said of the way she finished the season. “I was very happy for the opportunity, but it wasn’t a goal of mine, specifically for the weight throw because I just wanted to try the new event. I have been doing the shot for a couple of years, but I didn’t think I would get that far.”

Getman said it was fun to get to the last meet of the season and, as the only freshman competing, she said she was greeted by a number of very nice and supportive people.

“It was very fun to be on that stage a little bit early in my career,” she said. “It was definitely nerve-wracking, but I got to watch the best throw and it was a little eye-opening about how far I could go if my strength and technique keep improving. It was a very nice window into what I could possibly look like in the future.”

Getman has yet to compete in her favorite event, the discus, since that only takes place during the spring track and field season. While gaining experience as a member of the middle school track and field program, Getman set an impressive personal best of nearly 98 feet in the disc, a mark she



Nipmuc’s Cam Getman is already one of the best throwers in the state, and she’s only a freshman. Courtesy photo

will look to better this spring. This winter, she topped out at around 34 feet in the shot put. In the weight throw, which consists of hurling a 20 pound ball at the end of a short chain, Getman reached 34 feet, five inches in an event she had never before tried.

“The hammer is very controlled and footwork-oriented,” Getman said. “I think it’s a lot more technical than the shot or the discus.”

Getman said the focus this spring will be on getting stron-

ger and sharpening her technique across all events. She said Nipmuc throwing coach Brian Consigli told her that beating 50 feet in the shot and 60 feet in the weight throw by the time she is a senior are goals that are within reach. Getman says she would love to compete in college, but said she would do track and field as a hobby either way.

She said, “It’s good for strength building and flexibility and a great way to stay in shape.”

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