

## Tree Seedling Giveaway Slated for April 25

### 4th Annual Event Celebrates Arbor Day

By GRACE ALLEN

It's been said there is no greater act of generosity than to plant a tree under whose shade you will never sit. This sentiment and long-term vision align perfectly with the Norfolk DPW's tree seedling giveaway for Arbor Day. It's an annual event that will benefit the town for years to come.

According to Blair Crane, Norfolk's director of public works and the town's tree warden, this year's seedling giveaway will be held on Friday, April 25 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Department of Public Works office, 33 Medway Branch. As in past years, Crane anticipates the seedlings will go quickly.

"Each year I have had to order more and more in an effort to reach demand," he



One hundred Eastern redbud seedlings will be given away in celebration of Arbor Day, along with two other seedling varieties.

said of the popular event.

Available on a first-come, first-served basis, 100 Eastern redbuds and 100 Old-Fashioned lilac seedlings will

be offered free to residents. In addition, there will be a limited

**SEEDLING**  
*continued on page 2*

## Wrentham Takes Legal Action Against State Over MBTA Communities Zoning Mandate

By JOE STEWART

The Town of Wrentham has gone to court against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, challenging the enforcement of the MBTA Communities Act, a state law requiring municipalities to adopt zoning bylaws that allow for multi-family housing. The lawsuit seeks to exempt Wrentham from compliance with the law until the state provides funding to cover the costs associated with the mandate.

The legal action comes after Wrentham residents overwhelmingly rejected a proposed zoning bylaw amendment at a Special Town Meeting in December 2024, with a vote of 542 to 53 against the measure. The proposed bylaw would have created overlay zones to accommodate 750 multi-family housing units. Residents and town officials have consistently argued that the law imposes an unfunded mandate, placing a significant financial burden on the town.

### Unfunded Mandate Determination

In October 2024, Wrentham requested a determination from the State Auditor's Division of Local Mandates (DLM) on whether the MBTA Communities Act constitutes an unfunded mandate. On February 21, 2025, the DLM issued its determination, agreeing with the town that the law is indeed an unfunded mandate. The DLM found that the Commonwealth had failed to provide sufficient funding to cover the costs of compliance.

Despite this determination, the state has continued to enforce the law, setting a July 14, 2025, deadline for Wrentham to adopt a compliant zoning bylaw. The town now faces the loss of eligibility for state funding programs, including the Housing Choice Initiative, the Local Capital Projects Fund, and the Mass-

### ZONING

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**SEEDLING**

*continued from page 1*

number of Dawn redwood seedlings while supplies last.

Seedlings are roughly 5 to 12 inches tall and prepackaged in bags with some topsoil to start them off. Instructions will be included. The seedlings are grown in nurseries across the country.

Since starting the program three years ago, Crane says he has alternated the offerings between hearty hardwood trees and more decorative species. He notes that species diversity and seedling availability are considerations, as reflected in this year's giveaway.

Eastern redbuds, flowering trees known as the "harbinger of spring," can grow to a height of 20 to 30 feet, with a spread of 25 to 35 feet at maturity.

The popular "Old Fashioned" lilac blooms in mid to late spring and can grow upwards of 8 feet. The shrub's fragrant flowers are also considered a welcome sign of spring.



**Dawn redwood.**

Dawn redwoods are fast-growing conical-shaped trees that can reach 70 to 100 feet high. Their feathery foliage changes from light green in spring to dark green in summer, and then russet-brown in autumn.

Crane says feedback about the seedling giveaway has been uniformly positive, with many residents telling him the new plants have done very well.

On January 7, Crane was recognized as the Massachusetts Tree Warden of the Year. He was

honored at the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association (MTWFA) annual meeting and conference. In May, the MTWFA will hold a commemorative tree planting in Norfolk to honor Crane, although the date and location have yet to be announced. It's also an opportunity for residents to observe a tree planting and talk to dozens of tree wardens from across the state, as many will be in attendance.

Crane is quite active on social media, keeping residents



**Old-Fashioned lilac.**

informed about road closures and other notifications. In his role as tree warden, he is tasked with protecting every tree larger than one inch in diameter on public property, as well as alongside the roads in town.

At the upcoming May 14 Town Meeting, Crane will present a shade tree bylaw for residents to vote on. The proposal will attempt to clarify liability issues and determine who has authority to act over town trees, thereby providing some legal protection when tree-related lawsuits occur.

"As a measure that adds zero cost to the town budget and one that has an environmental impact regarding our public trees, I am hopeful that residents will attend and support this proposal," said Crane, adding that residents can contact him at the DPW to learn more prior to Town Meeting.

Elderly and disabled residents unable to come to the DPW office on April 25 can contact Crane to make arrangements to get a seedling. Call 508-528-4990 or email [bcrane@norfolk.ma.us](mailto:bcrane@norfolk.ma.us).

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## ***Elect Taiese Hickman for Select Board***

### **Candidate Pledges Fresh Leadership, Bold Ideas for Town's Future**

**NORFOLK, MA** - Taiese Hickman has officially announced her candidacy for the Norfolk Select Board in the upcoming May 6, 2025 town election. Hickman, a longtime Norfolk resident, mother, and community leader, is running to bring a fresh perspective to town leadership. Her campaign focuses on fiscal responsibility, smart growth, and innovation to ensure the town's prosperity for generations to come.

"I believe in Norfolk and our ability to provide for everyone, but to do so we need the right leadership who is focused on the future," said Hickman. "I'm running because I believe your voice should shape our town's future, and with our shared bold ideas we can ensure our residents thrive for generations to come."

Taiese Hickman brings a wealth of professional leadership experience to her campaign. She currently works in Higher Education, where she focuses on program development, research, and creating opportunities for undergraduate students. She earned a Ph.D. from New York University School of Medicine and an MBA from Northeastern University, and has held leadership positions in healthcare, analytics, and nonprofit management.

### **Hickman's campaign will center on three key priorities for Norfolk:**

- **Fiscal Responsibility** - Ensuring transparent budgeting, responsible spending, and securing outside funding to reduce the tax burden on residents.
- **Smart Growth** - Advocating for well-planned, sustainable development that preserves Norfolk's small-town charm while encouraging economic vitality and expanded housing opportunities.

- **Innovation** - Bringing modern solutions and new technology to town government to improve services, infrastructure, and communication with residents.

Hickman is deeply engaged in the Norfolk community, serving on the Norfolk Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAAC), where she advocates for students with disabilities and works closely with local schools to ensure inclusive education practices. She is also a member of the Norfolk Advisory Committee, where she helps oversee the town's financial planning and budget recommendations.

In addition, she serves on the Board of the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress and the Board of Autism Care Partners, organizations committed to improving opportunities and support for individuals with disabilities and their families. As the founder of the New England Equity Collective, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting equity in homeownership, Hickman has been a leader in helping first-time homebuyers, veterans, and underserved families achieve housing stability.

Most importantly, Hickman and her husband are proud parents of two children who attend Norfolk Public Schools. Her deep investment in the community and personal experience as a parent drive her commitment to making Norfolk a town where families and businesses can thrive for years to come.

As Election Day approaches, Hickman urges Norfolk residents to make their voices heard on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. She encourages every voter to support fresh leadership for the town's future.

Join the Campaign! Community members can support Hickman for Select Board by volunteering, hosting a lawn sign, or contributing to fundraising efforts. Together, we can build a stronger, smarter, and more sustainable Norfolk!



# Meet the Candidates: Wrentham School Committee

By JOE STEWART

On Monday, April 7, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wrentham residents will head to the polls at the Delaney School to vote in the annual Town Election. Among the seats are two for the Wrentham School Committee: a one-year term to fill a vacant seat and a full three-year term. Four candidates are vying for these positions—Cindy Fuller and Michael Hayek for the one-year term, and Dawn Doyle and Meaghan Drennen for the three-year term.

## One-Year Term Candidates

### Cindy Fuller

Incumbent Cindy Fuller was appointed by the Select Board last year to fill a vacancy. A life-long Wrentham resident, Fuller previously ran for the committee three years ago in a close race. With 35 years of teaching experience in the Wrentham School District, she has taught over 700 Wrentham students and says she is passionate about the town's education system.

Fuller has served on two building committees and multiple contract negotiation teams, experiences she believes will be valuable as Wrentham navigates decisions on the Roderick School building project and contract discussions. She says she is

committed to working collaboratively with teachers, parents, administration, and the broader community to support students' academic and emotional well-being.

Regarding the Roderick School project, Fuller acknowledges the need for decisive action and emphasizes her history of involvement with past building committees - her father served on the original Roderick School building committee and she attended 5th and 6th grade in the new Roderick school. She says she is dedicated to ensuring that Wrentham reaches the best possible solution—whether renovation or a new structure—through a collective, informed decision-making process.

### Michael Hayek

Michael Hayek, a first-time candidate, is motivated to serve because of his eldest son's enrollment in Wrentham schools. He says he recognizes the challenges children face in today's world, particularly post-COVID, and stresses the importance of play in developing social skills.

Hayek has already begun preparing for the role by reviewing six months' worth of School Committee meetings and studying details of the Roderick project. He brings a professional

background in aerospace engineering collaborating with large teams and plans to be an approachable member of the committee who actively listens to the community.

Regarding Roderick, Hayek is leaning toward supporting constructing a new building, citing issues such as the gym's dual function as a cafeteria and the noise levels affecting classrooms. He also highlights energy efficiency and safety improvements a new building would bring. Additionally, he says he is concerned about future funding requirements, emphasizing the need for long-term financial planning in light of declining state funding and potential federal policy impacts.

## Three-Year Term Candidates

### Dawn Doyle

With 25 years of teaching experience, Dawn Doyle says she is driven by a deep concern for children's development. She reflects on her own childhood of unstructured play and contrasts it with the heavily structured environment of today's students. She noted that this shift has contributed to rising anxiety, reduced attention spans, and increased social disconnection among children.

Doyle says she intends to bring a classroom-based perspective to budget discussions, particularly in addressing financial pressures from the King Philip Regional and Tri-County Vocational school districts. She suggests exploring more efficient ways to manage special education services such as bundled services while maintaining high-quality instruction.

Her experience on the Burrell School building committee in Foxboro informs her approach to the Roderick project, Doyle explained. She stresses the importance of thoughtful design, citing storage needs and flexible spaces that can accommodate future changes in education. Above all, Doyle says she is committed to ensuring that decisions prioritize students' needs.

### Meaghan Drennen

Meaghan Drennen decided to run for the School Committee after witnessing the COVID-19 pandemic's lasting impact on children's learning, particularly in literacy development. She has been actively involved in the schools as a Mystery Reader and field trip chaperone and now wants to take a more formal role in shaping the district's future.

Drennen points out the importance of supporting all

students through professional development for teachers and social-emotional learning initiatives. She is also an advocate for securing additional funding sources to strengthen Wrentham's education system.

On the Roderick project, Drennen highlights the significance of the school's acceptance into the state's school building program, which will cover 50% of the costs. She advocates for balancing instructional needs with a reasonable financial plan while ensuring community voices are heard in the process.

## Looking Ahead

As Wrentham voters consider their choices for the School Committee, each candidate brings a unique perspective and vision for the district. Whether focusing on building improvements, financial responsibility, or student well-being, these candidates stress they are committed to shaping the future of Wrentham's education system.

To help voters assess candidates, Wrentham Engagement, a local, grassroots, non-partisan effort to encourage greater engagement in Wrentham, has published the Wrentham Voter Guide at <https://www.wrenthamvoterguide.com>. It organizes information from candidates: why they're running, biographical details, and links to candidate supplied information.

# Meet the Candidates for Wrentham Select Board

By GRACE ALLEN

There's a three-way race for

two seats on the Wrentham Select Board in the April 7 Town

Election. The candidates agreed to answer some questions for readers of Local Town Pages.

## William D. Harrington

**Occupation:** Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Public Safety, assigned to the Massachusetts State Police Fleet Administration.

**Town boards and committees served on:** Previous member of Finance Committee (FINCOMM), Capitol Budget Planning Committee, Selection Committee for DPW Director, King Philip Youth Football Coach. Current member of St. Mary Parish, Wrentham Knights of Columbus, Wrentham Lions Club, Wrentham Sportsmen's Association, Wrentham Conservation Preservation Committee (CPC) Vice Chair.

**Why are you running?** I'm running for re-election to continue progress that I've been involved with

over the last three years. During this time, the Board worked with the Town Manager to create a balanced budget, and we have made positive changes to our town center with a new center parking lot and the Sweatt Park renovations. We have all worked well together for the good of our town and its residents.

**How would you propose funding local services in the short term, including schools, police, and public works, while keeping property taxes manageable for residents?** We diligently review the tax split each year, taking a hard look at the impact it will have on our residents and small businesses. In addition, each department budget is developed with tight controls in which a balance is met to provide a high level of service and being fiscally responsible.

**What is your view on Wrentham's long-term financial sustainability, espe-**

**cially considering potential infrastructure needs and other growing demands in the future?** The board develops and evaluates strategic goals and priorities itemized in specific areas which include Capital Planning and Infrastructure, and Economic Development. I believe it is imperative to have a long-term plan for the town and its residents. This allows for consistent evaluation, accountable and fiscal responsible planning for the town and its residents.

**What is your position on the MBTA Communities Act?** I remain committed to obtaining important fiscal impact information from the state related to the MBTA Communities Act. This fiscal impact analysis would be related to education, public safety, public works and infrastructure. This information is imperative to allow our residents to make an informed decision on whether to adopt an MBTA zoning bylaw.

## CANDIDATES

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CANDIDATES

continued from page 4

Leo E. Immonen

Occupation: Retired.

Town boards and committees served on: Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Open Space Committee, Solid Waste Recycling Committee.

Why are you running? I am running to provide the voters with a choice between my years of experience in Wrentham government vs. the other candidates.

How would you propose funding local services in the short term, including schools, police, and public works, while keeping property taxes manageable for residents? It's important to ensure that all taxes and fees are collected. To supplement those sources, I would seek state and federal grants.

What is your view on Wrentham's long-term financial sustainability, especially considering potential infrastructure needs and other growing demands in the future? We must balance the value of long-term projects vs. the limitations they impose on immediate funding needs.

What is your position on the MBTA Communities Act? The town must carefully weigh the benefits of maintaining local control vs. allowing the state to rewrite our zoning bylaws.

Roy C. Lamothe

Occupation: Corporate Development - lead the Integration efforts for laboratories acquired around the world for UL Solutions. A safety science and testing organization.

Town boards and committees served on: None, as my professional career had required travel each week to Chicago or acquired companies. Since COVID I have had the good fortune to work from home and now have time to give back to our community. I also volunteer as a director for the Friends of Wrentham, a nonprofit organization that financially assists individuals with disabilities to enhance their quality of life at the Wrentham Developmental Center.

Why are you running? Joe Botaish, my friend and Wrentham Select Board member, was fighting cancer and asked me to consider running to fill his position. Joe passed in January. He was a good man, devout Catholic and servant to the town of Wrentham for many years. In Joe's honor I began to investigate the town's



William D. Harrington

challenges and made the commitment to serve and protect Wrentham's traditional values that have served my family so well over the years.

How would you propose funding local services in the short term, including schools, police, and public works, while keeping property taxes manageable for residents? We must ensure that our essential services have the resources and funding to provide our constituents with the safety and lifestyle to which they have been accustomed. To achieve this, while minimizing the tax burden on residents, I would prioritize the following:

- Collaborate with local delegates (Representative Marcus Vaughn, State Senator Becca Rausch, and Congressman Jake Auchincloss) to secure state and federal funding for critical infrastructure, education, and public safety needs.
- Support our local businesses and additional economic development without imposing on the lifestyle, safety, schools, water and or traffic patterns that our residents experience today.
- Conduct comprehensive budget reviews of the town's expenditures to identify efficiencies while exploring partnerships with neighboring communities to increase service levels and reduce costs.

What is your view on Wrentham's long-term financial sustainability, especially considering potential infrastructure needs and other growing demands in the future? Long-term financial sustainability requires proactive planning to ensure we can meet infrastructure demands without overburdening taxpayers. My approach would include:

- A review and assessment of Wrentham's Multi-Year Capital Plan that considers renovations and infrastructure improvements for



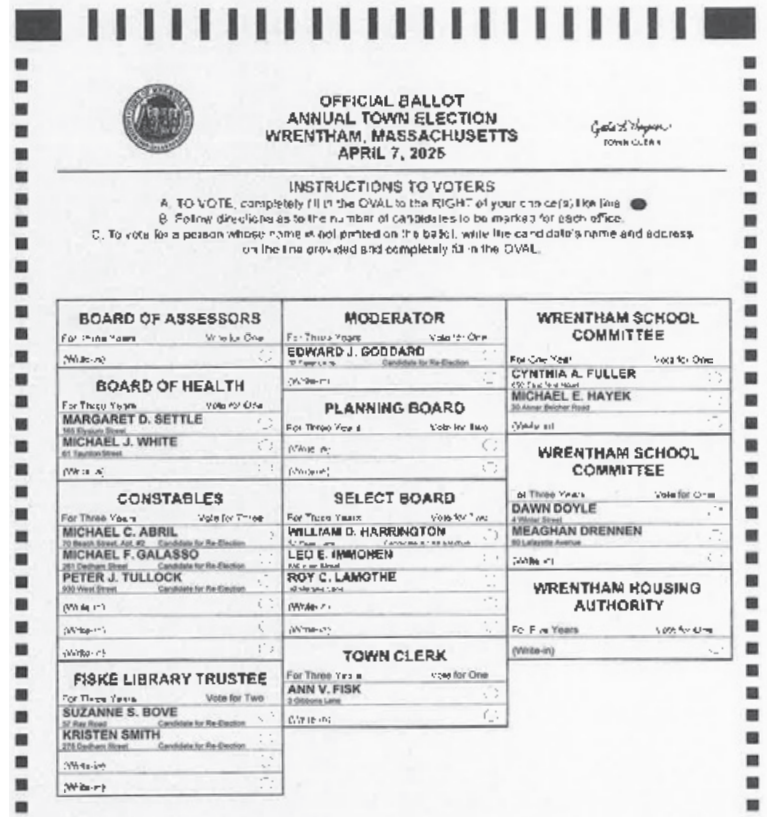
Leo E. Immonen



Roy C. Lamothe

our roads, water, sewer, and schools that can be planned, phased, and potentially supported by state development grants and funding sources secured by our local delegates.

- Continue and encourage a smart growth strategy, generating new revenues through public-private partnerships and developers whose efforts align with Wrentham's character.
- Promote the continued need for financial reserves that will strengthen our balance sheet and our ability to cover unexpected costs without placing a strain on taxpayers.



The ballot for Wrentham's annual town election, scheduled for Monday, April 7. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Voting is held at the Delaney Elementary School, 120 Taunton Street.

What is your position on the MBTA Communities Act? The Act presents both opportunities and challenges for Wrentham. I support responsible housing development that aligns with our town's character and infrastructure capacity:

- Each town should have local control over zoning changes to protect taxpayers and control the growth of their town in line with the anticipated revenues per the town's Home Rule Charter.
- Impact studies, provided by the state, must be issued, studied, and shared with the

residents before moving forward with any rezoning effort to comply with this Act. In addition, all unfunded aspects of the Act must be disclosed.

- Prior to a vote to rezoning, administrators and constituents must fully understand the tax implications, the potential change in demand for water, sewer, schools, and traffic patterns, and ensure that capital projects are planned, funded, and in alignment with the incremental housing developments.

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# Living Healthy

## Eye-Opening Surgery: Corneal Transplant Gives Patients a Clearer Outlook on Life

DAN LIU, MD  
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

In May 2023, a landmark surgery was performed at NYU Langone Health: a whole eye transplant. During this surgery, the entire eye – in addition to a portion of the face – was transplanted from a donor into a living human recipient for the purposes of facial reconstruction. While we are likely decades away from performing eye transplants that can restore vision, there are more than 49,000 transplants of a different kind performed in the United States annually which can successfully improve vision and save sight: corneal transplants.

### What is the cornea?

The cornea is the transparent, dome shaped surface that acts as the front window to the

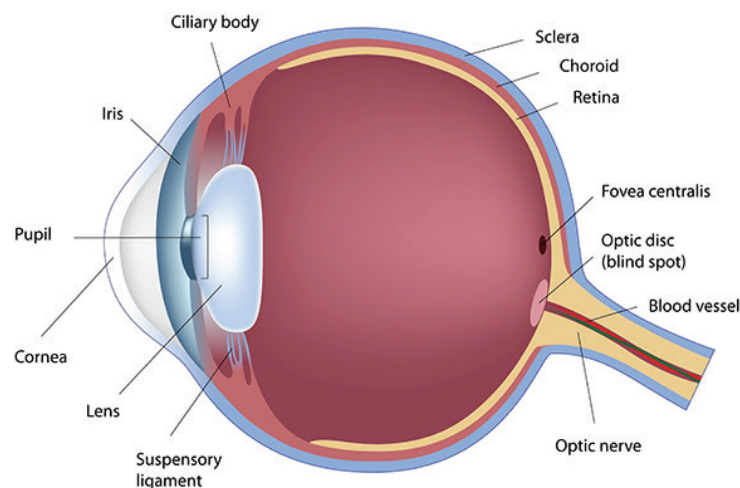
eye. It plays a crucial role in focusing light rays entering the eye in order to allow us to see clearly. When the cornea is damaged, it can become scarred, swollen, or opaque. In these cases, the visual effects can vary from increased light sensitivity, blurry vision, or even impaired vision to the point of blindness. Fortunately, for many individuals experiencing corneal damage, a corneal transplant, also known as a keratoplasty, may offer the opportunity to restore vision.

### Who needs a corneal transplant?

There are various conditions, both genetic and acquired, that can affect the cornea and necessitate a corneal transplant. Common conditions include:

- Corneal dystrophies: These are inherited conditions that cause progressive clouding or scarring of the cornea. Fuchs' dystrophy is the most common of these dystrophies, which often runs in families. This is a condition in which the innermost layer of cells in the cornea, the endothelial cells, no longer function in keeping the cornea clear. As a result, fluid can build up in the cornea, causing it to be swollen and cloudy. Some patients with Fuchs' dystrophy experience debilitating glare, whereas other patients can experience significant loss of vision.
- Keratoconus is a common condition for which corneal transplants are performed.

Human Eye Anatomy



In patients with keratoconus, the cornea becomes increasingly cone shaped over time rather than remaining dome shaped. This can lead to loss of vision as light rays bend or refract aberrantly off the irregularly shaped cornea. Individuals with keratoconus may experience progressive astigmatism and a decrease in vision.

waiting list in order to have surgery. By replacing the damaged tissue, a corneal transplant can significantly improve a person's vision, enhance their quality of life, and reduce symptoms like pain or sensitivity to light. In this era of modern medicine, corneal transplants are very successful and last up to 10 to 15 years, with many lasting more than 30 years.

### Are there different kinds of corneal transplants?

Since the introduction of corneal transplants in the 1900s, these surgeries have evolved to become more efficient with faster healing times and better visual outcomes. Corneal transplants can be full thickness or partial thickness transplants.

- Other acquired conditions that may affect the health and clarity of the cornea include eye infections which can cause significant scarring, or even previous eye surgeries that can result in damage to the cornea.

### What is a corneal transplant?

In diseases in which the cornea cannot be repaired with medications alone, an ophthalmologist who specializes in performing corneal transplants can restore the clarity and health of the cornea, as well as vision. In these sight saving surgeries, the diseased cornea is replaced with a clear, healthy cornea from a human donor who has generously chosen to donate their organs after death. Luckily, in the United States, there is a well established infrastructure for tissue procurement such that people who require corneal transplants do not need to be on a prolonged

- **Penetrating keratoplasty (PK):** Also known as a full thickness corneal transplant, this is the most traditional form of corneal transplant. In PK, the diseased cornea is removed by the surgeon, the donor cornea is sized to fit the patient's eye, and stitches are used to place the donor cornea in the eye. The surgery is performed when the cornea is severely scarred or damaged, affecting all of its layers.

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# Living Healthy

## Is Shoulder Pain Limiting Your Life?

It is researched that over 70% of people will experience shoulder pain at some point in their lives. Whether this is caused by sleeping the wrong way, shoveling the snow, a sports injury or anything in between, shoulder pain can deter one from the ability to live their normal life. Sometimes these symptoms can come on spontaneously, so finding the root cause of the pain is imperative to leading a healthy, pain-free lifestyle.

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helped many patients return to normal daily lives following shoulder pain incidents, improving their mobility and ultimately eliminating their painful symptoms.

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Dr. Rochelle Bien, Dr. Molly Rappaport & Dr. Michael Goldstein

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### EYES

continued from page 6

- **Descemet's Stripping Endothelial Keratoplasty (DSEK):** In DSEK, only the innermost layer of the cornea, called the endothelium, is replaced. The rest of the corneal layers remain intact. This surgery is often used to treat conditions that affect the endothelium, such as Fuchs' dystrophy.
- **Descemet's Membrane Endothelial Keratoplasty (DMEK):** DMEK is a more advanced version of DSEK and is considered one of the most effective corneal transplant procedures for treating endothelial dysfunction. In DMEK, only the thinnest layer of tissue with endothelial cells are transplanted. Because of its precision, DMEK has a faster recovery time and better visual outcomes than traditional PK or DSEK procedures.

### Do I need a corneal transplant?

To determine whether you would benefit from a corneal transplant, a thorough evaluation by an ophthalmologist is necessary to determine whether a transplant is appropriate. At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we have corneal transplant surgeons who perform additional testing to evaluate the patient's eye health, including measurements of corneal thickness and imaging scans. We also have established relationships with eye banks, which are organizations that procure donated tissue and screen for quality.

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# The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

## Gray-Blending for Women: Embracing Your Gray Hair in 2025

By GINA WOELFEL

You may remember our “Gray-Blending” article from last March. Since then, a growing interest in blending gray hair has been all over social media. You’ve got questions, and we’ve got the answers! Here’s your updated guide to gray-blending, with everything you need to refresh your look in 2025.

The world of hair color is undergoing a significant shift, with more women opting for gray-blending techniques instead of fully covering their gray hair. While gray-blending has been around for years, a surge in demand for low-maintenance hair color has brought this innovative technique into the spotlight. By seamlessly blending natural grays with soft highlights and translucent color, gray-blending creates a fresh, modern look that feels soft and natural. Unlike traditional hair dyes that often leave a harsh line of regrowth, gray-blending offers a lived-in style that celebrates the beauty of aging, giving women more freedom and flexibility with their hair coloring routines. Women aren’t just accepting their gray hair—they’re embracing it as a symbol of strength, confidence, and individuality!

### The Classic Approach to Gray Coverage

For years, there were three basic levels of gray coverage:

- **Full Coverage:** This all-over, one-process coloring technique provides 100% gray coverage. Imagine wearing

opaque wool tights. This application creates a uniform color that matches either your natural shade or your desired color but often results in a noticeable line of regrowth at the roots.

- **Demi-Permanent Coverage:** This method uses less pigmented dye to offer about 80% gray coverage. It provides a softer approach, allowing some natural gray tones to show through, similar to wearing sheer, colored pantyhose.
- **No Coverage:** This approach is a full gray embrace that leaves your natural gray and silver hair to take center stage. Using a clear gloss and brightening shampoo can eliminate brassiness and add shine. It’s like wearing sheer, nude pantyhose—subtle, simple, and naturally beautiful.

Modern hair dyes offer a broader spectrum of colors and a more vibrant finish than their predecessors but still require salon visits every 4 to 6 weeks. Many women continue to use the same hair color for years, believing that their natural shade remains unchanged, even though their original hair color has likely shifted significantly.

It’s easy to fall into a routine with hair coloring. While full coverage may have worked in the past, it’s important to consider whether it remains the best option for you today.

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GRAY-BLENDING INFORMATION

### Why is Gray-Blending For Women So Popular?

Embracing natural gray hair can be challenging for many women. Transitioning from a solid hair color to gray is often a significant emotional commitment. The rising popularity of gray blending offers a modern way to integrate gray hair with your natural or chosen color. It’s an excellent option for those looking for a low-maintenance way to incorporate more gray into their style without immediately making a complete silver commitment.

### How To Transition To Gray-Blending

For clients who’ve been coloring their hair for years but want to gray-blend or transition back to their natural color, there are several options available:

1. **Highlights and Lowlights:** If you’re looking to minimize the appearance of gray roots, a stylist can strategically apply highlights or lowlights around your face, which softens the look of regrowth and adds dimension without creating a stark line of demarcation. Additionally, incorporating a few carefully placed highlights near your part can lift gray strands closer to your silver color. At the same time, a toner (used after bleaching or coloring to help neutralize brassiness and unwanted undertones, resulting in a more desired and customized color) can help unify the overall appearance.
2. **The Big Chop:** If you’re ready to take the plunge, cutting your hair short



and allowing it to grow out naturally is a great option. It typically takes about 1.5 years for your hair to reach shoulder length, but regular trims can help eliminate any unwanted color.

3. **Complete Silver Transformation:** For many, the desire to go completely silver in one sitting is tempting. While some can achieve this in one session, it’s a lengthy and costly process that can take up to 12 hours and may not always provide the results you expect.

Regardless of your method, a toner or tinted gloss is always recommended to ensure maximum brightness and a beautiful finish.

### The Timeline for Gray Blending

The timeline for transitioning to gray hair varies for each individual. Factors such as your hair’s health, the coloring method you choose, and the rate at which your hair grows will all influence your journey. Your stylist will typically want to see at least three to four months of hair regrowth to assess your gray pattern. While this timeline can differ from person to person, it serves as a general guideline that helps your stylist create the most effective color plan for you moving forward.

Once you start the transition process, you can expect your maintenance and upkeep to be about eight to twelve weeks apart, depending on your chosen method. Typically, it takes about 3 to 4 salon visits to complete the process and get your hair to the desired state.

The best part? Nothing is permanent! If gray blending isn’t your style, you can always return to your traditional color. Your stylist supports you every step of the way and ensures you look and feel your best.

### Curious How Gray-Blending Can Work For You?

Visit b.LUXE Hair & Makeup Studio for a complimentary color consultation. Our expert stylists will help you navigate the world of gray-blending and find the perfect solution for all your needs.

2025 is the year for you to embrace your gray hair with style and confidence!

Scan the QR code for more information about gray-blending, including before-and-after photos of real clients. To book a consultation, go to bLUXE.com.

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Your Money, Your Independence

# Portfolios Care About Asset Allocation, Not Your Emotions



Glenn Brown, CFP

Investing is a journey with greed, fear and uncertainty creating market fluctuations and volatility to portfolio values. While the cause always changes, one thing remains constant - portfolios don't care about your emotions.

### Sounds harsh? Maybe.

Consider the last time your investments performed based on how you feel? This isn't the chicken or the egg. Investments don't react based on how you feel, they react to your actions and choice of asset allocation or lack thereof.

### What is Asset Allocation?

Asset allocation is a foundational strategy of dividing an investment portfolio across different domestic and international asset classes—such as

stocks, bonds, real estate, hard assets, and cash equivalents—to balance risk/reward and reduce volatility. This allows investors to participate in returns over time by staying invested throughout market, macroeconomic and geopolitical cycles.

### This Time is Different!

Really? Let's take a trip down memory lane the past 25 years.

Recall Y2K, Four Horsemen, Dot.com Bubble, 9/11 Recession, Iraq, No Income Verification Mortgages, \$150 Oil, Housing Bubble, Financial Crisis, 0.1% Cash, Great Recession, Quantitative Easing (QE), Flash Crash, QE2, Debt Ceiling, Government Shutdown, Greece, Taper Tantrum, QE3 - Shock & Awe, FANG, Brexit, 2016 Election, Tax Cuts, China Trade War, 9 Fed Rate Hikes, COVID Shutdown, 3X Stimulus, 9% Inflation, Ukraine, 10 Fed Rate Hikes, 2022 Non-Recession, Magnificent 7, Trump II. Throughout all these events, asset allocation ensures not all investments in a portfolio are moving in unison.

Asset allocation is not influenced by emotions; it is a strategically, diversified portfolio spread across different asset classes to help smooth out market fluctuations and reduce overall risk. For example, if stocks are down, then bonds or real estate or gold may be performing well to help offset.

### S&P 500 Index ≠ Asset Allocation.

Many believe investing in the S&P 500 index is the same asset allocation. It's not.

Being broadly diversified across U.S. large companies represents one asset class. Due to an average annualized return of ~13.9% over the past 15 years, recency bias has investors "setting it and forgetting it".

### Asset Allocation at Work.

Most under age 45 (and some older) don't recall "The Lost Decade" when the S&P 500 index total return including dividends from 2000-2010 was -9.1%. Correct, \$1 million invested on Y2K was ~\$910,000 ten years later.

Elsewhere from 2000-2010, positive returns and outperformance was captured in index funds of developed international stocks, emerging market stocks, U.S. small cap stocks, U.S. high-yield bonds, U.S. REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), commodities, gold, cash and U.S. bonds.

Speaking of the U.S. Aggregate Bond index, \$1 million invested became ~\$1,840,000. Because of this divergence, the S&P 500 index didn't catch up to the U.S. Aggregate Bond index until 2017, or 17 years later. If you're in the distribution stage of your life (i.e. retirement), that's not good.

Asset allocation models vary and ideally are based on timelines for the need of funds in a financial plan, not your age. How one invests a Roth IRA, Traditional IRA or taxable brokerage account could be different and should align with "when" and "how much" the plan projects to draw from each account.

### Ignore at Your Own Risk.

When investors ignore asset allocation, they risk making decisions based on emotion. During market highs, greed sells lagging asset classes. During downturns, fear sells into panic without a plan back into the long-term strategy. These emotional responses create market timing and remove your foundation.

So remember, during times like these, your portfolio cares about asset allocation — a foundational strategy to help you manage risk, smooth out market volatility, and stay on track to meet timelines of your financial goals.

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

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

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## George Labonte Scholarship Established

In early February, Wrentham Cub Scout Pack 131 held its annual Blue and Gold banquet. George Labonte, Sr. was the featured speaker, and he spoke about his experiences as a Scout and honored the legacy of his late son, George Labonte, an Eagle Scout from Pack 131 who dedicated himself to serving his community from a young age.

In his memory, Pack 131 has established the George Labonte Scholarship to enable young Scouts to experience the adventures that Scouting offers. Also speaking was David Paulson, an Eagle Scout from Troop 40 in Taunton, who was recently honored by the Boy Scouts of America's Narragansett Council with the National Outstanding Eagle Scout Award.



George Labonte, Sr., left, and David Paulson recently spoke at Wrentham Cub Scout Pack 131 Blue and Gold Banquet, after establishing the George Labonte Scholarship.

## The Charles River Chorale Celebrates 40 Years of Music with Magical Spring Concert

The Charles River Chorale is excited to present its Spring Concert, "If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It: 40 Years of Making Music Magical," on May 3 at 5 p.m. at the Medway High School Auditorium. This special event marks the chorale's 40th anniversary, celebrating four decades of community and song.

Under the direction of Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the 100-member chorale will perform a powerful mix of Disney classics, traditional choral pieces, and pop songs that highlight the themes of hope, dreams, and the power of believing.

The concert will also feature Grammy-nominated recording artist and NBC's The Voice Finalist Michelle Brooks-Thompson, whose soulful renditions will elevate the evening, and a performance by the Children's Choir, adding a vibrant, inter-generational touch.

"This concert celebrates 40 years of sharing the power of music with our community," said Nelson-Oneschuk. "We're thrilled to mark this milestone with a performance that highlights the strength of hopes and dreams."

For more information and ticket details, visit our link: <https://www.charlesriverchorale.com/tickets> or access the QR code provided.



## Wrentham Lions Annual Golf Tournament Slated for June 9

The Wrentham Lions Club will hold its annual golf tournament on Monday, June 9 at Wentworth Hills Country Club, 27 Bow Street, Plainville.

Registration begins at 7 a.m. and start time is 8:30 a.m.

The entry fee is \$150 per golfer and includes a continental breakfast, full lunch, green fees and cart. There will be raffles and prizes.

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**ZONING**

*continued from page 1*

Works infrastructure program among other grant programs, if it fails to comply.

**Wrentham’s Legal Action**

Wrentham argues that the state has failed to meet its obligations under Massachusetts General Laws, which requires the Commonwealth to fund any new mandates imposed on cities and towns. The town also contends that the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), has not provided the required fiscal impact analysis, leaving Wrentham unable to fully assess the financial burden of compliance.

**Town Officials’ Response**

In a press release issued on March 6, the Wrentham Select Board and Town Manager Michael King emphasized the town’s commitment to fiscal responsibility and local control. “Wrentham voters overwhelmingly defeated an article concerning a zoning bylaw amendment at the December Special Town

Meeting by a vote of 53 to 542, in large part due to a concern over unfunded obligations,” the statement read. Further, the Select Board “... believes that the Commonwealth’s financial analysis is necessary for voters to make an informed decision at Town Meeting on whether to adopt an MBTA Zoning bylaw.” King has estimated that the cost of accommodating these units could range from \$4 million to \$13 million annually, depending on the extent of infrastructure upgrades needed.

**Legal and Financial Implications**

Wrentham’s filing comes in the wake of a January 8 ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) which upheld the constitutionality of the MBTA Communities Act. However, the SJC also found that the state’s initial regulatory process was flawed, prompting the EOHLC to issue emergency regulations in January. These regulations largely mirrored the previous version but set new deadlines for non-compliant communities.

Wrentham’s first hearing took place on March 10, before Judge

Mark C. Gildea at the Plymouth County Superior Court in Plymouth. At the hearing following oral arguments, Gildea decided to consolidate four MBTA Communities unfunded mandate cases: Hanson, Marshfield, Middleboro, and Wrentham. The next hearing is now scheduled before Gildea for April 2.

**Next Steps**

With the July 14 deadline looming, Wrentham officials are preparing for a potential show-

down with the state. The town has submitted an Action Plan, as required by the MBTA Communities Act, but has not yet adopted a compliant zoning bylaw. The Planning Board has indicated that it will bring the same bylaw and overlay zones proposed in December back for another vote at an upcoming Town Meeting, but it remains unclear whether residents will support the measure.

As the legal battle unfolds, Wrentham residents and of-

ficials are left to grapple with the broader implications of the MBTA Communities Act. “Let the fight begin,” declared Select Board member Jim Anderson at a recent meeting, capturing the town’s determination to push back against what it sees as an overreach by the state. For now, Wrentham’s lawsuit represents a stand for local autonomy and fiscal responsibility, setting the stage for an ongoing battle over the future of housing policy in Massachusetts.



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# Norfolk Public Schools Music Teacher John Fouracre Inducted to MICCA Hall of Fame

Freeman-Kennedy School music teacher John Fouracre has been inducted to the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) Paul Smith Hall of Fame.

Fouracre was named as a 2025 co-recipient of the MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame Award, alongside Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, choir director at Medway High School. There is usually only one person selected each year for the MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame Award. This year is the second time since 1998, when the award was first established, that two recipients were named.

This award honors Massachusetts music conductors who serve as an inspiration to students, the community, and fellow educators. Fouracre was formally inducted at the Massachusetts Music Educators Association In-Service Conference at the DCU

Center in Worcester on Friday, March 28.

Fouracre has been an instrumental music teacher since 1996 at the Freeman-Kennedy School, where he instructs students in grades 4-6. Under his leadership, the school's Advanced Band has consistently received high rankings at MICCA Concert Festivals.

Beyond his role as a teacher, Fouracre is an accomplished musician who has performed with the Wachusett Brass and the Jerry Seeco Big Band. Fouracre currently performs with the Commonwealth Wind Symphony.

Induction into the MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame is based on several criteria, including a minimum of 10 years as a Massachusetts conductor, a variety of conducting experience, involvement in MICCA activities, and demonstrating a commitment to professionalism in music educa-

tion at the state and local levels.

The MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame Award is named after the late Paul Smith, former director of bands at Abington High School, who was widely respected for his musicianship, professionalism, and integrity. Fouracre joins a distinguished group of past honorees, including Walter Chesnut, George Parks, Frank Battisti, and Malcolm Rowell.

For more information about MICCA and the Hall of Fame Award, go to [www.miccamusic.org](http://www.miccamusic.org).

"I couldn't think of a more deserving recipient of this Hall of Fame honor. Mr. Fouracre is an exceptional educator who has nurtured a love of music in countless students over the years," said Principal Lisa Altham-Hickey. "He not only teaches music but inspires a lifelong appreciation for it. We are so proud to see



Norfolk Public Schools music teacher John Fouracre was selected by the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Executive Board as a 2025 co-recipient of the MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame Award, which was presented to him during an event at the DCU Center in Worcester on March 28. (Photo Courtesy Norfolk Public Schools)

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## VOTE MAY 6 FOR DAN SIEGER!



My name is Dan Sieger and I'm happy to launch my campaign for Norfolk Planning Board. The municipal election will be held on Tuesday May 6, 2025. In this time of growth and change within our communities the Planning Board is vitally important to implement the town's master plan, steward commercial development, and ensure that residents' voices are at the forefront of these discussions.

I am a well-respected dynamic leader with 15 years of public and private sector environmental protection and development experience. I've helped towns establish long-term planning best practices and I've represented developers before local planning boards. I want to bring this experience on both sides of the table to help keep Norfolk a thriving and affordable community. I want to lead with common sense and not force unreasonable change. I want to drive commercial development to ensure our community has the resources that it needs while preserving the town's character. I want to bring my experience

in environment, energy, and real estate and be a resource for the citizens of this community.

In my years of public service I served in administrations of both political parties creating a reputation as someone who will get things done while working to build coalitions and making sure everyone's voice is heard in the process. I served as Undersecretary of Environmental Affairs where I was responsible for leading the Commonwealth's environmental agencies and ensuring that everything from parks and recreation to agriculture to environmental protection and transportation access were considered in all decisions. I am used to balancing a portfolio of interests in order to lead and make decisions. These skills transferred to my current work as an energy developer with RWE.

Most importantly as my wife and I raise our two boys in this town, I want to make sure that future growth is managed responsibly, with the interest of every resident in mind. I look forward to spending the time up until the May election getting to know my neighbors and their priorities better and I hope to work with you all going forward to serve our community best. For more information: [www.DanSieger.com](http://www.DanSieger.com)

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him recognized with a spot in the MICCA Hall of Fame."

"John Fouracre's dedication to music education and his impact on young musicians in our district has been profound," said Norfolk Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Ingrid Allardi. "He has done such a great job throughout his

career as a music teacher and conductor for our students in the instrumental band program. His induction into the MICCA Paul Smith Hall of Fame is a well-deserved recognition of his professionalism, musical ability, and commitment to fostering a love of music among our students."

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# Q & A With Healthy KP: The Developing Teenage Brain

“I know I’m supposed to be preparing my teenager for life and all, but it’s hard when they already know everything.”  
~Whitney Fleming

“The thing you’ve got to be prepared to do as a parent is not to be liked from time to time.”  
~Emma Thompson

“The scariest thing about raising a teenager is remembering all of the stupid things you did as a teenager.” ~Every parent

If you are a parent of a teenager, you can probably relate to one or all of these quotes. Nothing can fully prepare you for parenting during the teenage years, but the more we learn about the teenage brain helps us to understand why this is such a complex phase of life—for everyone involved.

## Q: What is going on in my teenager’s brain?

A. The teenage brain is like a work-in-progress construction site: it’s full of potential, but still under heavy renovation. While it’s growing and evolving, some areas—like decision-making and impulse control—are still being built, leading to moments of brilliance mixed with questionable choices. The prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for planning, decision-making, and controlling impulses, is one of the last areas of the brain to mature, typically not fully developed until the mid-20s for females and up to age 30 for males. And while the prefrontal cortex is lagging behind, making teens more prone to risky behavior, the emotional center is in overdrive, making everything feel more intense. It’s a time of change, growth, and sometimes chaos as the brain prepares for adulthood.

## Q. Why are adolescent brains more vulnerable to substance use?

A. Because the teenage brain is still forming, substances like alcohol, nicotine and marijuana can interfere with normal development processes, which may lead to difficulties later on with decision making, cognitive functions, emotional regulation and even addiction.

- **Decision Making:** Substances can disrupt the growth and lessen the strengthening of neural connections for teens in this already lagging region, potentially leading to

even poorer decision-making and riskier behaviors.

- **Cognitive Function:** Studies show that adolescents who use substances regularly may experience lower academic performance, reduced memory ability, executive functioning impairment and decreased ability to focus. One study even found heavy marijuana use predicts an 8 point drop in IQ.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Regular substance use during adolescence is linked to an increased risk of developing mental health disorders including anxiety, depression and psychosis. Teenagers may use substances to cope, but in the long run using substances can exacerbate mental health issues and reduce opportunities to develop healthy coping strategies.
- **Addiction:** Early substance use is a major risk factor for developing a substance use disorder later in life. The brain’s reward system,

which is highly active in adolescence, is particularly susceptible to becoming reliant on substances for pleasure and stress relief, potentially leading to addiction.

## Q: How can I help my teenager to understand these risks and make good decisions?

A: Remember, even though it might not seem like it, you are your teen’s #1 influencer. Have proactive open conversations about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Encourage your teenager to ask questions and express their feelings about peer pressure, stress and substance use. Set consistent rules and consequences to help reinforce healthy behavior and discourage experimentation. Model healthy behaviors and promote healthy activities.

## Q: What should a parent do if they suspect their teen is using substances?

A: If you suspect your teen is using substances, try to express your concerns without accusing or blaming. Ask open-ended questions and listen to what

they have to say. Teenagers are more likely to open up if they feel supported, not judged. Visit [healthykp.org](http://healthykp.org) for talking points and quitting program access.

Please email your questions to [info@healthykp.org](mailto:info@healthykp.org). Your questions will remain confidential and anonymous. Formed in 2018, Healthy KP is a community-based group of volunteers from the tri-town communities working together to prevent and reduce the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco products among our

youth. In December of 2020, Healthy KP was awarded a Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant allowing the coalition to strengthen community collaboration and engagement to prevent and reduce substance use among youth. By implementing evidence-based prevention programs, strengthening partnerships and building connections through community events, Healthy KP has made progress in reducing rates of youth use. For more information, visit [www.healthykp.org](http://www.healthykp.org).



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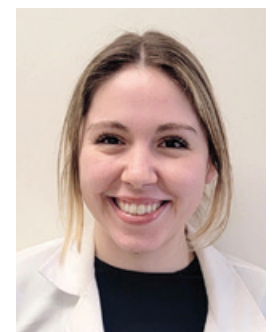
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## The Little Lovebugs – Spreading Kindness One Card at a Time

In a world that often feels rushed and impersonal, two young sisters, Chimaya, 5 and Kachimra, 4, are proving that small hands can make a big impact. Their initiative, The Little Lovebugs, began with a simple yet powerful idea—spreading love and kindness through hand-made cards.

Each summer, the sisters take art classes, and one day, they decided to use their creativity for a greater purpose. They started making heartfelt cards for people facing difficult times, delivering them to local hospitals as a

way to bring comfort and joy. What started as a small family project has now blossomed into something bigger, inspiring their school, Delaney School in Wrentham, to join in. Students there have made and sent cards too, helping to touch the lives of even more people in need of encouragement.

But Chimaya and Kachimra have even bigger dreams. They hope to spread awareness and get more schools and community groups involved, ensuring that The Little Lovebugs continues to bring smiles to those who



Sisters Kachimra and Chimaya Ogbo.

need them most. Their message is simple yet profound: *Kindness is what matters.*

In an era where division often makes headlines, these two young girls serve as a reminder that compassion and generosity can be just as newsworthy. No act of kindness is too small, and even the youngest among us can make the world a little brighter.

Want to help? Follow The Little Lovebugs on Instagram: [spreadlovewithbugs](#).

## Norfolk and Wrentham Plan Town-Wide Cleanups this Month

BY GRACE ALLEN

In honor of Earth Day, residents in both Norfolk and Wrentham will have the opportunity to make their communities cleaner and greener by picking up trash and debris on April 12.

### Norfolk's 16th Annual Clean & Green Town-wide Cleanup

Organized by the Norfolk Grange, locals of all ages are encouraged to pick up litter from any roadside or public area any day(s) of the week prior to and including April 12. Bagged trash and recyclables can be dropped off at the Norfolk Grange Hall, 28 Rockwood Road, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 12. Volunteers are asked to attest the trash is not from a household.

Alternatively, participants may request their litter collection or large items be picked up at the site of the cleanup. Contact Kevin Roche at 508-328-5604 if you would like pickup on the April 12 by Lions Club volunteers.

Community service volunteer certificates can be picked up at the Grange during litter drop-off times.

For important safety and general information about the cleanup event, visit the Norfolk Grange Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/NorfolkGrange](#) or contact Robin Biscaia at (508) 740-2777.

### Keep Wrentham Beautiful Spring Cleanup

The Wrentham chapter of Keep Massachusetts Beautiful is organizing the town's annual spring cleanup from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 12. Volunteers are asked to meet at the Wrentham Council on Aging, 400 Taunton Street, at 10 a.m. to sign in, pick up supplies, and choose a cleanup area.

Volunteers are asked to wear high visibility clothing and to bring their own gloves. Trash grabbers are recommended. A 15% discount code (KEEPMASSBEAUTIFUL15) can be used at [bit.ly/KMBgrabber](#) to purchase a grabber.

For planning purposes, organizers ask participants to register at: [bit.ly/KWB2025](#).



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# Wrentham to Commemorate Start of American Revolution on April 19

Two hundred and fifty years ago, Wrentham (which then included parts of Franklin, Norfolk, and Plainville), was a quiet farming town, but one where local patriots were well aware of the tensions building with 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 news that fighting had broken out. It was news that was feared but 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.

On April 19, 2025, at about 10 a.m., the Gavel Restaurant in Wrentham, 36 South Street, will play the role of the Colonial-era Man Tavern. There will be a brief pageant, commemorating the arrival of the news and the mustering of the first Minutemen from the area.

Weather permitting, the event will continue outside, on the town common until approximately 11:30 a.m. Seating in the Gavel is very limited. For updated information closer to the date, visit <https://alanearls.wixsite.com/mysite-1>.



The inaugural meeting for the Wrentham-area April 19 Revolutionary War commemoration. From left, Geri Tasker, Norfolk Historical Commission Chair; Jan Prentice, Franklin Historical Commission; Alan Earls, Franklin Historical Commission Chair; Rian Chace, Vice Chair, Plainville Historical Commission; and Kristine Moore, Plainville Historical Commission Chair. Wrentham Historical Commission could not participate due to a scheduled conflict but met separately a few days later.



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# Wrentham Cultural Council Announces Recipients of 2025 Local Cultural Council Program

The Wrentham Cultural Council announced the recipients of the 2025 Local Cultural Council Grants, which will fund a wide array of artistic and cultural programs for the Wrentham community. These grants aim to support local artists, cultural organizations, and projects that promote the arts and enrich the cultural life of Wrentham residents.

This year, the Wrentham Cultural Council has awarded funding to a variety of projects that reflect the diversity and creativity of our community. From educational arts programs to performances and exhibitions, the grant recipients represent the rich cultural fabric of our town. The Cultural Council is committed to fostering artistic expression and providing access to high-quality cultural experiences for all residents.

“The Wrentham Cultural Council is thrilled to support so many innovative projects

this year,” said Karen Becker, Chair of the Wrentham Cultural Council. “The grants will not only enhance the cultural landscape of Wrentham but also encourage collaboration and creativity within our community. We are proud to invest in programs that offer opportunities for artistic engagement, education, and enjoyment for all ages.”

The Wrentham Cultural Council is one of the local cultural councils established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency that provides funding for arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences. The MCC advances the Commonwealth’s creative and cultural sector by celebrating traditions and talents, championing its collective needs, and equitably investing public resources. The Council pursues this mission through a wide range of grants, initiatives, and advocacy for artists, communities, organizations, and schools.

The Wrentham Cultural Council is a local agency of volunteers dedicated to promoting the arts and culture in the community. The Council is currently looking to fill multiple spots on the Council. If you have an interest in bringing cultural events to your community, please consider joining! We are looking for people who are passionate about community and supporting the arts (no need to be a professional artist!) The Council is tasked with selection of community grantees and organizing the annual Arts on the Common Festival. The Council has also begun to curate exhibits at the Old Fiske. For more information visit our page on the Wrentham town website [wrentham.gov](http://wrentham.gov) or email us at [ContactWCC@wrentham.gov](mailto:ContactWCC@wrentham.gov).

2025 Community Grantees include:

- Attleboro Area Industrial Museum, Inc.- 50th Anniversary Celebration

- Bettagere Nagendra Prasad, Pranav Swaroop- Project SARANG - Colors of South Asian Music
- Daly, Rachel- Film Music Hornithology Summer Horn Ensemble
- Easton Children’s Museum, Inc.-Fossil Discoveries
- Fiske Public Library-Pop Up Art School
- Fuller Craft Museum, Inc.- Craft for Kids
- Fuller Craft Museum, Inc.- Craft for All
- Hurlbut, Steven M.- Jumpin’ Juba Library Concert
- Illuminate Creative & Theatrical Arts Company, Inc.- Shakespeare in the Skate park
- Illuminate Creative & Theatrical Arts Company, Inc.- Illuminate’s Media +Tech
- LiveARTS-The 2024-25 LiveARTS Concert Series
- M.M.A.S., Inc.- Council on Aging partnership with Mass Arts Center
- Neponset Choral Society, Inc.-FY24-25 Concert Season

- Norfolk Cooperative Primary, Inc.-Music with Mr. Dave
- Powell, Jennifer sculpture “You Are Here”
- Southeastern Massachusetts Community Wind Symphony, Inc.- Band Concert
- Sri Kuchipudi Natyalaya LLC- Festivals Of India
- The Greater Milford Ballet Association, Inc.- Nutcracker Ballet
- The Un-Common Theatre Company, Inc.- Fall Production - Seussical
- The Un-Common Theatre Company, Inc.- YPP Production - Disney’s Finding Nemo JR
- The Un-Common Theatre Company, Inc.- Spring Production - Chicago: Teen Edition
- The Un-Common Theatre Company, Inc.- Young Adult Summer Production – Peter and the Starcatcher
- Wise, Dennis- The Theft of Dignity: Wrentham Presentation

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For more information, or to schedule your insert, please contact Jen Schofield at 508-570-6544 or by email at [jenschofield@localtownpages.com](mailto:jenschofield@localtownpages.com)

## OCC Yard Sale Drive-Up Donation Day Set for April 26

Spring Yard Sale to be held May 17

Used items needed for our spring yard sale! The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham is holding a drive-up donation day on Saturday, April 26 from 1 - 3 pm. Drive into the parking lot, and someone will help unload items from your vehicle. Items also can be dropped off during church office hours, Tuesday through Friday from 9

a.m. to 3 p.m.

No electronics, large furniture, car seats, strollers, or clothing.

The church’s spring yard sale will be held on May 17. The Original Congregational Church is located at 1 East Street in Wrentham. For more information, call 508-384-3110 or visit [www.occhurch.net](http://www.occhurch.net).



Guest Column

# Time to Move Over, Gentlemen

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

Let's make more room on the park bench.

As your writer closes in on the completion of his 85th year, the realization that perhaps we have not given our sometimes-belittled counterparts equal opportunity to exercise their myriad assets has come home to roost. The male side of the equation, try as we may, just doesn't seem to be getting the job done, as evidenced by the growing chaos in our nation's capital.

During the many years your writer has been fortunate enough to exist on this planet, the opportunity to befriend, love and interact with outstanding women has been a blessing. Mother, grandmother, wife, sister, niece, daughter and so many other intelligent, accomplished females helped shape, direct and motivate a desire to contribute to country and society in general.

On the national stage, you have witnessed the courage and intellect of women such as Michelle Wu, Boston

Mayor, who recently withstood the withering fire of politicians bound and determined to break her defense of what she believes to be foundational human rights. Some may criticize Senator Elizabeth Warren for what they feel to be her sometimes over-zealous verbal forays, but she fights for worthy causes and is to be admired for her dedication.

We are in the midst of disturbing political and social upheaval, much as those which Charles Dickens described in *A Tale of Two Cities*. But sadly, it seems "the best of times" is giving way to "the worst of times," and the chosen captains of our ship seem unable to steer a course around the reef which looms on the horizon. It is time to better recognize and welcome the attributes of our many qualified women and invite their participation in tackling the enormous challenges confronting our country.

*Opinions expressed in the Guest Column do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.*

# The Kennedys to Perform at Circle of Friends Coffeehouse

The Kennedys return to the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse in Franklin on Saturday, April 5, as part of their 30th anniversary tour.

The Kennedys, an American folk-rock band, consists of husband-and-wife Pete and Maura Kennedy. Recognized for their harmonies and instrumental prowess, their music blends elements of country, bluegrass, Western swing and janglepop.

Admission for this performance is \$25. Visit <http://www.circlefolk.org/> to purchase tickets or for more information.

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin's First Universalist Society. Concerts are presented in a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment at the Society's handicapped accessible Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin. Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available.



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# Social Justice Events at the First Universalist Society

In April, the First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) will present two special programs on social justice.

## Climate: What will you do?

On Sunday, April 6 at 10 a.m., a lay-led service will focus on climate change. Several members of FUSF's Climate Justice Team will share personal perspectives and the steps they are taking to put UU Values and their faith into action. They will also share examples of relatively simple steps one can take to make a difference.





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All are invited to continue the discussion after service over coffee and treats in our Fellowship Café.

## Food Sovereignty and Access

On Thursday, April 24 from 7 to 8:30 p.m., the FUSF Food Justice team invites you to share an evening of thoughtful discussion with our special guest, Sister Anna Gilbert-Muhammad. Sister Anna, the Equity Director and Food Access/Webinar Co-

ordinator for Northeast Organic Farmer's Association - MASS Chapter (NOFA/MA), will focus on the current state of food justice, access and sovereignty issues in Massachusetts. This is a particularly timely topic given the current pressures on our food system from climate change and the rapidly changing policies at the federal level. Her discussion will include actions we can take to make an impact.

A reception with light snacks

will follow the speaking event. Donations to FUSF will be gratefully accepted but are not required to attend.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. Our Interim Minister is Reverend Beverly Waring. For more information about FUSF, visit our website at [Fusf.org](http://Fusf.org), or contact us at [info@fusf.org](mailto:info@fusf.org), or call 508-528-5348.

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# Norfolk Firefighter Graduates from Fire Academy

On March 5, 27 recruits graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training Program.

Norfolk Firefighter Christopher Watson was among the graduates and received the Martin H. McNamara Outstanding Student Award. The award is named for Martin "Marty" McNamara V, a call firefighter with the Lancaster Fire Department who lost his life in the line of duty in 2003 while battling a fire in a multifamily home. It is presented to one recruit in each graduating call/volunteer training class and recognizes their academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the program.

The members of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #116 graduated at the Academy's main campus in Stow. They represent the fire departments of Carlisle,

Dover, Grafton, Harvard, Holliston, Hopedale, Lancaster, Mendon, Millis, Millville, Norfolk, Northbridge, Pepperell, Sherborn, and Sterling.

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit Training Program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural departments who work full-time jobs or go to school. Making the training more accessible means more firefighters can participate and allows them more time to practice training skills with instructors.

The MFA, a division of the Department of Fire Services, has offered the program since 2003. More than 3,000 call and volunteer recruits have graduated since then.



Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #116 Graduation • March 5, 2025

Norfolk Firefighter Christopher Watson.

# Norfolk Public Schools to Host 'Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light' Event

The program "Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light," will be offered on Monday, April 14, at the Freeman-Kennedy School in Norfolk. The free event starts at 6:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria. Attendees are asked to arrive by 6:15 p.m.

Stewards of Children is an evidence-informed, award-winning training that teaches adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. This training is offered to parents/guardians in the tri-town

districts of Norfolk, Plainville, Wrentham and King Philip Regional.

"As April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, this is a timely training to support families," said Director of Wellness Dot Pearl.

The program will be presented by trained facilitators from the Hockomock YMCA who are authorized by Darkness to Light.

Through interviews with a very diverse group of people with lived experience, experts, and

treatment providers, Stewards of Children teaches adults practical actions they can take to reduce instances of child sexual abuse in their organizations, families, and communities.

Visit <https://shorturl.at/Qty51N> to register for the event.

## About Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light

Darkness to Light's flagship training, Stewards of Children, teaches adults practical actions

they can take to reduce instances of child sexual abuse in their organizations, families, and communities. Guided by the vision of a world where children can grow up happy, healthy, and safe, Darkness to Light is committed

to empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse. The organization believes that protecting children is an adult's responsibility and that adults will be empowered to act through education and training.

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# SAFE Coalition Announces 3rd Annual Gala on May 8

The SAFE Coalition has announced its 3rd Annual Gala will be held on May 8 at the Lakeview Pavilion in Foxborough. Titled “An Evening of Giving,” the event will raise funds to advance SAFE’s mission of offering compassionate, judgement-free

support to those affected by substance use disorder and mental health challenges.

Guests of SAFE’s gala will enjoy a gourmet dinner, live music, silent and live auctions, and inspirational guest speakers.

Jake Haendel will be the

keynote speaker. His podcast “Blink” is currently at the top of the Apple Podcast charts. Haendel, a Boston native, struggled with substance misuse in early adulthood. He is the only known survivor of a rare brain disease that caused him to develop “locked-in syndrome,” a condition causing complete, coma-like body paralysis.

Haendel will speak on risk factors for substance abuse, especially for adolescents, and how more needs to be done to ensure no one goes unsupported.

“All kids are good kids,” he says, “and substance use disorder does not discriminate.”

Struggles like depression, anxiety, and trauma affect all kids, regardless of background, he says. These stressors can result in harmful coping mechanisms regardless of a person’s outward appearance or perceived privileges.

Businesses and individuals across New England show their support of SAFE’s work to reduce stigma and raise awareness by sponsoring the gala, such as Direct Federal Credit Union,

who secured a champion sponsorship for the 2025 gala.

“Direct Federal Credit Union is committed to supporting organizations like SAFE that make a difference in our community,” says Kristen Johnson, DCFU Senior Vice President, Employee & Brand Experience. “By combining our efforts in philanthropy, volunteerism, and financial literacy, we’re able to contribute to the long-lasting impact SAFE is having on individuals and families. We are honored to stand with SAFE in their mission to strengthen our community.”

SAFE serves over 50 communities in Massachusetts with programs for teens, support groups for loved one’s impacted by others’ substance use, harm reduction education, resources for families in need like a community diaper bank, housing support, and more. SAFE’s services are free to recipients and no insurance is needed.

SAFE began in 2015 after a community discussion on the increasing deaths from opioid use and what could be done to combat the rising epidemic.

Today, the nonprofit works with first responders, local and state politicians, municipalities, schools, other nonprofits, and concerned citizens across southeastern Massachusetts to fill gaps in substance use prevention and education, harm reduction, recovery, and mental health support.

“At the gala we bring together stakeholders, community partners, and members of the public, without whom we would not exist,” says SAFE Co-founder and Director of Family Recovery Jim Derick. “This event provides a platform to highlight our services and successes, report on impacts we have made, and chart our course for the year to come.”

Purchase tickets, secure a sponsorship, donate to the live and silent auctions, and learn more about SAFE’s work at [www.safecoalitionma.org/2025-safe-gala](http://www.safecoalitionma.org/2025-safe-gala).

Questions? Call the SAFE Coalition at (508) 488-8105 or send an email to [info@safecoalitionma.org](mailto:info@safecoalitionma.org).



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# The College Essay - Let the Student's Voice be Heard!

My favorite pastime is reading students' college essays and essay tips from the masters - Admissions Officers. Does this make me a college nerd? Probably! But it certainly is why I do what I do!

Selecting a college essay topic can become the most challenging aspect of the application process. Students tend to search for the perfect topic that is not cliché, layered with the pressure to create a fascinating story that has never been told before. The truth is, all stories have been told before: the comeback story after a basketball injury, the mission trip that changed your life, the patience you showed after vacationing with 30 family members in a small cabin with one bathroom. The lesson is that there is no one unique topic - they have all been done.

Does this mean that you settle for mediocrity? No, but it does mean that you need to differentiate yourself by finding YOUR voice, make sure it is heard, and unveil the fantastic and authentic YOU in your story. Here are a few tips from the masters. **FREE RESOURCE:** email me for the full list of tips.

**1. Just make sure that the story you're telling is uniquely YOURS.**

"I believe everyone has a story worth telling. Don't feel like you have to have had a huge, life-changing, drama-filled experience. Sometimes the seemingly smallest moments lead us to the biggest breakthroughs." *Maggie Schuh, high school English teacher in St. Louis.*

**2. We want to learn about growth.**

"Some students spend a lot of time summarizing the

plot or describing their work and the "in what way" part of the essay winds up being one sentence. The part that is about you is the most important part. The majority of the essay should be about your response and reaction to the work. How did it affect or change you?" *Dean J, admissions officer and blogger from University of Virginia.*

**3. Tell a good story.**

"Most people prefer reading a good story over anything else. So... tell a great story in your essay. Worry less about providing as many details about you as possible and more about captivating the reader's attention inside of a great narrative. I read a great essay this year where an applicant walked me through the steps of meditation and how your body responds to it. Loved it." *Jeff Schiffman, Director of Admissions at Tulane University*

**4. Write like a journalist.**

"The first few sentences must capture the reader's attention, provide a gist of the story, and give a sense of where the essay is heading. Think about any article you've read—how do you decide to read it? You read the first few sentences and then decide. The same goes for college essays. A strong lead will place your reader in the "accept" mindset from the beginning of the essay. A weak lead will have your reader thinking "reject"—a mindset from which it's nearly impossible to recover." *Brad Schiller, MIT graduate and CEO of Prompt*



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

difference at our college?" *Tracy Sullivan & Maryline Michel Kulewicz, College 101 Admission Consultants*

There are so many admission resources out there. I really enjoy reading Rick Clark's Georgia Tech Admission Blog. He is knowledgeable, honest, and tells an engaging story. Hint: elements of a good essay!

The college tips were paraphrased from College Essay Guys's "35+ Best College Essay Tips from College Application Experts."

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**5. Write like you speak.**

"You should use words and phrases that you would actually use in everyday conversation. The most meaningful essays are those where I feel like the student is sitting next to me, just talking to me". *Kim Struglinski, admissions counselor from Vanderbilt University.*

**6. Read it aloud.**

"Reading your essay aloud is the best way to corroborate that your essay is revealing your voice. Do you feel the emotions? Is it a good story? Is the reader learning something valuable about you? And, will the admission reader say 'yes, I can see this student making a

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# Sports

## KP Nine Aiming for Staying Power In D-1 Playoffs

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The King Philip baseball team is eager to get its season underway and hopeful that its second season in Division 1 will produce better results than last year.

The Warriors posted an 11-9 record in their first season as a Division 1 squad but it's what happened in the playoffs that coach Jeff Plympton Jr. and his players want to change. KP faced Westford Academy in the first round and lost, 4-3, making the Warriors' initial appearance a one-and-done affair.

"We've got something to prove after an early exit last season," Plympton said. "Our goals for 2025 are to win the Kelly-Rex Division of the Hockomock League, qualify and go deeper in the tourney and to improve every day. All our goals are realistic."

Two elements give KP cause for optimism — its overall team strengths and having 13 returnees with experience.

"The current team has experience and depth," Plympton said. "The players are skilled and athletic, they're coachable and capable leaders. We've got three returning pitchers who'll start, our hitters have power and speed, and our defense is strong in the outfield but we need to fill some vacancies in the infield."

KP's senior captains — Nate Pennini (pitcher) and Aidan Astorino (outfielder/DH) — are top-notch leaders. "Nate relies on leading by example and Aidan is more vocal," Plympton said. "They're both excellent communicators."

Pennini had a 3-2 record and an earned-run average of 1.90 in 50 innings last year. Astorino

hit .295, had 16 RBIs, scored 20 runs and his on-base percentage was .456.

"Nate is dedicated and provides lots of effort," Plympton noted. "A right-handed pitcher, his assortment includes a fastball, curve and change-up. His control is good, he's effective with his off-speed pitches and throws in the 80-mph range. Aidan is a strong contact hitter who has good range in the outfield. Both of the captains are in their third varsity year."

Senior Drew Herlin was a designated-hitter last year but is ticketed for duty at first base. Tall at 6-1, he supplied plenty of offense last year. He hit .409 in 56 at-bats, had 27 hits and two home runs. "Drew is a line-drive hitter, usually makes contact and hits to any field," Plympton offered. "An adept situational player, he's got power."

Two senior right-handers will join Pennini in the starting rotation — Cam Hasenfus and Ryan Higgins.

"Cam throws in the mid-80 mph range," Plympton said. "He was 3-2 and had a 1.90 E.R.A. last year. His fastball moves, his curve ball is sharp, and his control is good. He's also a utility infielder who's tough, quick and competes hard. Ryan's velocity is in the low 80-mph range. He did a lot of off-season work and he's competitive and focused on the mound. He gets good movement on his fastball and his curve ball is solid."

Senior Alex Lutfy split time as a pinch hitter and outfielder last year. "A left-handed hitter, Alex has a strong bat (.308)," Plympton offered. "A player who we want in the lineup, he works hard and strives to improve."

Junior Leo Dowling is a dynamic catcher who's in his third



KP coach Jeff Plympton Jr. is flanked by his captains — Aidan Astorino, left, and Nate Pennini.

varsity season. "Leo is a line-drive hitter who batted .308 last year," Plympton recalled. "A talented catcher, he's solid on defense, has great rapport with the pitchers and he's got a strong arm. He's effective throwing out runners stealing and he also gets some pickoffs."

Junior centerfielder Johnny Prater is in his third varsity year. "Johnny hit .265 last year but he's a more experienced hitter now," Plympton said. "He's got great range in the outfield, able to track the ball well. He gets a good read off the bat and his arm is strong."

Two juniors — Brady Herlin and Ryan Burns — excelled at the jayvee level last year and will see action in the outfield. Herlin hit .389 and Burns was .448 at the plate. Herlin can also play the infield and Burns can be utilized as a relief hurler.

"Brady is versatile, has speed and is probably the fastest player on the team," said Plympton. "He's got a high baseball IQ. Ryan is strong, athletic and has a cannon for an arm. A right-hander, he could be our closer. He relies on a strong fastball and a slider."

Junior Jacoby Cady, who

played on the jayvees last year, is a shortstop but he can also be counted on as a relief pitcher. "Jacoby is aggressive going for the ball, is sound defensively and has a strong arm," Plympton noted. "A right-hander, he relies on a fastball, curve and change-up. His command and control are good."

Sophomore Nick Broughton excelled for the jayvees last year and Plympton said: "I'm excited to see how he contributes on the varsity." A left-handed pitcher who also is an outfielder, he hit .435, had a 2-0 record and struck out 32 in 23 innings. "Nick has good velocity, in the low 80-mph range," Plympton said. "His arm is strong and his best pitch is a curve ball."

The KP coaching staff is a group Plympton calls "dedicated and committed to success." They include varsity assistants Jim Danielson and Nolan Brady; jayvee coach Jason Connelly; and freshman coach Mike Morrisette.

A native of Wrentham who played two varsity seasons of baseball at KP, the 31-year-old Plympton relies on a competitive philosophy that stresses reaching one's potential and having fun.

"When those things occur, winning will be the by-product," he emphasized. "And valuable life lessons can be learned in athletics, like being prepared, working hard and overcoming adversity. Leadership and setting goals can also be learned and I want our players to respect others, respect the game and be role models."

Plympton, who earned his bachelor's degree from Plymouth State, is in his fifth season as KP's varsity coach. His teams have qualified for tourney play in all four of his previous seasons. During the 2022 and 2023 campaigns, the Warriors played for the Division 2 state title but lost both times to Milton.

Division 1 competition again will be challenging this season, but Plympton has scheduled five non-league games that should help in the power rankings. They include Hopkinton, Westwood, Bridgewater-Raynham, Walpole and Xaverian.

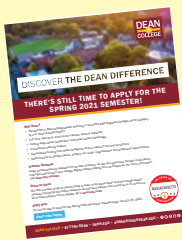
The Warriors will be aiming for staying power in the tourney this year and it's very likely they'll often remember Plympton's words that emphasize: "We've got something to prove after an early exit last season."

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# Sports

## EMASS Senior Softball League Opens Player Registration for 2025 Season

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is opening its annual registration campaign for men and women softball players aged 50 and older. With almost 500 members, the league attracts players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts with games played primarily in Wayland, Medfield, and Framingham. The EMASS season runs from late April through late September, including playoffs. Interested players can register for the EMASS 2025 season at <https://e-mass.org/current-programs>.

EMASS has six divisions that accommodate a range of skill levels, two of which play on Saturday mornings and four

on weekday mornings. EMASS has many seniors in their fifties and sixties who can still hit a ball over a 300-foot fence, run down a deep drive in the outfield, or turn a double-play in the infield. There are other divisions in which players whose talents may have diminished over time can enjoy playing with similarly skilled friends.

### A Community of Like-Minded Players Who Become Friends

“We are a group of folks who recognize how lucky we are to be able to play a game we love at the age we have attained and at a level that matches our abilities,” said Steve Bober, Commissioner of EMASS.

“I joined EMASS when I retired and didn’t know a single person,” offered Joe Groden, an EMASS Division coordinator. “Six years later, the best thing about being part of this community has been the number of friends I’ve made. This is truly the essence of the experience.”

Division Coordinator Mike Mauceri added, “These friendships can expand, providing opportunities like playing in tournaments or going to Cuba to play in a friendship series. Whether you just want an outlet for fun and exercise or to build new friendships, there’s something for everyone.”

### A Physical Activity Outlet with Balanced Competition

EMASS adds about 60 new players each year. “We shuffle up team rosters every year in all divisions to enhance connections across our large softball-loving community,” said Division Coordinator Rich Goldberg. “Our members enjoy competing with and against their friends.”

EMASS players cherish their weekly double-headers and three-hour escape to the ballfield. “Aches and pains are easily tolerated when offset by the joy of playing and competing with friends,” said Walker Royce. “And, at a cost of roughly \$5 per game, there’s no better value for healthy recreation.”

### About EMASS Senior Softball League

EMASS was founded in 1995 and offers active seniors of all skill levels a safe, well-organized opportunity to play competitive slow-pitch softball. Players can sign up for a division featuring players with similar abilities. With two Saturday divisions and four weekday divisions, players can play at a level most comfortable for them. All divisions play a double-header each week and many members play on different teams in multiple divisions.

For more information about EMASS Senior Softball League, visit [www.e-mass.org](http://www.e-mass.org).

## KPHS DECA Members Attend MA DECA Career Development Conference

Members of the King Philip Regional DECA chapter of Massachusetts DECA joined 4,000 high school business, finance, hospitality, and marketing students at the State Career Development Conference (SCDC) in Boston. The annual association career development conference was held Feb. 27 through March 1.

The following students received recognition of individual ability and achievement at the association level:

- Kendall Noonan — Business Services Operations Research
- Jacob Schmier & Dylan Spak — Business Services Operations Research
- Tyler Walker — Business Services Operations Research
- Halle Miller, Bethany Evan & Ugo Ezemma — Buying and Merchandising Operations Research
- Eric Miles, Thomas Lutfy & Micheal Flaherty — Finance Operations (FOR)
- Ashley Cleverdon — Finance Operations
- Ryan Brown & Chris Delvecchio — Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research
- Arya Doye, Muhja AlSara & Vaishu Chintaluri — Hospi-

tality and Tourism Operations Research

- James Dow, Lucas Raymond & Owen Collins — Sports and Entertainment Operations Research
- Bailey Cerderbaum & Olivia Chavers — Sports and Entertainment Operations Research
- Allison Loring, Brooke Haltom & Sage Heslin — Business Solutions
- Cole Fraford & Luke Rogers — Business Solutions
- Louis Bourque & Nora Tobichuk — Career Development
- Caitlin O’Brien & Gavin Hickey — Financial Literacy
- Eve Rose & Lucia Harmon — Sales Project
- Isla Hollowell & Lila Fleischman — Innovation Plan
- Jayson Lussier & Aidan Carone — Start-Up Business
- Nate Crowley & Eli Hoyt — Start-Up Business
- Beckett James, Evan Allen, & Alex Weinberg — Independent Business
- Hunter Wells, Will Leclair & Ethan Wolff Allen — International Business



**King Philip Regional High School DECA members, seniors Bethany Evans, Ugonna Ezemma, and Halle Miller, placed first in the state for Buying and Merchandising Operations Research.**

- Addie Townsend & Laura Valentina DaSilva — International Business
- Jett Tucker & Jack Haltom — Business Growth Plan
- Addison Lewis — Business Growth Plan
- Keith Joseph — Franchise Business Plan
- Madison Asprelli — Integrated Marketing Campaign Event
- Jordan Host & Emily Heslin — School-Based Enterprise



**Sophomores Eli Hoyt and Nate Crowley, new members of KP DECA chapter, are now State Champions in Start-Up Business.** (Photos courtesy King Philip Regional School District)

These students will advance to international competition at the DECA International Career Development Conference, which will be held April 26-29 in Orlando, Florida.

As an integral part of the classroom curriculum, DECA’s industry-validated competitive events align with the National Curriculum Standards in marketing, business management, administration, finance, hospitality, and tourism career clusters.

DECA’s competitive events directly contribute to getting every student college and career ready by the time they graduate high school. More than 200 business professionals evaluated the members’ performance through role-plays, case studies, and prepared presentations.

### About DECA Inc.

DECA is a career and technical student organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs who are interested in careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. DECA enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, apply learning, connect to business, and promote competition. DECA student members leverage their experience to become academically prepared, community-orientated, professionally responsible, and experienced leaders. DECA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with over 240,000 members in 3,600 high school and college chapters in nearly all 50 United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Germany.

For more information about DECA, visit [deca.org](http://deca.org).

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# April News and Program Highlights at the Fiske Public Library

For a full list of programs at the Fiske, visit <https://fiskelib.org/>.

The library will be closed Monday, April 21 for Patriots' Day. Regular hours of operation are Monday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Reading Challenge 2025

Fiske Library is partnering in the Massachusetts Center for the Book 2025 Reading Challenge for kids, teens and adults. The challenge for April is a book about books, bookstores, or libraries. Visit <https://www.mass-book.org/readingchallenge> to see how to participate.

## Kindergarten Tours

Do you have a child in kindergarten at Delaney School? Throughout the first week of May, all kindergarten classes will be visiting Fiske. They will take a tour of the library and learn about all the fun and interesting things the library has to offer. Your child's teacher will be sending home a pink library card application. If they do not already have a library card of their own, please fill this out and return to school by April 18 so they can receive their very first library card at their visit.

## Buildwave

Saturday, April 12 from noon to 1 p.m.

Boost your child's STEAM interest with Buildwave® — a

building event that feels like a gameshow. During the event, participants build with waves of diverse materials like Lego®, Plus-Plus®, and more. Each building wave is enhanced by a dynamic audiovisual experience unlike any other. As participants complete wave after wave of building, they gain creative confidence, enhance teamwork, and experience design fundamentals in a unique and memorable context. Register on the calendar page at [fiskelib.org](https://fiskelib.org). Learn more at [www.buildwave.com](http://www.buildwave.com). For grades K-6.

## Board Game Afternoon

Friday, April 24 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Kids and families are invited to drop in for an afternoon of

board games. Play a new one or an old favorite. While you're here, get a sneak peek at our 2025 Summer Reading program, "Level Up at Your Library!" No registration required.

## Free Drop-in IT Help Office Hours for Adults

Tuesdays from 5 to 7:45 p.m.

The Fiske Public Library is hosting free IT help office hours with IT expert Ben Elliot, who will be available to help with personal technology related issues in an informal setting. Ben is available at the Fiske Public Library on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Spice Kits

Pick up one of our monthly spice kits. Each kit contains information about the spice, recipes, and a sample to try at home. April's spice: turmeric.

## Adult Craft Hour

Saturday, April 19 at 11 a.m.

Drop by the Fiske Public Library to make your own book

page pennant banner. Program is for ages 18+. To register, please call 508-384-5440 or visit the calendar at [fiskelib.org](https://fiskelib.org).

## Sourdough Starter Workshop

Thursday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Back by popular demand! Learn how to make, maintain, and store a sourdough starter in this one-hour presentation. Leave with some of Brandon's sourdough starter. Registration is required. Please visit [fiskelib.org](https://fiskelib.org) or call 508-384-5440 to register.

## Fiske Public Library Book Club for Adults

Tuesday, April 29 at 7 p.m.

We'll discuss "Tomorrow, Tomorrow, and Tomorrow" by Gabrielle Zevin. For more information, contact Library Director Kim Shipala at [kshipala@sailsinc.org](mailto:kshipala@sailsinc.org) or 508-384-5440.

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# April Program Highlights at the Norfolk Senior Center

RSVP to 508-528-4430 or register for programs in person at the Norfolk Senior Center, 28 Medway Branch Road. For a full list of activities, visit the Council on Aging page on the town's website: [norfolk.ma.us](http://norfolk.ma.us).

Thursday, April 3 at 1 p.m. **Boston Marathon History Lecture** Bestselling author Paul Clerici will discuss the iconic Boston Marathon. Clerici has run the Boston Marathon 23 times and has been covering it for over 35 years in newspapers, magazines, and books. He brings the race to life through informative, humorous, and enlightening detail that includes stories about every moment, landmark, and portion of the course. RSVP requested.

Monday, April 7 at 10:30 a.m. **Coffee Cake with Karen** Celebrate National Coffee Cake Day with the Director of the Norfolk Senior Center, Karen Edwards. While enjoying coffee

cake, discuss with Karen the events and programs you'd like to see at the Senior Center. RSVP requested.

Tuesday, April 8 at 1 p.m. **Zeal for Liberty: European Volunteers in the American Revolution** This lecture by Paolo Di Gregorio will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. When Britain's American colonies began their struggle for independence in the 1770s, many European states doubted whether the Americans could defeat the mighty British. Yet, some individuals were inspired by the struggle, and sought to help the colonists gain their liberty. These foreign volunteers, from across Europe, played a vital role in the eventual outcome of the Revolutionary War. RSVP requested.

Wednesday, April 9 at 1 p.m. **Steve Charette Magic Show** Steve Charette is a dynamic magician who has been captivating

audiences for over 30 years with his high-energy performances, mind-blowing illusions, and engaging humor. Steve's interactive magic leaves spectators of all ages amazed and entertained. His incredible sleight of hand turns every show into a truly unforgettable experience. RSVP requested.

Thursday, April 10 at 11 a.m. **Just Dance - Beatles Mania** Time to Just Dance to music from The Beatles and other 60s rock and pop bands. No choreography, just 40 minutes of a simple "step touch." Chairs available. Take out your dancing shoes and have fun! RSVP requested. This is the first of a monthly dance program with different themes.

Thursday, April 10 at 1 p.m. **Return to the Wild-Animals, Woods & Hoods** Back by popular demand, Susan Siegel of Return2Wild will discuss the wild animals living in our community

and the role of wildlife rehabilitation. Learn about different species of mammals, reptiles, birds, and their babies. Susan will dispel popular myths about wildlife. You will leave with newfound knowledge and appreciation of the beauty and life that surrounds us. RSVP requested.

Thursday, April 17 at 1 p.m. **Building Climate Resilience & Flooding Solutions in Norfolk** Concerned about extreme weather and flooding in Norfolk? Hear from Communities Responding to Extreme Weather and the Charles River Watershed Association about nature-based solutions, like planting trees and creating rain gardens. Get tips on extreme weather preparedness, connect with neighbors to share your flood solution ideas, and inform local leaders on how to best support the community. RSVP requested.

Tuesday, April 29 from 10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Health and Wellness Vendor Fair** Metacommet Public Health Alliance nurses will be holding their annual Spring Health Fair. There will be numerous local vendors, free screenings, information, giveaways, raffles, and more.

Wednesday, April 30 at 1 p.m. **Parrot Head Show** Experience the fun of a Jimmy Buffett concert with Bill Reidy's Parrot Head Show, which includes all of Jimmy Buffett's most popular songs, including Margaritaville, Changes in Latitudes, Come Monday, Fins, Cheeseburger In Paradise, Havana Daydreaming, One Particular Harbor, A Pirate Looks at Forty, Son of a Sailor, Volcano, Pencil Thin Mustache, and Last Mango In Paris. The Parrot Head Show includes Bill on acoustic guitar and vocals along with backing rhythm tracks. RSVP requested.

## KP District to Undergo Integrated Monitoring Review of Special Education Requirements

The King Philip Regional School District will undergo an Integrated Monitoring Review conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) during the week of April 7.

The review, which occurs every three years, will assess the district's compliance with key special education requirements, including student identification, eligibility timelines, Individualized Education Program development, programming and support services, and procedural safeguards related to suspensions and equal opportunity.

As part of this process, PSM will do the following:

- Conduct interviews with district staff and administrators, review student records, policies, and procedures, and visit school buildings.
- Distribute a parent survey in multiple languages and accessible formats to parents and guardians of special education students.

Approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, PSM will provide the district with a report detailing its findings and any necessary corrective actions. The public will be able to access this report at [www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html).

The interview and review process may also include parent, student, and teacher focus group meetings, with interpretation services available as needed.

To gather additional input, DESE is offering parents, guardians and other stakeholders the opportunity to request a telephone interview with the PSM team by contacting Monitoring Review Chairperson Henry Ndakalu at 781-338-3706. Translation services will also be made available by the PSM team for those requesting a telephone interview.

For more information about the review process, please contact the King Philip Regional School District's Office of Student Services by emailing [moyl@kingphilip.org](mailto:moyl@kingphilip.org), or by calling 508-520-7991, ext. 2320.

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# Real Estate Corner



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## School Districts Awarded Grant to Help Fund Behavioral and Mental Health Services

Superintendents Dr. Rich Drolet, Dr. Ingrid Allardi, Dr. Allan Cameron, and Dr. Jennifer Parson and Director of Wellness Dot Pearl have announced that their districts will share a \$100,000 grant as part of an initiative to improve student access to behavioral and mental health services and support.

Four school districts — King Philip, Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham — share the services of regional Director of Wellness Pearl.

“Since 2019, these four districts have collaboratively applied for state grants focused on supporting students’ behavioral and mental health and wellness,” said Director of Wellness Pearl. “While King Philip will serve

as the fiscal agent for the grant, the funding supports initiatives across all four districts.”

The Healey-Driscoll Administration recently announced that it was awarding \$5,540,875 in grants to 60 school districts, educational collaboratives, and charter schools across Massachusetts to improve student access to behavioral and mental health services and support.

This funding can be used to create or expand comprehensive, integrated systems of student support and aims, through collaboration with families and educators, to build strong local school partnerships with community-based mental health agencies and/or providers.

“Cross-district efforts to en-

hance students’ behavioral and mental health — especially as they transition from elementary districts into the regional secondary district — are critically important,” said Director of Wellness Pearl. “With this grant, we can continue strengthening multi-tiered systems of support to provide a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment for all students.”

This initiative includes, but is not limited to:

- Expanding and integrating social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices
- Increasing mental health literacy and suicide prevention efforts

- Implementing universal mental health screening

“We have a mental health crisis that was only made worse by the pandemic, particularly for students,” said Gov. Maura Healey. “That’s why improving students’ access to behavioral and mental health care is a priority for our administration. These grants will help districts connect students with the services they need to be safe, healthy, and successful today and into the future.”

The state funding can be used to help strengthen skills to recognize and respond to mental and behavioral health challenges, establish cross-system coordination to improve integration of behavioral and mental health supports

and ensure seamless transitions between schools and communities, and improve data systems to track efforts and impact. These grants also promote piloting universal mental health screening systems.

“A key focus is sustaining access to behavioral and mental health services through partnerships with community agencies and Care Solace, which connects students, families, and staff with appropriate care,” said Director of Wellness Pearl. “Additionally, this funding allows us to provide professional development for educators and counselors, as well as education and resources for caregivers to better support their children.”

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## Franklin PorchFest Set for June 7

*Call for Bands and Porches: Register thru April 30*

Franklin PorchFest returns! The outdoor music event will be held on Saturday, June 7 from noon to 6 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday, June 8.

Spend the day in Franklin’s beautiful Cultural District while listening to live music. Sole performers and full bands of all genres will be performing on porches and patios throughout the district. This walkable event is also the perfect opportunity to check out local shops and restaurants. Public bathrooms will be available.

Visit <https://franklin.porchfest.info/> for complete information on the event. Bands and

performers interested in participating at PorchFest can click the “Band Signup” tab at the top of the website to register for the event. Porch owners interested in hosting a band can click the “Porch Signup” tab.

Franklin PorchFest is made possible with investment funds granted from the Mass Cultural Council through the Franklin Cultural District Committee and the Town of Franklin.

Volunteer opportunities will be posted on the website as the event nears. Porch managers, responsible for working with porch hosts and bands to ensure that performances go off as planned,



are needed. Also needed are PorchFest information booth volunteers, who are responsible for providing event information and maps on the day of the event.

Follow Franklin PorchFest on Facebook and Instagram for the latest information.

# Real Estate Corner

## Positive Trends Continue in Norfolk County's Real Estate Market

Norfolk County recordings for the month of February 2025 indicate an increase in overall real estate activity compared to last year, including increases in both the total number of deeds and mortgages recorded.

The Registry of Deeds recorded 6,870 documents in February 2025. This was 1% more than in February 2024, but a 12% decrease compared to January 2025.

“Overall, the increase in document recordings compared to the previous year is a positive indicator for the real estate market, highlighting steady growth in both commercial and residential sectors,” stated Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O’Donnell.

“Despite a slight dip in activity from the previous month, the year-over-year growth suggests a consistent trend for the market.”

The total number of deeds recorded for February 2025, which reflects both commercial and residential real estate sales and transfers, was 1,035, up 8% from February 2024, but down 10% from January 2025. According to the Federal Reserve Bank, home listings in Norfolk County increased by 15% in February 2025 compared to February 2024.

“Since mid-2024, the real estate market in Norfolk County has experienced a sustained increase in the number of deeds recorded. This upward momentum has continued all the way up to the traditional homebuying season,” noted Register O’Donnell. “We will need to wait and see if this trend persists, especially as we approach the peak months for real estate activity. Factors such as interest rates, economic conditions, and the inventory of available property will play crucial roles in determining whether the market can maintain its current pace.”

In February, lending activity increased compared to the same month a year ago. A total of 983 mortgages were recorded in February 2025, up 7% from February 2024, but down 14% from January 2025. According to The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, average mortgage interest rate in February 2024 were between 6.63% and 6.94%, while in February 2025, they were between 6.76% and 6.89%.

“The increase in mortgage activity continued in February compared to the same month last year. Mortgage interest rates have remained relatively stable, staying

within a narrow range compared to this time last year. Even though rates are higher than in 2021 and 2022, some borrowers still find them attractive,” stated Register O’Donnell. “As we move forward, it will be important to watch how changes in the economy and interest rates affect both the lending market and overall real estate activity in Norfolk County.”

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties for February 2025 rose to \$1,061,849, a 7% increase compared to February 2024, but a decrease of 14% from January 2025. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is also up, increasing by 4% from last year but down 30% from the previous month.

“Norfolk County is undeniably a sought-after location for both living and working, thanks to the vibrant communities and the dedicated efforts of municipal staff and leaders,” said Register O’Donnell. “However, even as property listings increase, the limited property inventory is still unable to meet the high demand. Many would agree that the market poses challenges for buyers, particularly those purchasing their first home.”

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has been closely monitoring the foreclosure market. In February 2025, there were seven foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, up from the six recorded in February 2024. Additionally, there were 19 notices to foreclose, the first step in the foreclosure process, which is fewer than the 26 recorded in February 2024. The register encourages anyone struggling to pay their mortgage reach out to one of the non-profit organizations listed on the Registry website: [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org).

For the past several years, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has partnered with Quincy Community Action Programs (617-479-8181 x376) and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (508-587-0950) to help anyone facing challenges paying their mortgage. Another option for homeowners is to contact the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Consumer Advocacy and Response Division (CARD) at 617-727-8400.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, located at 649 High St., Dedham, is the principal office for real property in Norfolk

County. The Registry is a resource for homeowners, title examiners, mortgage lenders, municipalities, and others with a need for secure, accurate, and accessible land

record information. All land record research information can be found on the Registry’s website, [www.norfolkdeeds.org](http://www.norfolkdeeds.org). Residents in need of assistance can contact

the Registry of Deeds Customer Service Center at (781) 461-6101 or send an email to [registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org](mailto:registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org).



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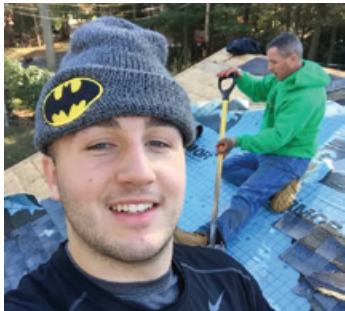
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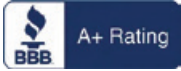
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