



Bellingham BULLETIN

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Vol. 31 No. 7

Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

June 2025

BHS Girls Track Team Wins 1st TVL Championship

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

The Bellingham High girls' outdoor track team went unbeaten during its dual-meet season and captured its first Tri Valley League Small Division championship in the program's 46-year history.

The girls defeated Millis, Dover-Sherborn, Medfield, Medway and Norton. The 76-60 triumph over Norton clinched the title on the Lancers' home track.

"The girls knew what was on the line, and they were intense against Norton," said coach Peter LaCasse. "When it ended, there was joy, excitement and lots of happiness in a controlled way. We competed at a high level. I thought it would be a close meet, but the 16-point victory became a proud moment."

The 63-year-old LaCasse, who coached girls' and boys'



The 2025 Bellingham high girls track team went undefeated and won the Tri Valley League Small Division championship. Photos provided.

track and cross-country at Attleboro High for 18 years, has been the Blackhawks' boys' track coach for 13 years and is finishing up his third campaign as the girls' outdoor coach. He was also Bellingham's cross-country coach for 10 campaigns.

The veteran coach deflected all praise for the school's most recent crown towards the girls.

"I'm just an enabler," he said. "The girls are the ones who worked hard to sharpen their skills and achieve this honor. They're the ones who made this happen."

LaCasse knew his team had great potential, and he had hopes that a TVL title was possible. "I knew our talent was very good and that we were capable of winning more than



Lots of smiles at Pride Fest last year as visitors took advantage of a free ride around the Town's Common. This year's event will take place on Saturday, June 28th.

Pride Fest Returns to Bellingham Town Common June 28th

By DAVID DUNBAR

Bellingham Pride Fest will be held on the Town Common, Saturday, June 28, from 11 a.m. until 3pm.

"This family-friendly event will feature artisans, crafters, vendors, food trucks, information and activities," explains Josie Dutil, chair of the Pride Fest planning committee and executive director of the Senior Center.

Last year, 100+ vendors signed up. This year, besides the 80 vendors and sponsors already signed up (at this writing), there will be family-friendly activities that include Mr. Niko, the Bubble Guy; a Trackless Train; story walk; henna; music and other attractions. "We're hoping to bring together different

PRIDE FEST
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CHAMPIONSHIP

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we'd lose," he said, "There was always a feeling that a league championship was possible."

The Blackhawks four senior captains — Olivia Carney, Calleigh Elder, Emma Smith, and Sydney Bashford — contributed to the team's success in a variety of ways, and their leadership styles varied. Carney competed in the 100 and 200-meter runs; Elder ran the 100, a leg of the 4x100 relay and threw the javelin; Smith ran the 800, mile and two-mile; and Bashford ran the 100 hurdles and competed in the triple jump.

"Olivia holds the school record in the 100 and 200 and was unbeaten in the TVL meets," LaCasse noted. "Our top scorer, she's the best sprinter in the league. She's got speed and power and runs with a powerful stride and a high track IQ. She's a leader by example."

Elder is labeled as "a super competitor" by LaCasse. "Calleigh runs the leadoff leg of the 4x100 relay and went unbeaten in the league in the javelin," he said. "Also a leader by example, she has the second fastest time



Bellingham High's girls track captains are, from left, Emma Smith, Sydney Bashford, Olivia Carney, and Calleigh Elder.

in the 100 on our team and she works diligently to sharpen her technical skills."

A native of Attleboro, LaCasse admires Smith's leadership style that's supportive and Bashford's communication skills. "Emma is very coachable, has good endurance and a passion for running," he said. "Sydney also is passionate about track; she's an excellent communicator and her attitude is always positive."

Four other key contributors who scored points and provided top-notch efforts are all underclassmen — junior Emanoela "Ella" Barreto and sophomores Calleigh Hayes, Emma Carroll, and Jenna Dormady.

Barreto runs the 100, 400, and 100-meter hurdles and competes in the long jump; Hayes runs the 400, the 400 hurdles and competes in the high jump; Carroll's events are the 100 and 200-meter runs, the triple jump, long jump, and the 4x100 relay; and Dormady runs the 400, 800, mile and two-mile.

"Ella is tenacious, the ultimate competitor," LaCasse offered.

"Calleigh holds the school record in the 400-meter hurdles and was unbeaten in the league in the hurdles. Emma is new to track. She's versatile and able to compete in five events. Jenna is quiet, determined and welcomes instruction."

The rest of the squad provides depth for LaCasse. "They not only give us depth, but they're always ready when called upon," he said.

The future for both the girls' and boys' outdoor track teams is positive. For this season, there were 54 boys on the roster and the girls numbered 40.

"I expect the good numbers to continue," LaCasse emphasized. "Other programs are encouraging their athletes to compete in track to become faster, stronger and more agile."

The girls still had three post-season meets on tap before the official end of the 2025 season. The events, all of which were slated after The Bulletin's deadline, include the divisional relays, the TVL meet and the state meet.

No matter how the girls fare in the post-season, the 40 who turned out for the team this season no doubt are glad they did. They made history as Bellingham High's first girls' outdoor track team to win a league championship.

PRIDE FEST

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generations of the LGBTQ+ community and friends of the community," says Dutil.

"We are excited to have a new gold sponsor this year," says Dutil, "and it's the Bellingham American Youth Football and Cheer organization." Leanne Marino, Secretary of the BAYFC, explains, "We sponsor Pride Fest and other events to be a part of our community and support our community members. As a community based non-profit organization, we always try to sponsor community events. We plan to have a raffle and interactive booth. Pride Fest has always been a fun day with a great turnout!"

"Elders in the LGBTQ+ community," Dutil adds, "have lived a lifetime of shame and trauma. They've been on the receiving end of hateful comments. Having the Senior Center be part of the efforts to pull this event together will hopefully help those members of the community feel the love and respect they spent many years only dreaming about. The LGBTQ+ community is indebted to these brave souls who paved the way for younger generations to feel acceptance and love in their communities."

At Pride Fest, you will find handmade greeting cards for purchase, unique jewelry, painted beach stones, sewn and crocheted items, art and photography, antiques, pine needle baskets, and caricature portraits.

Town of Bellingham, Senior Center, State Rep Mike Soter, Jolicoeur Overhead Doors, Synerge Home Care, Bellingham Democratic Town Committee, Teri's Child Care, Mendon Local Realty, Bellingham Youth Football and Cheer, New England Cheer and Tumble, Amy Azza, the Genereaux Family, Bellingham Business Association, and MY FM Media will provide music. Middlesex Savings Bank is the platinum sponsor again this year.

"Our students at Keough Memorial Academy (KMA) are thrilled to be represented at Pride Fest once again this year," says KMA's Matthew Doiron. "Our main goal is to foster an inclusive learning environment in which all students regardless of their background can succeed. We love the idea of taking these goals and sharing them with the Town of Bellingham." Doiron continues, "Last year, during the event, we enjoyed spending time at each booth, engaging with all attendees, and passing along not only our town pride but school pride as well. This year we are excited to do the same!"

Participating at Pride Fest is a new endeavor for KMA. "We participated for the first time at last year's event," explains Doiron who is a teacher and leads the effort at the Academy to get students involved in Pride Fest. "We were impressed by Josie Dutil and her planning committee's dedication to host-

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localtownpages

Founded by
Pamela Johnson

Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the
Community of Bellingham
Circulation: 7,500
households & businesses

Publisher
Chuck Tashjian

Editor
J.D. O'Gara

Send Editorial to:
bellinghambulletineditor@
gmail.com

Advertising Director
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Creative Design & Layout
Michelle McSherry
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Anthony E. Steele II Becomes BVT's Superintendent

Upton, MA - For the first time in 31 years, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District is proud to announce that, effective July 1, 2025, Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal Mr. Anthony E. Steele II will become the next Superintendent-Director, making him the fourth leader in Blackstone Valley Tech's (BVT) history. With a three-year agreement, he will take over for Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, who will retire at the end of June. BVT is excited about Steele's leadership and his vision for the future.

With nearly three decades of education experience at BVT, Mr. Steele has held many roles. The first was in 1997, when he began his career as an English teacher. He can still recall his first interview for this position.

"I vividly remember cresting the hill on Pleasant Street in 1997 and laying my eyes on our school for the first time. Customary jitters aside, I was relieved that my McNally Road Atlas led me to our campus on time and without incident. I was confident, yet hopeful to be offered the job, but I never imagined that BVT would become my home for the next 28 years and come to represent my life's work."

For BVT, it was an exciting and pivotal time when education reform would challenge vocational schools to meet the MCAS standard. Bringing a vocational perspective to the position, Steele said, "As a 22-year-old construction worker, I hung up my hard hat to try my hand at teaching English. I never anticipated the numerous opportunities for professional growth beyond improving my classroom teaching."

When Mr. Steele was named Assistant Principal/Director of Curriculum in 2001, BVT sustained a feverish pace of redefining what was possible in vocational education.

"It was thrilling to be a key player in transforming BVT from a strong, traditional vocational school to a nationally acclaimed career-technical center for the new era."

He says there has never been a dull moment in his career. "For the past thirteen years, I have been honored to serve as the Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal under Dr.

Fitzpatrick, who encouraged innovation and embraced change," said Mr. Steele. "My leadership experiences and growth at BVT were not accidental, but rather a philosophy in action that has allowed our school to develop talent, maintain focus on our mission, and ensure smooth transitions as time passes. We strategically develop succession plans to maintain a deep bench of talent that ensures the upward trajectory of our school for generations. I am well prepared to build on Dr. Fitzpatrick's legacy and lead our school on a continued path of innovation and excellence."

Mr. Steele has also served on various state committees and held leadership positions in professional organizations throughout his career, including the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators and the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association. He appreciates the perspective gained from his longevity at BVT and is most proud of the school's culture of high expectations, collegiality, and the resulting success of its graduates.

Mr. Steele has been a key player in transforming the school into the successful model it is today. His foresight for the future is exciting for many reasons, and he has several immediate goals for the district:

Expand Access to Career Technical Education (CTE): Establish the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute, which will expand our adult Moonlight Program to implement 200-hour, credential-based programs in HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, Welding, and Advanced Manufacturing. This grant-funded program will allow us to deliver high-quality CTE to adults interested in upskilling and retraining, provide skilled labor to the local workforce, and generate non-taxpayer revenue to help fund the school.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Across the Curriculum: Continue to refine our AI Governance policies as we embrace this technology in our teaching and learning. We are training our academic teachers and vocational instructors to use AI in their classrooms and shops, and likewise, we are training our students on the responsible use of AI. It is vital that we stay cur-



rent with emerging AI tools and practices and that our graduates are prepared to utilize AI in the modern workplace.

Maximize the benefits of the "Skills-Based-Hiring" Movement: Through our Cooperative Education (Co-Op) Program, we will continue to increase the number of students placed in Co-Op employment positions. Over 180 students participate in Co-Op each year, providing a seamless pathway to employment after graduation. Our students learn sophisticated career planning through their Career Enrich-

ment courses, and we are giving extra attention to analyzing emerging opportunities as the Skills-Based-Hiring movement grows nationwide. We will also continue to work with employers to create attractive opportunities for seniors going directly to work after graduation.

Expand the Role of The Valley Tech Education Foundation: With sensitivity that there are fewer tax and State dollars available each year, it is imperative to generate alternative revenue streams to maintain the quality of education at BVT. We wish

to increase the Education Foundation's efforts to seek charitable donations through businesses, foundations, and the private sector, and expand fundraising activities and events. The goal is to strengthen the quality of education and student opportunities at BVT while decreasing the reliance on member town assessments.

"I am eager to provide the unique blend of administrative experience, historical perspective, local knowledge, leadership style, and philosophy required of the next superintendent-director," said Mr. Steele. "I am honored to serve my school in this new role, and I am very excited about our future."

Having nurtured the talent within its administrative team, BVT has qualified, prepared internal candidates for the assistant superintendent-director and principal roles, and they will lead an exhaustive search for outside candidates as well. Either way, BVT will continue to be led by bold, innovative, mindful leaders with new ideas.

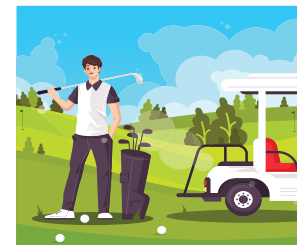


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3. Leigh and Connell are out golfing. While driving the golf cart, Leigh accidentally runs over Connell's foot, causing serious injury. Would Leigh have any coverage for the injuries through his auto or home insurance?



Answer 1: Yes, a newly licensed driver has 60 days to be added to the policy. Answer 2: No, if the jewelry is not "scheduled" there is no coverage for mysterious disappearance. Answer 3: Yes, Leigh's homeowner insurance would provide coverage. His auto policy would not provide coverage.

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Getting Rid of Ants, The Most Common Home Invader

While homeowners across the country enjoy the warm weather and the sights, smells and activities of the season, they also must contend with increased pest activity. This season, WPC Pest and Termite Control is reminding homeowners to be on the lookout for one of the most prevalent pests – ants.

Often considered the No. 1 nuisance pest, ants also pose significant health and property risk as they destroy wood and contaminate food items. And with more than 700 types of ant species in the United States, it's not surprising that ants can quickly become a source of disgust, frustration and concern for homeowners.

“Most ants thrive in warm and moist conditions, which is why it's best to eliminate moisture or standing water near or inside the home,” says Jim Maz-zuchelli, owner of WPC Pest and Termite Control. “In some

cases, the only way to completely remediate an ant infestation is to call a qualified pest professional who can locate and remove the identified species' nests.”

WPC Pest and Termite Control reminds homeowners that the first step to remediation is to properly identify which ant species is present in the home.

Some of the most common home invaders include:

- **Odorous House Ants:** These ants get their name from the unpleasant odor they give off when crushed, often described as smelling like a rotten coconut. They typically nest in wall voids and crevices and prefer sweet foods.
- **Pharaoh Ants:** Pharaoh ants prefer sweets, but also consume grease and even shoe polish. They live in extremely large colonies and keep warm near artificial heating sources like baseboard heaters and ovens.

- **Carpenter Ants:** This species hollows out nests in both dry and moist wood, though they prefer the latter. They can be particularly hard to remove since their nests can be more difficult to locate.
- **Fire Ants:** Fire ants can cause severe allergic reactions in addition to structural damage caused by chewing through the insulation around electrical wiring.

Homeowners who suspect an ant infestation should contact a licensed pest professional who can identify ant species and recommend a course of treatment. To learn more about ants, please visit www.nobugsnopests.com.

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PRIDE FEST

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easy to see how successful she was in creating a day full of love, acceptance, tolerance, and above all pride. It was an easy decision to be involved at Pride Fest again for the 2025 date.”

Like last year, the KMA booth will be offering a free raffle for a mystery prize, candy, informational flyers, and friendly

conversation for all those who choose to stop by.

Visitors will receive a gift when they check in and can participate in a bingo activity for a chance to win a \$100 Visa Gift Card donated by the BESG. There will be a shuttle bus for vendors and help setting up and breaking down. “We have room for a few more vendors and are still looking for volunteers,” says Dutil. If you want in, then please call her at (508) 966-0398.

“And personally,” explains Dutil, “I want to be part of this effort to thank those who travelled before me, making it possible for me to be married to the person of my choice. I want to be part of an event that encourages members of my community that living peacefully with all human beings is possible.”

From the Town Clerk's Office...

Our Local Election will be held on Tuesday, June 3rd at the Bellingham High School Gymnasium from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Results will be posted on the Town Clerk's website as soon as they're available. We'd like to thank the poll workers for all their dedication at each & every election. As of this time, there will be no further elections until next year, but that can always change!

A reminder that dog licenses are late as of April 1st. Please get your renewals in ASAP as citations will be issued per MGL beginning June 1st.

For those seeking vital records for Real ID applications, birth certificates are located in the town the mother was living at the time of birth. Marriage certificates are located where paperwork for the marriage was filed (and that's not always the same town as the marriage took place.) Bellingham charges \$10 per record, and if we don't have the record we'll help direct you where to find it. Also, a reminder that while we do marriage intention paperwork during business hours, an appointment is always a good idea. Please give us a call with any questions or concerns at (508) 657-2833 or townclerk@bellinghamma.org.

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Celtic Strength Returns to Milford for Historic 5th Year — Bigger, Bolder!

Brace yourself for the 5th Annual Celtic Strength Festival, Saturday June 21st, as it storms back onto Fino Field with a day of kilts, courage, and community. Formerly known as the Scottish Highland Games, this expanded celebration now embraces the full breadth of Celtic warrior traditions—including stone lifting, Irish wrestling, and the iconic Scottish Heavy Athletics.

Over the past four years, world records have fallen and legends have risen. With 120+ athletes flying in from Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and across the U.S., 2025 is shaping up to be our boldest year yet!

Celtic Strength blends adrenaline-pumping competition with cultural pride and family-friendly fun. Highlights include:

- **Highland Games Heavies** — Caber Toss, Weight for Height, Sheaf Toss, and more with athletes from the USA, Czech Republic, Belgium, Holland, and Canada.
- **Team Highlander Showdown** — Barbell clubs, firehouses, and gyms face off in events like the 550 lb Wagon Wheel Deadlift, U-Haul Pull, and Caber Relay.



- **Celtic Wrestling Revival** — Live matches and workshops in Irish Collar & Elbow and Scottish Backhold, featuring expert Tom “Headhunter” Higgins from Chicago.
- **Stonelifting Showcase** — World-class lifters including Martin “The Stoneman” Jancsics from Scotland and David “Indiana Stones” Keohan from Ireland will demonstrate historic feats of raw power. Try-it stations open to all ages.

Celebrate with the Whole Clan

Join us for Opening Ceremonies with bagpipes and awards, a Kids Tug-of-War vs. Team Highlander Captains at noon, Celtic heritage booths, food trucks, epic merch, and activities for all ages.

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Thanks to Milford Parks & Recreation, Sports Illustrated Tickets, Cerberus Strength USA, Bosse Pickledom, Premier Fence, Celtic New England, USMMA, and others for supporting this unforgettable day of strength and unity.

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Bellingham Public Schools Receives National Recognition for Music Education Support for 2nd Time

Bellingham Public Schools has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for their outstanding support and commitment to music education. Now in its 26th year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement for providing music access and education to all students.

Two awards are given each year: Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) for school districts and the Support-Music Merit Award (SMMA) for individual school sites. Both reach K-12 schools and districts throughout the U.S. and offer opportunities to increase awareness and support for music programs. Over 1,000 districts and individual school sites (public, private, charter, parochial) were recognized for having the highest commitment to producing exceptional music programs.

Dr. Peter Marano, Superintendent of Bellingham Schools says, "Music education is not just an enrichment—it's a foundation of a well-rounded education. In Bellingham, we have seen firsthand how music fosters creativity, builds confidence, and strengthens community. It empowers our students to express themselves, connect with others, and thrive both academically and personally. The impact is profound and lasting, and we are proud to continue investing in programs that inspire all students."

Marie Forte, the Fine Arts Department Coordinator, states, "This is the second time in as many years that we have been recognized with this distinction - it is a great honor! This award is a credit to the entire Bellingham community and validates how we support and collaborate to provide a strong music education experience for our students. This recognition is awarded annually, so we need to make sure we continue to serve the Belling-



ham students in the best way possible, even through anticipated challenging budget years ahead. The Bellingham community has always been a strong supporter of the arts, this recognition says thank you to all the families and citizens who support our concerts, fundraisers, have volunteered their time, voted in favor of school budget presentations and who show up for our music program in many different ways. I want to also thank all our alumni - we continue to build the tradition and legacy that they have set here in Bellingham."

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Fine Arts Department Coordinator Marie

Forte answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified by school officials and reviewed by the leading arts educational research firm, Wolf-Brown.

Bellingham Public Schools has a comprehensive music education program where students receive formal instruction from highly qualified music educators in grades K - 12. Throughout the program, music instruction is focused on interactive, engaging music-making through drumming, Orff instruments, recorders, ukulele, singing, instrumental music and more. Students participate in choral singing beginning at the elementary level and continue at Bellingham Memorial and High School. At the 5th grade level, students can begin their instrumental music experience with traditional band instruments. In addition to all the core academic course offerings, Bellingham offers a variety of co-curricular activities such as Jazz Band, Marching Band, Color Guard, Chamber Music,

Percussion Ensemble and a free Summer Music Camp to name a few. With strong support and advocacy from the Bellingham Friends of Music, scholarships are offered throughout the year for music lessons, summer music opportunities, visiting clinicians and field trips to see professional performances. The Bellingham Music program is thankful for the strong support of the School Committee, School Administration and community partners that have made our music program note-worthy and a meaningful program for the youth of Bellingham.

About The NAMM Foundation

The NAMM Foundation is the charitable arm of the National Association of Music Merchants, the global trade association for the music products industry. The foundation works to remove systemic barriers that limit access to music-making and career pathways in the music industry. By investing in bold ideas and innovative solutions, we strive to build inclusive and thriving musical communities. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

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7-Year Streak for BVT Student Council

2025 National Gold Council of Excellence Award Recipient

For their exemplary record of leadership, service, and activities that assist the school and community, the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Student Council has once again been recognized as a 2025 National Gold Council of Excellence by the National Association of Student Councils. It is the seventh consecutive year the council at BVT has earned this top award.

To meet the National Council of Excellence Award requirements, a student council must meet various criteria, such as crafting a written constitution, conducting regular meetings, and adopting a democratic election process. Additionally, it demonstrates successful sponsorship and participation in leadership development and activities that serve its school and community.

“Our students continue to amaze me year after year,” said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. “On behalf of our school community, we applaud our award-winning student council’s consistent work and continued efforts to improve their school and surrounding communities through their leadership and service.”

“We are equally proud of our advisors, Danielle Cann and Megan (Potenti) Wilk, who consistently assist and empower our council members through annual service projects and fundraising efforts that truly make a difference in the lives of our families and community,” said Dr. Fitzpatrick.

This national recognition honors student councils demonstrating exemplary leadership, service, and commitment to school and community. It is an



honor to be a recipient of this prestigious award.

Student Council Executive Board for 2024-2025:

Sosie Derkosrofian, President; Maddison Dos Santos, Vice President; Perry Derkosrofian, Treasurer; Eva Schairer, Secretary; Nora Iadarola, Historian; Tyler Houlihan, Awards Coordinator; Addison Taylor, Events Coordinator; Emma Cliadakis, Senior Representative; Olivia Katz, Senior Representative/Recruitment; Genevieve Kovolyan, Junior Representative; Isla Koopman, Sophomore Representative; Zabel Derkosrofian, CDMASC Vice President; and Kiele Sarnie, CDMASC Fall Conference Chair.

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Wednesday July 16. 6pm - 7pm Free pony rides., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Morse Code (rock and pop).

Wednesday July 23. 6pm – 7pm Free pony rides., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Back Pages (classic rock).
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Wednesday Aug 6. Free Pony Rides 6:30pm – 7:30pm., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Vinyl Echo (power trio)

Wednesday Aug 13. Free Pony Rides 6:30pm – 7:30pm., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Alexander’s Jazztime Band (jazz standards)



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Municipal Spotlight

LaCroix Is a Capable Choice for Dual-Role Position

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

Caroline LaCroix has heard a plethora of great things about the late Beth Connell-Smith and she's well aware how efficient Connell-Smith was in her role as Bellingham's Human Resource Director.

"During my brief time in Bellingham, I've learned how dedicated and organized Beth was and how committed she was not only as Human Resource director, but also to the town," LaCroix said. "As her successor, I'll do my best to live up to her standards."

Connell-Smith died last year on Dec. 17 and LaCroix, who was appointed in January, began working in March.

On the job for four months in her dual role as Human Resource Director and Assistant Town Administrator, LaCroix has adapted nicely.

The 59-year-old native of Middleboro has made the transition from a city form of government (Mayor and City Council)

to a town-meeting system (Select Board). For the last seven years, LaCroix worked as Weymouth's Human Resource Director, and earlier in her career, she served in Weymouth as Director of Administrative and Community Services for a seven-year stretch and prior to that she was Assistant to the Executive Administrator for four years.

Other municipal positions she's held include Town Manager intern in Groton, Conn.; Special Projects employee for Westwood's Town Administrator; Assistant to the Town Manager in Middleboro; and Human Resource Director in Marshfield. Her experience in municipal government totals 30-plus years.

"In 2007, the position I held in Weymouth was eliminated and all the other transitions were career advancements," said LaCroix, who's married and has two adult children.

Because of her time as an assistant to Town Managers and Executive Administrators, LaCroix expressed an interest in



Caroline LaCroix, Bellingham's Human Resource Director and Assistant Town Administrator, has 30-plus years of municipal experience.

also serving as Assistant Town Administrator in Bellingham. Interim Town Administrator Denis Fraine conferred with the Select Board, and she was hired for the dual position.

"I'll fulfill my role and functions in human resources and support Denis in the daily operation of Bellingham's municipal affairs," she said. "And, when

Denis ends his interim appointment, I'll assist whomever is appointed. I look forward to working on projects for the Town Administrator."

LaCroix knows what the key is to succeed as a Human Resource Director.

"The key to success is all about working with others and being non-judgmental towards them," she emphasized. "Helpful attributes are to be a good listener, to be objective and see other points of view, to be professional at all times and to have a sense of humor."

A municipal Human Resource Director deals with a variety of people — active municipal employees, active school employees, retirees, insurance vendors, taxpayers, elected and appointed officials and federal and state agency personnel.

"The role involves working on labor relations/union matters," LaCroix noted. "Contract negotiations are a good example. Employee relations can include dealing with employee complaints, requests to review a personnel file, training inquiries, disciplinary issues, employee and retiree benefits and pension assistance."

"New employee recruitment involves job postings, writing job descriptions, conducting interviews and offers of employment. And, very often a director must provide reports for state and federal agencies during the year."

There are challenging situations that arise for Human Resource Directors. "What I regard as challenging are personnel

matters, like employee illness or injury," LaCroix said. "And, a director has to adjust to sweeping changes in state and federal legislation. The Mass. Municipal Association fortunately is on top of legislative changes, making it easier for directors to implement them."

Fraine is delighted to have LaCroix on board and is impressed with her work ethic. "Since joining our management team, Caroline has hit the ground running, bringing her many years of municipal experience with her," he said. "While transition is always a challenge, Caroline has invested the energy and time along with her can-do attitude to make it as seamless as possible."

LaCroix' master's degree in public administration from the University of Rhode Island in 1993 has been a big plus in her municipal positions. After graduation from Middleboro High where she was an honor student who enjoyed playing clarinet in the band, she earned her bachelor's degree from UMass-Dartmouth, majoring in political science and minoring in history.

The personable LaCroix, who still lives in Middleboro, felt comfortable early on in her roles at Bellingham's Municipal Center.

"I received an extraordinary welcome," she said, "Everyone has been so kind and helpful, and Denis is the consummate professional. He defines the role of a Town Administrator. With his 35 years of experience, I'm honored to have had the opportunity to work with him."

LaCroix, who grew up on a dairy farm, spends her free time with farm obligations.

"I still live on the farm," she said. "We have livestock. I love gardening, whether it's flowers or vegetables, and we also cut hay. I also enjoy fairs, especially 4-H and grange fairs."

Caroline LaCroix no doubt is adept around farm animals and fairs. She's embraced farm life for a long-time but she also plans on being at Bellingham's Municipal Center for a long stretch.

"My letter of appointment from the Town Administrator is a four-year commitment," she said. "I will fulfill that agreement and hopefully be with the town long-term."

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Your Money, Your Independence

Mid-Year Review: Five Financial Metrics To Evaluate



Glenn Brown, CFP

As the year reaches its midpoint, June is a great time to reflect on your financial progress. Whether your goals include building savings, paying off debt, and/or preparing for retirement - evaluating key financial metrics this month gives you the opportunity to make strategic changes to complete a strong year. Here are five essential financial indicators to assess this month and how to act on what you find.

1. Net Worth

Your net worth provides a clear snapshot of your overall financial health. It's calculated by subtracting your total liabilities (debts) from your total assets (cash, investments, real estate, etc.).

Why it matters in June: Reviewing net worth mid-year helps you evaluate growth of wealth over time. If it's stagnant

or declining, it may signal overspending, increased debt, and/or underperforming investments.

Action step: List all assets and liabilities using a spreadsheet or financial planning software, like eMoney. Compare with your end of December figures to track progress and use this insight to adjust the following items.

2. Savings Rate

Your savings rate is the percentage of your income that you're saving — including contributions to retirement accounts, HSAs, 529s, emergency funds, brokerage accounts, etc.

Why it matters now: If you're not close to 50% of your annual savings target, consider increasing contributions to accounts where funds are accessible this year without penalty. This usually means taxable accounts and not 401k or 529 plans, because if a shortfall is created, you'll need ease of access to funds to cover.

How to calculate: Divide your total savings to date by your gross income (pre-tax) for the same period. A 15% savings rate is a solid target, but if you wish to be above-average there are only two ways - save more and/or invest beyond median returns of the population.

3. Monthly Cash Flow

Cash flow reflects your day-to-day financial reality by measuring the difference between your monthly income and expenses.

Positive cash flow means you're living a sustainable lifestyle and have money left to save and invest.

How to check: Track all income and expenses for the past one or two months. Subtract total expenses from total income. If you're consistently negative, you need to trim spending, increase income, or both.

Action step: Use budgeting apps or spreadsheets to monitor cash flow. Small leaks — like unused subscriptions, frequent takeout, impulse purchases — can erode your financial health over time.

4. Emergency Fund Coverage

An emergency fund should cover 3-6 months of essential living expenses to defend against financial surprises.

Why June matters: If you've had unexpected costs this year, your emergency fund may be lower than it should be. Summer travel and seasonal expenses can also drain savings if you're not careful.

Action step: Calculate the last 3 months of essential expenses, compare to your current cash balance, and plan to replenish if needed.

5. Investment Portfolio Allocation

June is a great time to check investment returns and asset allocation. Market changes or personal milestones (like a job change, large purchase or desired earlier retirement) may require a strategy shift.

Why it matters: If your portfolio has drifted from your target allocation (e.g., too much in stocks, not enough in bonds or real assets), it can affect risk exposure, volatility and long-term results.

Action step: After confirming monthly cash flows and emergency funds are aligned and no additional funds need to be raised, review your portfolio allocation and rebalance accordingly.

Final Thoughts

A mid-year financial check-up gives you clarity, control, and the chance to recalibrate while sitting outside with your laptop sipping morning coffee or lazing on a sunny afternoon in the summertime.

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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Local Resident Helping to 'Strike Out' Rare Kidney Disease

By LISA GENTES-HUNT

One local mother is hoping to spread awareness about IgA Nephropathy, a rare kidney disease, by teaming up with the Boston Red Sox and the IgA Nephropathy Foundation. In a special May 17 event at Fenway Park in Boston, Franklin resident Victoria Bartlett, Ph.D., the Massachusetts ambassador for the national foundation, took part in a "Strike Out IGaN" day as part of a nationwide awareness week. This year, for the first time in the state's history, Governor Maura Healey issued an official state proclamation declaring May 14 as "IGaN Awareness Day" in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Bartlett, who works in Boston and has been living with IGaN for more than 20 years, wanted to reach others battling the rare kidney disease, also known as Berger disease, which, according to the Mayo Clinic, happens when germ-fighting immunoglobulin A (IgA) builds up in the kidneys, causing inflammation that, over time, can make it harder for kidneys to filter waste from the blood. The first sign is often

blood in the urine.

"I had a supportive nephrologist, but I never met another patient until after my transplant," said Bartlett, who is originally from the United Kingdom and who received a kidney transplant in 2021 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

Bartlett decided to become an ambassador for the foundation to "share my story and give some people hope that you can live with this disease," she said. "Finding out can be quite scary. It can be traumatic. It's nice to be on the other side and have a kidney that's working and doing what it needs to do."

Bonnie Schneider, the founder of the IgA Nephropathy Foundation, which has ambassadors throughout the United States and Canada, said the state proclamation is a huge boost for the foundation.

"We are hoping to have all 50 states recognize IGaN Awareness Day, and having Massachusetts is really important as there are a lot of patients in the state," Schneider said. "They can be recognized and celebrate IGaN



Getting ready for their "Strike out IGaN" Red Sox game on Saturday, May 17 at Fenway Park, from Left to Right are Lauren Bartlett, Abby Trombert, Tracey Trombert, and Victoria Bartlett.

Awareness Day instead of suffering in silence. The disease does not define you, and it's okay not to be okay."

Schneider, a New Jersey resident, created the foundation when her son was diagnosed 21 years ago. She said it's crucial to the foundation to have ambassadors, like Bartlett, advocating for the foundation.

"It's really important that these ambassadors come out of

their comfort zone and help others in their communities," she stated, noting that the volunteer ambassadors help patients that are newly diagnosed navigate the disease and teach them what is available. "Victoria is amazing and goes above and beyond the call of duty," she said. "We're lucky and honored to have her as part of the program."

Schneider also noted that the foundation is thankful for the kidney donors as well. "We couldn't do it without our unsung heroes."

One of those unsung heroes is Francine Gregoire, Bartlett's friend and kidney donor.

The former Massachusetts resident, who now lives in San Carlos, California, has been friends with Bartlett since the two worked together in January 2014.

Gregoire was moved to become a kidney donor after learning of her



friend's plight.

"When I received the text from Victoria indicating finding a donor...was pretty much life or death for her, I only had one thought in mind - how can I help her," she said. "I could not bear the thought of losing my friend."

After undergoing various tests, and "a pandemic delay," the friend said she was "thrilled to hear I was qualifying as a donor. I never looked back and would do it again if I had a 'third/another' spare kidney."

Gregoire stressed how important spreading awareness about the rare kidney disease is for patients, caregivers and for potential kidney donors.

She said spreading the word is critical to the cause. "I had no clue Victoria was affected by IGaN, a deadly kidney disease which still has no cure. It is also key for potential donors to understand that you can live a perfectly normal life with one kidney."

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Spring Cleaning is Greener with Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe walking through your basement has gotten difficult or there is no more room in the attic? Perhaps you are planning to move, and you need to declutter before your open house?

Figuring out who to call can be challenging. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2005. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with eight trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by

Business spotlight

renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices, so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!



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A Glimpse at Bellingham’s Memorial Day Observance 2025

Photos and captions by Jenn Russo



Chris Condon, US Navy Veteran and Bellingham VFW Quartermaster, reads a list of those Bellingham Veterans who have passed away in the last year.



WWII US Army Veteran and parade Grand Marshal Alfred Cosigli, now 101, shares his experience serving under General Patton in the 774 ‘Blackcat’ Tank Battalion. He served in five battles and earned a Silver Star.



Honored guest speaker, Sergeant Major Jesse J. Krone gave a moving speech about the significance of Memorial Day, sharing that “the willingness to serve something greater than oneself is the cornerstone of our Nation’s strength.” He encouraged everyone watching to carry with them not just the memories of the fallen, but a renewed commitment to the country they loved, honoring their sacrifice through a dedication to public service in any form and to “ensure that future generations understand the cost of the freedom they inherited.”



The Bellingham High School marching band marched by, playing some family favorites.



US Marine Veteran and Master of Ceremonies, Jim Hastings, thanks everyone for coming to honor our fallen heroes.



Veterans wave from the VFW 7272 Float as they pass by parade spectators.



Captain David Kiley of the Colonial Navy of Massachusetts, wears a uniform typical of the Revolutionary War period.



Bellingham student Eva Landry gave a beautiful reading of Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Gettysburg Address.



Members of Bellingham Scout Troop 14 and Cub Scout Pack 118 stand by their raft float, ready to march.

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BBA Holds Annual State-of-the-State Meeting

This Month, Group Will Present Scholarships, Annual Awards June 11

The Bellingham Business Association (BBA) held its annual State-of-the-State meeting on Wednesday, May 14th, at Arigna's Irish Pub & Coal Fire Kitchen in Bellingham. Association members welcomed State Rep. Mike Soter (R) and State Senator Becca Rausch (D), who offered overviews of local initiatives and funding.

Rep. Soter spoke first, noting to the group that this year, as a ranking member of The Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, he hopes to "bring a lot of economic development to Bellingham and communities throughout my district and here in the state." Soter noted the House had recently finished its budget process, and that the Senate was in the midst of its budget process, but under the bill the House passed increases would go up from \$75 to \$150 per pupil, with increases in

special education funding and child-care reimbursement. Soter noted "we also go money to close out Fiscal 2025, and that's money (Bellingham) can utilize if it comes back."

Sen. Rausch explained to the group that the Senate was currently involved in the budgetary process, noting that in case of a "rainy day," the Massachusetts' bond rating "is at just over \$8 billion dollars, which is the highest it's ever been in Massachusetts' history, if my understanding is correct, which is great, because if we hit that rainy day, were going to need those resources, and we have them, because we've been investing and saving smartly." She added that the MA Senate proposal, with over 1,000 amendments to be debated the following week, included \$1.3B in unrestricted general government aid, \$116M for Housing Authorities, over \$200M total for regional transit authorities,

with \$40M for fare-free fixed route rides, nearly \$60M for adult education services and \$9M for career technical institutes.

"Specifically for Bellingham, I've filed an amendment to allocate \$65,000 for improvements to the senior center for the parking lot. I also submitted a number of statewide amendments to supplement mental health, regional recovery services, scientific research ...," said Rausch.

Referring to Rep. Soter's discussion of the supplemental budget passed by both chambers, Rausch said, "I secured 3/4 of a million dollars just in that budget and hopefully a half a million in the forthcoming document ... to come back into our community to support all of you and fellow business owners and our community." Amendments for Bellingham she just filed included \$35,000 for Silver Lake Park, \$50,000 for the playground at Town Common. Rausch was hopeful on that funding, noting that she was able to secure \$150,000 in funding in



Sen. Becca Rausch discusses state initiatives with Bellingham business owners at the BBA's meeting last month.

priority projects for Bellingham in the last three budget cycles.

The next BBA meeting will be the annual awards dinner on June 11th 5:30-7:30 at Lowell's Restaurant this month, during which two scholarships will be

awarded to high school seniors from Bellingham, as well as the annual Unsung Hero award. For more details on attending this meeting, email contact@bellingshambusinessassociation.org.



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A Revolutionary Advance in Glaucoma Treatment Debuts in Massachusetts

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

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness worldwide, affecting over 3 million Americans and millions more globally. This silent disease gradually damages the optic nerve—often without noticeable symptoms until significant vision is lost. Lowering intraocular pressure (IOP) remains the only proven way to slow or stop its progression—and innovative treatments continue to evolve in the fight to preserve vision.

In a major advancement for glaucoma patients in Massachusetts, Dr. Roger Kaldawy, MD, is offering the state’s first Direct SLT (Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty) using Alcon’s newest, state-of-the-art laser system. This groundbreaking 2-second procedure will take place at Milford Franklin Eye Center’s surgical facility in Milford, MA, marking a new chapter in laser glaucoma care—right here, close to home.

What Is Glaucoma and How Is It Treated?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, usually due to increased intraocular pressure. The most common form, **open-angle glaucoma**, occurs when the drainage system of the eye becomes less effective over time, allowing fluid to accumulate and pressure to build. Without treatment, this pressure can cause permanent vision loss.

Traditional glaucoma treatment options include:

- Medicated eye drops to reduce fluid production or improve drainage
- Oral medications, often a last resort due to systemic side effects
- Laser treatments, such as conventional SLT or argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT)

- Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS) for moderate disease
- Traditional surgeries, including trabeculectomy or tube shunts, for advanced cases

Each approach has its pros and cons, and treatment is tailored to the patient’s specific needs and stage of disease.

What Is SLT?

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a well-established, non-invasive laser treatment that targets the eye’s **trabecular meshwork**—the tissue responsible for draining fluid from the eye. SLT uses gentle laser pulses to improve outflow and lower IOP, often reducing or eliminating the need for daily eye drops. It’s a quick, painless procedure with minimal downtime, typically performed in an outpatient setting.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, **Dr. Kaldawy was among the first surgeons in the region to offer SLT**, performing hundreds of successful treatments over the years. Our facility provides SLT in a state-of-the-art surgical center in Milford, offering expert care without the need to travel



to distant hospitals or urban centers.

With this advanced center available in your backyard, there’s no reason to travel hours for glaucoma or eye surgery. If your provider is still recommending you drive long distances for treatment, we welcome second opinions and offer world-class laser glaucoma care, right here in Milford.

Introducing Direct SLT: The Next Generation of Laser Therapy

Alcon’s Direct SLT takes traditional SLT to the next level, combining the trusted benefits of SLT with cutting-edge technology and enhanced precision. This new approach allows the laser to be applied more accurately and consistently to the drainage tissues of the eye, resulting in improved outcomes and a better patient experience.

What Sets Direct SLT Apart from Traditional SLT?

Traditional SLT:

- *Requires a gonioscope:* A specialized lens is placed on the eye to allow the physician to visualize and direct the laser beam at the trabecular meshwork
- *More operator-dependent:* The accuracy and effectiveness can vary based on the physician’s experience and technique
- *Longer procedure:* Typically takes a few minutes
- *Can involve some discomfort:* Some patients may experience discomfort from the gonioscope

Direct SLT (DSLST):

- *Non-contact:* Laser energy is delivered through the limbus, eliminating the need for a gonioscope or physical contact with the eye
- *Automated and fast:* The procedure is automated, takes less than 3 seconds, and can be performed by trained personnel
- *Efficient and accessible:* DSLT may treat more patients in less time, making care more accessible
- *Potentially more comfortable:* Non-contact delivery improves patient comfort

Who Should Consider Direct SLT?

Direct SLT is especially beneficial for:

- Patients with early to moderate open-angle glaucoma
- Individuals looking to reduce or avoid glaucoma medications
- Patients with sensitivity or allergies to eye drops
- Those with difficulty maintaining a drop regimen
- Patients with ocular surface disease worsened by medications

Benefits and Risks of Direct SLT

Benefits:

- No incisions and minimal discomfort
- Quick recovery
- May reduce or eliminate the need for daily drops

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EYE

continued from page 14

- Repeatable treatment
 - Customized for individual patient needs
- Risks:
- Temporary eye irritation or inflammation
 - Mild, short-term increase in IOP immediately after treatment
 - In rare cases, insufficient pressure reduction

Why Choose Milford Franklin Eye Center for Your Laser Glaucoma Surgery?

We are proud to be the first center in Massachusetts to offer Direct SLT, and even prouder to provide it in a local, accessible setting that prioritizes patient comfort and convenience. Our facility is equipped with the latest ophthalmic technology, and our team—led by Dr. Kaldawy—delivers compassionate, expert care with excellent outcomes.

Here’s the great news: You don’t need to travel far to receive top-tier glaucoma care. We’re offering excellence in SLT—including the newest Direct SLT—right here in Milford.

If you or someone you love is living with glaucoma or elevated eye pressure, contact us today to learn whether Direct SLT is right for you. We’re honored to bring this breakthrough in glaucoma care to our community—and we’re ready to help you protect your vision for years to come.

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SAFE Gala Highlights Group’s Reach to 55 Communities



SAFE CEO Jennifer Knight-Levine and SAFE Director of Family Recovery Jim Derick, co-founders of the SAFE Coalition, at the third annual SAFE Gala.

By JUDITH DORATO O’GARA

“This night is incredible. It is a highlight of the year for us at the SAFE Coalition, and we know that so many community members have been impacted by substance abuse, and tonight we get to honor those we have lost and celebrate the opportunity our community has to honor (them) and provide education and recovery,” said Jennifer Knight-Levine, co-founder and CEO of the SAFE Coalition, which held its third annual fundraising gala on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at the Lakeview Pavilion in Foxboro. The event, which included a live auction emceed by Ken Cosco, met its fundraising goal of \$200,000

“We’re pleased so many people are here to support such an incredible cause,” said Dr. Anne Bergen, President of the SAFE board of directors, prior to the dinner, “SAFE is such an important organization in our community. We really have to do something about the mental health epidemic. It’s not going away, and SAFE is on the front lines.”

Many attended from the local community to support the cause.

“I’m here because of what this organization is doing and has done since its inception,” said Rep. Jeff Roy at the event, present years ago when Jennifer Knight and Jim Levine were pondering how to tackle substance use disorder in the Franklin community. “To think that that small group of people turned into what we are seeing here tonight, 400 people coming, and all the lives they’ve saved and the support they’ve provided to the community ...



SAFE COO Carrie Asprinio shared her personal story, hoping to remove the stigma surrounding addicts who experience abuse.



Roberta Trahan, Sue Rohrbach, and Anne Bergen mingle before dinner at the SAFE Gala. Dr. Bergen, President of SAFE’s Board of Directors, opened the evening’s event, welcoming guests and introducing speakers.



Bill Fox was presented with this SAFE’s Jeffrey N. Roy Excellence in Community Service Award for his outstanding commitment and follow-up to each person who asks him for help, any time of day.

and now SAFE is supporting 55 communities,” said Roy.

Norfolk County Commissioner Richard Staiti was also among supporters at the SAFE Gala. “They do a great job in Franklin and surrounding communities in the county, and I always want to try to support them any way I can,” said Staiti, who added that the Norfolk County



Jacob Haendel, keynote speaker at the SAFE Gala, co-creator of the podcast Blink, (www.blinkthepodcast.com), spoke, and stood, briefly, before a sold-out audience of 400.




Members of Last Chance Clean and Sober men’s motorcycle club attended the SAFE Gala. The 501 c 3 organization has a run this month, on June 7th. For more information, email lastchancemcinc@gmail.com or visit www.lastchancemotorcycleclub.org.



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Letter to the Editor

Don't Tax My Credit Union

By SUSAN J. KENNEY

CEO, Norfolk Community Federal Credit Union

Credit unions are speaking as Congress and the new administration move quickly on tax reform and announced plans to end the industry's tax exemption status. Here's what you should know:

A Tax on Credit Unions Is a Tax on You: Why We Must Act Now

In communities across America, credit unions are doing what

they've always done best—putting people first. As not-for-profit financial cooperatives, credit unions are fundamentally different from banks. They exist to serve their members, not to generate profits for shareholders. That's why more than 140 million Americans—43% of the population—have chosen credit unions as their trusted financial partner.

But this model is now under threat.

There's a growing concern that lawmakers may consider eliminating the federal income

tax exemption for credit unions. Make no mistake: a tax on credit unions is a tax on you and the millions of other Americans who depend on them.

Credit Unions' tax status was established by congress in 1937, and it is crucial to all credit unions' survival and continued ability to service people left behind by banks. As cooperatives, credit unions succeed when people come together. We are all stronger when we advocate and act with one unified voice. Just like in the movie "It's A Wonderful Life," with Bailey Building and Loan fighting against Mr. Potter's authoritarian way.

Why Credit Unions Matter

Credit unions were born out of necessity. More than a century ago, when banks turned their backs on working families, farmers, and small business owners, credit unions stepped in to serve. They provided accessible financial services to those excluded from the mainstream banking system—and they continue to do so today.

Unlike banks, credit unions are not-for-profit and member-owned. Any earnings they gen-

erate are returned to members through better interest rates on loans, higher returns on savings, fewer fees, and personalized services like financial counseling. This community-first model helps individuals and families build stronger financial futures and strengthens local economies. Credit unions are democratically owned and operated, governed under a "one member, one vote" principle, regardless of the amount of deposit. While banks are operated with the purpose of maximizing profits for their shareholders, credit unions' sole purpose is to return those benefits to their member-owners and the communities they serve.

Despite their growth, credit unions remain a relatively small player in the financial sector, holding only 8.8% of assets compared to banks, which control 91.2%. Yet their impact is outsized when it comes to improving financial well-being.

What's at Stake

The federal income tax exemption for credit unions exists because of their unique structure and mission. Congress recognized long ago that credit unions provide essential financial services to underserved communities, and that taxing them like for-profit banks would undermine that mission.

It's important to note: credit unions already contribute billions in state and local taxes. The exemption only applies to federal income tax on profits—profits that are reinvested back into the membership, not handed to wealthy shareholders.

If Congress were to eliminate this exemption, it would significantly reduce the ability of credit unions to provide the services their members count on. That means fewer low- and no-fee accounts, less access to affordable loans, and reduced financial support for families and small businesses.

Why You Should Care

Eliminating the tax exemption wouldn't just hurt credit

unions—it would hurt you. It would force your credit union to operate more like a bank, focusing on profits instead of people. And ultimately, those costs would be passed on to you in the form of higher fees and worse rates.

This isn't just a financial issue—it's a fairness issue. Why should consumers who have chosen a cooperative financial model be penalized because of pressure from big banks that fear competition?

Take Action: Protect Your Credit Union

Credit unions are not a loophole. They are a lifeline for millions of Americans.

As federal lawmakers consider tax reform, they need to hear directly from you. Tell your U.S. Representative and Senators: **Don't tax my credit union—it's a tax on me.** Visit donttaxmycreditunion.org for more information and a link to your lawmakers. You can also get the link on our website: www.norfolkcommunityfcu.org.

Your voice matters. Let Congress know that you stand with credit unions—and that any attempt to tax them is an attack on the financial security of more than 140 million Americans.

Here at Norfolk Community Federal Credit union, it has been our mission to help our members fulfill their dreams and meet their financial goals for almost 75 years. We're in business to help people improve their lives through realizing their financial goals and to provide financial services to members at the lowest possible cost. People helping people help themselves. We have a Board of Directors who are local members of your community, volunteering their time to oversee the general direction of the credit union. So, credit union profits don't get distributed to them, like bank shareholders get bank dividends. We reinvest it in you, our members!

Now is the time to act. Protect your credit union. Protect your community. Protect your financial future. Protect your choice!

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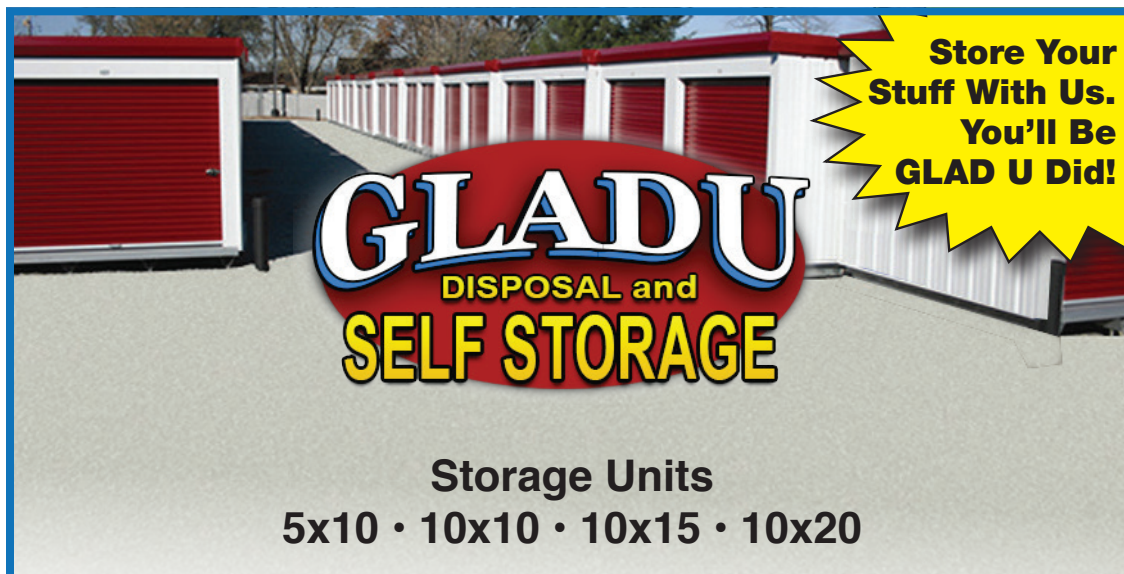
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Bellingham Fire Dept. Reminds Homeowners about Rules on House Numbers

Bellingham, MA — Chief William Miller and the Bellingham Fire Department want to remind homeowners of state regulations related to display of house numbers.

“When we’ve been out on some calls recently, we’ve had an issue finding the address where we’re supposed to respond,” Chief Miller said. “We respond to emergencies in real time, and residents making sure house numbers are visible will help us with that.”

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has specific standards for house numbering that often exceed older town codes.

Among the standards, according to the state Department of Fire Services:

1. All numbers must be four inches high.
2. All numbers must be lighted at night.
3. If the home is set back from the road, the house number should also be placed alongside the road, at least four inches high and lighted at night.

“Our crews may be familiar with the area, but in major incidents we may need assistance from neighboring firefighters,” Lt. Joseph Altomonte, who works on fire prevention issues, said. “Visible house numbers could save precious seconds when those unfamiliar crews are responding to a fast-developing scene.”

The Bellingham Fire Department is willing to help if a senior citizen needs assistance installing house numbers on their home. For assistance, please call (508) 966-1112.

Ladies Plan Officers’ Recognition Banquet

Willowbrook Restaurant in Mendon, MA, will be the site of this year’s Officers’ Recognition Banquet, June 19, 2025 beginning at 6 p.m. A buffet dinner of steak tips, baked haddock and chicken parmesan, with salad, mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls, butter, coffee, tea and dessert will be offered. The cost is \$40. per person. Please contact Ann-Marie Lavallee-Kell, (508) 488-8528, or Jay Castonguay, (774) 262-9605, for more information or to sign up. Payment must be made by June 2. If paying by check, please make it payable to St. Blaise with LoSA Banquet on the memo line and place it in an envelope addressed to Ladies of St. Anne, ATTN: Ann-Marie, and drop it in the collection basket at any Mass. Hope to see you there.

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Ready, Set, Glow!

The Best Summer Facials at b.LUXE

BY GINA WOELFEL

The flowers are blooming, the sun is shining, and iced coffee is officially back in our rotation—that's right, **summer is just around the corner!**

While we've mostly thawed out from winter, your skin might still be playing catch-up. After months of dry indoor heat, unpredictable New England weather, and layers of holiday makeup, it's time to refresh your complexion before the summer sun takes center stage.

We've designed our hand-picked lineup of **facials and skincare treatments to exfoliate, hydrate, and bring back your skin's natural glow**—just in time for the sunny season ahead. With beach days, weddings, and outdoor adventures on the calendar, we've rounded up a few summertime favorites to help your

skin look—and feel—its absolute best.

So, let's go!

The Power of 3 Facial

Think of this as the ultimate skincare triple threat. The Power of 3 Facial blends dermaplaning, a brightening peel, and a deeply hydrating mask to sweep away dull, dry skin and reveal the fresh, dewy glow beneath the surface.

Using a sterilized blade, dermaplaning gently sweeps away built-up surface debris, fine vellus hair (aka peach fuzz), and micro—surface wrinkles without harsh chemicals, downtime, or discomfort.

Results: A smoother, more refined complexion that better absorbs your skincare products and creates the perfect canvas for makeup.

Best for: All skin types except active acne or hypersensitive skin.



Oxygenating Facial

Is your skin feeling tight, dry, and thirsty for hydration? This facial delivers a refreshing gulp of oxygen to your complexion, clearing out clogged pores and flooding your skin with moisture. But it's more than just a quick fix—it's our ultimate anti-aging facial treatment. Infusing the skin with pure oxygen and potent actives helps boost circulation, stimulate collagen production, and restore your natural glow.

You'll leave with visibly plumper, smoother, and more radiant skin—and the results don't stop when you walk out the door. This treatment works long after your appointment, improving elasticity, reducing fine lines, and giving your complexion a fresh, youthful bounce you'll love.

Best for: Tired, dull, oily, acne-prone, devitalized, or element-stressed skin needing a deep reset and revitalization.

Pro tip: Schedule early in the season for a complete refresh.

Hydrolifting Facial

This anti-aging, hydrating miracle worker profoundly improves the visible toning of the face, neck, and jawline.

Best for: Anyone wanting to feel tighter, brighter, and red-carpet-ready.

Results: Smooth, vibrant skin—like you got eight hours of sleep (even if you didn't).

The Mind Body Facial

The complete reset—from the inside out. The Mind Body Facial combines the skin-loving power of G.M. Collin skincare with the **calming energy of Reiki and personalized aromatherapy**. It's a facial-meets-spa-meets-en-



ergy-clearing kind of treatment, and it's every bit as dreamy as it sounds.

You'll start with a full consultation and then settle into a session that includes a deep cleanse, exfoliation, steam, a custom mask, and hot stone foot therapy. Oh, and let's not forget the soothing hand, arm, and shoulder massage with aromatherapy that will have you floating in relaxation.

Best for: Stressed-out skin, tired minds, and anyone needing a serious dose of self-care.

Results: Hydrated, glowing skin and a calmer, lighter you.

Big Results, Minimal Time Stand-Alone or Add-On Chemical Peel 30 min

Ready to shed that dull, dry layer? This professional-grade chemical peel is customized to your skin type and gets right down to business. Your esthetician will choose the best acid—glycolic, salicylic, or lactic—to smooth texture, brighten tone, and give your skin that fresh-faced glow.

Think of it as spring cleaning for your skin.

Best for: A quick, no-nonsense glow-up.

Just a warning: They can be addictive from the very first one!

Stand-Alone Oil Dermaplaning 30 min

Short on time? No worries—you can book an oil dermaplaning on its own for the ultimate lunch break glow-up. This quick treatment smooths skin, removes peach fuzz and helps your products absorb more effectively.

Best for: Makeup lovers, SPF devotees, and anyone craving a smoother, more radiant complexion.

Pro Tip for Summer: Don't Skip the SPF

Sun protection is non-negotiable—especially after a glow-boosting facial. Make daily SPF part of your routine to keep your skin looking radiant and healthy all season long. **Great skincare doesn't end at the spa!**

Bonus: You can purchase your G.M. Collin SPF with your HSA!

b.LUXE proudly carries a curated selection of top-tier SPF formulas from G.M. Collin to help you perfect and protect your glow.

One Last Thing

b.LUXE isn't just your go-to for luxury facials—it's a local, woman-owned business that combines top-tier skincare with a warm, welcoming vibe. Whether you're a first-timer or a regular, you'll feel right at home from the moment you walk in.

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Sober and Social: Alcohol-Free Events for a Fun Summer

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Many people are shifting toward alcohol-free living, whether it be because they are in recovery, are pregnant, they want a healthier lifestyle overall, or any number of other reasons. While society may push people to believe that it isn't possible to have fun without drinking, it really couldn't be further from the truth. It's about the people you are with and an attitude of mindfulness and being completely present in the moment. And, in fact, many events are hosted that are considered sober events, cultivating connection, celebrating creativity, and setting the scene for an exciting time — without the “buzz”. Check some of them out below.

The SAFE Coalition of Massachusetts is a nonprofit that hosts events throughout the year. On June 7th at 6:30 p.m., they have SAFE Café After Dark featuring music by the Zajac Brothers — located at 31 Hayward St in Franklin. They also host a weekly Sober Moms club for those moms navigating or exploring an alcohol-free lifestyle. Learn more here: <https://www.safecoalitionma.org/>

The Circle of Friends Coffee House, located in the First Universalist Society Meetinghouse in Franklin, has monthly concerts with some of the best local acts around. Check out their schedule here: <https://www.circlefolk.org/schedule>

Plum Island Sober Sunset Cruises — an Alcoholics Anonymous cruise that sets sail from Newburyport on Tuesdays. Hot dogs, beverages including coffee, and snacks provided. Learn more here: <https://www.captainsfishing.com/cruises-events>

Held weekly on Sundays, a free 11:30 a.m. Stretch and Restore yoga class hosted by Namastay Sober at Serenity in the City, located in Stoneham. Check this and other events out here: <https://namastaysober.org/events/>

The Sober in the Sun Festival is celebrating its 37th year. Held on Labor Day Weekend at the Treasure Valley Scout Reservation in Rutland, you can get a weekend pass and camp out or a day pass to enjoy the live music.

Get more info here: <https://soberinthesun.org/>

Additionally, if you find yourself being invited to a restaurant or brewery and you'd prefer a zero-proof (non-alcohol) but are comfortable being around others who do want to have a libation, many places have alcohol-free options. For example, Castle Island brewery in Norwood offers hop-water and craft sodas. Odd by Worcester in Worcester collaborates with Woo Juice for some amazing mocktails, and all locations of Tavern in the Square have a dedicated selection of non-alcohol options. Most places can make you something delicious without the hard stuff, just ask.

Invited to a house party or BBQ? Stick to iced tea or bring your own mocktail! Here are a few easy and refreshing recipes for the summer) and we guarantee that people will wish they were having what you're having):

'I Carried a Watermelon' Mule: one cup muddled watermelon, ginger beer or ginger ale, mint, lime, and honey. Sweet with a gingery bite.

You're a Peach: Club soda or Sprite, muddled ripe peaches, simple syrup, and a squeeze of lemon. Simple and summery!

NOjito: 4 or 5 mint sprigs, ginger ale, lime juice, and pure maple syrup. Add some blackberries too if you like it fruity.

Espresso Mocktini: For those who love coffee and chocolate, try chilled espresso coffee shaken with some chocolate syrup, seltzer, and ice. Strain into a glass and top with whipped cream and crushed Oreos if you're feeling fancy.

More events and activities are constantly popping up that offer a completely sober and present good time. And lots of activities are alcohol-free by default, such as visiting museums, zoos, and art galleries. There are also great local groups for sober events that you can join on meetup.com, like *Adventures Without Alcohol and Sober Hour*. Whatever your reason for choosing sobriety, we are happy for you and think it's a wonderful choice!

A reminder to friends and family of those who are choosing not to drink alcohol...please, be supportive of their decision.

SAFE

continued from page 15

Commissioner's office recently was able to give SAFE a \$1,500 award as part of the opioid settlement.

Dr. Anne Bergen opened the event, honoring the memories of those who struggled with mental health issues and substance abuse disorder who have passed on and introducing SAFE COO Carrie Asprinio, who told her personal story, addressing the need to reduce stigma surrounding sexual and physical abuse even among those in the recovery.

Jim Derick followed, pointing out that, “We at SAFE know that when an individual or a family is impacted by substance abuse or mental health challenges, the entire family is impacted.” Derick then awarded the Jeffrey N. Roy Excellence in Community Service Award to Bill Fox.

Keynote speaker Jacob Haendel, co-creator of the podcast Blink, and sole survivor of a rare brain disease usually caused by inhaling the fumes from heroin heated on aluminum foil, moved the audience with his account of his experience, which included 18 months of Locked-in Syndrome, which, he said, caused him to shift perspective.

“I'm speaking to you as a guy who is in chronic pain

in a wheelchair, and I'm so much happier than I was back then...,” said Haendel, who now appreciates “little things” he took for granted.

After an impact video focusing on teen Sarah Bakas, Knight-Levine explained how SAFE now reaches 55 communities, with diversion programs in 19 schools and communities, Narcan training sessions in 44 communities and public presentations in 31 communities. She highlighted SAFE's many offerings, among them 1:1 peer support, clinical support, and support groups. Prior to the speaking portion of the program, Knight-Levine told Local Town Pages about a recent grant from Community Health Systems and upcoming plans for that funding. “That means we can close off the space and create a real teen center. We'll run after-school programs and weekend programs, and this will

be peer-to-peer support,” she said.

SAFE publicly thanks its major gala sponsors, listed here:

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For information on the SAFE Coalition, visit <https://www.safecoalitionma.org>.

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Franklin Strawberry Stroll Set for June 13; Will Expand up Main Street with More Activities

The 21st Annual Strawberry Stroll is set for Friday June 13th from 4 to 8 p.m. Rain date is Saturday June 14 from 4 to 8 p.m. This year's stroll is expanding farther up Main Street from Dean Bank toward Dean College and Franklin Public Library.

This year, visitors will enjoy more interactive activities, more music, and more vendors. Stroll along Main Street by Dean College's beautiful, historic campus. Just a few steps more and you will see the handsome Franklin Public Library across the street.

With the expanded format, it's an easy and short stroll to Franklin Town Common where the Farmer's Market will be happening. Food trucks will be there. The market operates on Fridays in the summer from 2 to 6 p.m.

Make sure you stroll downtown to the restaurants and shops on Main Street and the surrounding streets.

It's all that you expect of the Strawberry Stroll and more.



Mark your calendars for Friday, June 13th for the annual Strawberry Stroll in downtown Franklin, now expanded, with even more free music and interactive activities.

Photo used courtesy of Franklin Downtown Partnership

Food, music, 100+ vendors, community groups, activities and, of course, strawberries. Booths will be open from 4 to 8 pm with fun activities for children and giveaways.

"We expanded the stroll so people can experience more of Franklin. It's got all the right things for summer fun: strawberry shortcake, more than 100

vendors, live music, and shops and eateries downtown," said Lisa Piana, Franklin Downtown Partnership Executive Director. "The Strawberry Stroll is a wonderful start to summer."

Here's the rest of the agenda: **Signature strawberry shortcakes** will be served by Dean Bank's staff under tents in front

of the bank. Fresh strawberries donated and cut by Dean College will top hundreds of shortcakes complete with whipped cream. Proceeds from strawberry shortcake sales go to the Downtown Partnership to help fund the event.

Children's Museum of Franklin is planning a variety of interactive exhibits and mobile makerspace activities at the stroll. Co-owner Meg will be running a science experiment once each hour during the stroll.

Dean College will have their famous Bull Dog inflatable and there will be plenty of mascots walking around to greet kids for photos.

Franklin Historical Museum will introduce the "Franklin Strawberry Patch" with a brief ribbon cutting and remarks at 4 p.m. The Strawberry Patch is a permanent perennial planting of strawberries in a raised bed, surrounded by decorations for the day. There will be popcorn and fun giveaways for kids. As always, the museum's fun and accessible exhibits are free.

Plus, the museum, in cooperation with their neighbor, Franklin United Methodist Church (FUMC), will highlight the church's Spring Fashion Fling, with a "fashion show" of recycled and upcycled clothing. The FUMC operates Community Closet — an ambitious clothing reuse program to benefit anyone in need or anyone who just likes a bargain. Enjoy their fashion show and shopping at the church during the Stroll.

Franklin Public Library is excited to offer several fun activities for children.

Touch-A-Truck will be at the Franklin Fire Station on West Central Street with fire safety handouts. Sparky the fire dog will make the rounds with families.

STROLL

continued on page 22

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BWOT Spring Events

The Bellingham Women of Today announced the winners of their annual Peep's Contest held at the library in April. Winning entrees are:

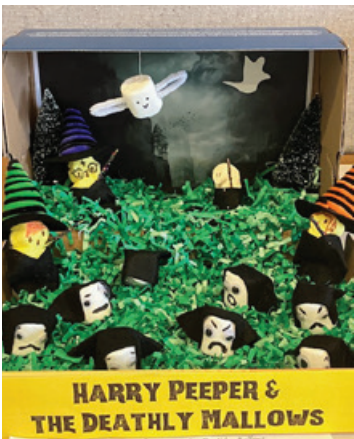
- Group/Family entry was won by the Bellingham Public Library,
- Adult/Individual Entry was won by Theresa Durkin,
- Youth Entry was won by Avery Donovan, and the
- PEEPls Choice was the Peepsville Campground by Theresa Durkin.



Avery Donovan won the Youth category of BWOT's Annual Peep Diorama Contest with her "Peeps Run on Dunkin'."



Theresa Durkin won both the Adult/Individual category for her take on Harry "Peeper" as well as the PEEPls Choice award for her "Peepsville Campground."



A big thank you to the Bellingham Library and to Bernadette Rivard for their support.

The BWOT will be awarding 2 scholarships to graduating high school seniors and will be presenting them at Awards Night on June 4th at the High School.



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STROLL

continued from page 20

Music will be provided by local musicians Dom DeBaggis 4 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. and Heath Nisbett, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dean Avenue. At the other end of Main Street, near Dean College, The Padula Band will perform 4 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.; and State Representative Jeff Roy will play his acoustic guitar from 6 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Feet in Motion School of Dance will perform at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Radio Station MyFM 101.3 will broadcast live from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

“Year after year this event attracts more visitors and vendors. It’s always an exciting day to see so many people enjoying themselves and some strawberry shortcake,” said Roberta Trahan, Vice President of the Franklin Downtown Partnership. “What better way to kick off the summer than joining others and listening to live music on Main Street.”

Strawberry Stroll organizer Franklin Downtown Partnership is grateful for the support from their sponsors:

Platinum: Dean College; G & C Plumbing & Heating

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Silver: Camford Property Group, Inc.; Eagle Stainless Tube & Fabrication, Inc.; Elizabeth’s Bagels; Fenton Financial Group; Notturmo Home Services; Revise Inc.; The Enclave of Franklin.

Bronze: All Energy Solar; Chestnut Dental; Connell Roofing, Inc.; LeafFilter Gutter Protection; Mint Dental; PEEL microspa; Simon’s Furniture

Follow the Franklin Downtown Partnership and keep up with their many activities on:

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

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

The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents are welcome to join the Downtown Partnership for only \$25. The Partnership manages events like the Strawberry Stroll and the Harvest Festival, and initiatives such as beautification, streetscape design, greenspace, alley murals, and sculpture projects. For more information go to www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.

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BVT Competitors Earn 46 SkillsUSA Medals

The 51st SkillsUSA State Leadership & Skills Conference was held on May 2nd at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT). The annual event, hosted by SkillsUSA Massachusetts, welcomed approximately 2,100 district champions and many notable dignitaries. It is an incredible showcase of vocational technical training at its finest.

BVT’s Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick

was honored during the opening ceremonies. The national high school president of SkillsUSA, Kallie Allen of Hopedale, a senior in the Biotechnology program at BVT, presented Dr. Fitzpatrick with the SkillsUSA Massachusetts Honorary Life Member award. It is one of the highest recognitions within the SkillsUSA organization, bestowed upon individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of

SkillsUSA and vocational education. He accepted the award on behalf of the district and in memory of Helga “Sunnie” Epstein, a Holocaust survivor and vocational advocate.

BVT’s student competitors achieved remarkable results, earning 46 medals: 17 Gold, 17 Silver, and 12 Bronze. Maria Clara De Oliveira of Milford, a sophomore in the Electrical program at BVT was elected as a State Officer for the 2025-2026

school year. These achievements are a testament to the student’s hard work and dedication.

The gold medalists earn the right to represent SkillsUSA Massachusetts and compete with champions from all over the country at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, this June. The complete list of medalists is available at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa.

BVT 2025 State Medalists

The following BVT students from Bellingham earned medals at the State Leadership & Skills Conference:

Silver: Audrey Drons, Promotional Bulletin Board; and Kiele Sarnie, Carpentry.

Bronze: Matthew Skarin, Welding.

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BFCCPS Invites Alumni & Families to Pin-Down, BBQ & Tours

Our facility has come a long way since the days of the “caf-a-gym-a-nurse-atorium” and the Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation (BFEF) invites our alumni and families to play your favorite game of Pin Down in our new gymnasium!

This event is being held in conjunction with our Physical Education Coaches and student leaders on Saturday, June 14 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. If you aren’t interested in playing pin-down ,we hope you will still join us for building tours of 500 Financial Park and a BBQ in the courtyard as well.

If you are interested in joining us please RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/BFCCPSPinDown> to let us know which elements of

the day you’d like to participate in.

We hope you will consider joining us for the event!

About the Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation (BFEF)

For over 20 years, the Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation (BFEF) has played a vital role in supporting the growth and development of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (BFCCPS). Originally focused on funding capital improvements, BFEF’s mission has evolved to encompass a broader range of initiatives that enhance the student experience beyond what tuition alone can provide. From facility upgrades and staff-

ing infrastructure to academic enrichment and parent education forums, BFEF is committed to securing the school’s future by diversifying its funding sources.

As the landscape of public education funding faces uncertainty, we turn to our community—current families, alumni, and supporters—to help sustain the exceptional, well-rounded education that defines BFCCPS. Now, more than ever, your involvement can make a meaningful impact.

The Foundation is actively seeking trustees and subcommittee members to help drive its mission forward. Whether you have experience in fundraising, event planning, or expanding academic and extracurricular pro-



grams—or simply a passion for supporting our students and educators—there’s a place for you here. Join us in shaping the next chapter of BFCCPS and ensuring its legacy of excellence continues for generations to come.

If you are interested in learning more please email: Info@bfe-foundation.org

Franklin Porchfest June 7th

Free Event to Be Held
12-6 p.m.; Rain date
June 8th



In a matter of days, Porchfest will be back in Franklin, MA! PorchFest is a free, outdoor music event that will be held on Saturday, June 7th from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, June 8th.

Porchfests have become popular nation-wide. This grassroots music festival is a way for neighbors to connect and celebrate local music in a relaxed, informal setting.

Come spend the day in Franklin’s beautiful Cultural District while listening to live music. Musicians and 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 our local shops and restaurants.

You’ll find band schedules and porch locations on our website, <https://franklin.porchfest.info/>. Our Facebook and Instagram pages will also have useful information and updates.

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Hockomock YMCA Offers Water Safety Tips

(North Attleboro - MA) When the weather starts to get warmer, the pools, lakes, oceans, rivers and other bodies of water start calling! While swimming can be a very enjoyable activity, it is important to remind all parents and caregivers of the importance of water safety. Here's how children can stay safe in and around water:

Tip #1: Make sure children know to always ask permission before going in or near the water.

Teaching your children to be water smart is the first step in water safety – be sure they understand the importance of asking permission before going in or near the water.

Tip #2: Never swim alone without a water watcher.

When children swim, ensure they are actively supervised at all times. Teach your children that they should only swim in locations where a lifeguard is on

duty, or where a responsible adult agrees to watch the children in the water without distractions.

Tip #3: Supervise your children whenever they're in or near water.

Whether it's bath time or taking a dip in a pool or waterfront, make sure your children are within arm's reach at all times.

Tip #4: Don't engage in breath-holding activities.

Children should not hold their breath for a prolonged amount of time while swimming, as this can be dangerous.

Tip #5: Wear a life jacket.

Inexperienced or non-swimmers should always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket while in or around the water.

Tip #6: Don't jump in the water to save a friend who is struggling in deep water.

If a child finds their friend in deep water unexpectedly, their natural reaction may be to

jump in the water to try and save them. Even if a child is a great swimmer, a panicked person will overpower them, pulling the rescuer under water. The Y's Safety Around Water program teaches the "reach, throw, don't go" concept of using a long object to reach for them, and pull them to safety. By using this technique, children can help their friend without compromising their own safety.

Tip # 7: Use four-sided fencing with self-closing, self-latching gates, pool covers, and alarm systems to help prevent children from accessing water unsupervised.

Water safety isn't just during swim time. Know the five layers of protection which include: barriers & alarms, supervision, water competency, life jackets and emergency preparation. You never know which layer will save a life.

Tip #8: Prepare for emergencies by making sure everyone in your home takes water safety, first aid and CPR Courses.

Training in lifesaving skills such as lifeguarding and CPR presents opportunities for us all to take greater responsibility for ourselves and others. The Hockomock Area YMCA offers lifeguard and CPR training pro-

grams with full certification. We also babysitting courses and first aid training. The Hockomock Y is offering lifeguard certification courses. Visit www.hockymca.org for more information.

See all of the Hockomock Y's water safety tips at: www.hockymca.org/water-safety-tips/

As a leading nonprofit committed to youth development, the Y has been a leader in providing swim lessons and water safety for more than 100 years. The Y continues to help youth and adults experience the joy and benefits of swimming, so they can be healthy, confident and secure in the water.

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OBITUARY

Hannelore Amelia Pacheco (Kuhlmann), 95, formerly of Holbrook, known affectionately as Hanna to her friends and family, passed away peacefully of natural causes on May 1, 2025, in Raynham, Massachusetts. Born on December 8, 1929, in Mecklenburg, Germany, she was a beacon of adventurous spirit, generosity, and captivating charm throughout her 95 years.

Hanna's early years in Germany were marked by an appreciation for the great outdoors, a passion that only grew as she did. Her love for ice skating, skiing, and hiking was matched by her talent in each, and became an integral part of her life. Her melodious voice found a home at The Boylston Schul-Verein, Walpole, a German Club, where she joined the singing choir, and she sang with gusto and joy, sharing her culture and zest for life with all those around her.

A master of the garden, Hanna cultivated beauty and life in the soil of her home in Holbrook, creating an oasis that reflected the care and attention she gave to every aspect of her life. Her gardens were a symbol of her nurturing soul, a

trait that extended into her relationships with her loved ones.

She is reunited in eternity with her husband, Manuel Costa Pacheco, her mother Dora Becker, and her sister, Ursula Clark, whom she cherished deeply. Hannelore leaves behind a legacy of love carried on by her children Bruce Pacheco and wife Beth, Mark Pacheco and wife Linda, and Michelle McSherry and husband George, her grandchildren Jonathan, Lauren, Emily, Hannah, Katelyn, Shane and Joshua and her great-grandchildren Evelyn and Kellan. Each family member carries forward a piece of Hanna's extraordinary legacy through their own lives.

Those who knew Hanna will remember her as a woman who embraced life's challenges with a remarkable blend of strength and grace. Her generous nature knew no bounds, and she was always the first to offer help to anyone in need. Her life was a tapestry of experiences that made her one of the most interesting and engaging individuals to be around.

Hanna's passing leaves a void in the hearts of all



who loved her, but her spirit remains a guiding light. Her adventurous tales, her laughter in the chorus, and the beauty of her gardens will continue to inspire and comfort her family and friends. Hannelore Amelia Pacheco's life was one well-lived, full of passion and kindness, and she will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

A private memorial service honoring her life was held at Cartwright funeral followed by her burial at Blue Hills cemetery.

The family would like to thank Old Colony Hospice of West Bridgewater for their compassionate care. Memorial contributions may be sent in lieu of flowers to Old Colony Hospice, 321 Manley St. West Bridgewater, MA 02379.

www.oldcolonyhospice.org

Sports

Feola, Simpson Honored for Football, Academics

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Brady Feola and Blake Simpson, who both excelled on Bellingham High's 2020 unbeaten football team (5-0) that won the Tri Valley League's Small Division championship, qualified for recognition in The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame's Hampshire Honor Society.

The Hampshire Society recognizes graduating seniors who attained a minimum undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.2 (4.0 scale) and have been starters or contributors throughout the 2024 season.

The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF) announced a record number of members for the 2025 Hampshire Honor Society, which comprises college football players from all divisions of the NCAA, NAIA and sprint football who each maintained a cumulative 3.2 GPA or better throughout their college careers.

Feola played middle linebacker, tight end and fullback at the University of New England (Biddeford, Me.) and Simpson competed as a running back and



Brady Feola was chosen twice as a Conference Of New England all-star.

linebacker at Westfield State University. Feola majored in environmental science and Simpson was a business administration major.

"My parents always stressed that academics come first," Feola said. "That priority paved the way for me to play football, and I'm honored to be considered for this award."



Blake Simpson displaying his Defensive Player of the Year plaque.

Simpson also was honored to be selected. "It's humbling to be selected for this recognition," he said. "Football and academics are areas that help sharpen one's discipline and lead to achieving educational goals. I'm pleased with how my four years at Westfield State turned out."

Both players were also selected for impressive gridiron awards. As a junior and senior, Feola was chosen as a Conference of New England all-star, and Simpson was named Westfield State's Defensive Player of the Year, leading the Owls with 52 tackles (10 of them for losses).

A total of 2,529 players from 340 schools qualified for membership in the College Hall of Fame's Hampshire Honor Society, marking the largest class in the program's 19-year history. Since its inception, the initiative has honored 20,943 student-athletes. This year's members represented six divisions: 689 from the FBS, 532 from the FCS, 212 from Division II, 991 from Division III, 58 from the NAIA, and 47 sprint football players.

"In today's era of NIL and the transfer portal, we firmly believe that education remains the key to long-term success," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "These results reaffirm that academics are still top of mind for today's student-athletes. We salute the schools, coaches, and administrators who continue to champion education as a core part of the student-athlete experience. We'll keep doing every-

thing we can to promote those academic ideals and ensure education stays central to the development of every student-athlete."

At Bellingham High, Feola played tight end and linebacker while Simpson competed at running back and linebacker. During the 2020 COVID-shortened season, both captured top-notch awards as BHS seniors. Simpson was chosen the Offensive Player of the Year, and Feola was selected as Defensive Player of the Year.

Dan Haddad, who coached both players in high school, had high praise for them, not only for their football prowess, but also for their efforts in the academic arena.

"We are super proud of both men!" Haddad said. "Blake and Brady were superb football players for us but, as always, they were ones to take it to the next level with their education. What a fantastic honor to be recognized for football and for excelling in the classroom. You will not find two more humble and kind men than Blake and Brady. They deserve this honor because I know they worked hard for it."

BHS Boys' Track Team Dealt Admirably with Injuries

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Coaches and student-athletes so often realize that physical setbacks can play a major role in the outcome of a sporting event or an entire season.

Coach Peter LaCasse and members of his boys' track team were optimistic at the start of the dual-meet season that a winning record and possibly a Tri Valley League Small Division championship were realistic goals for the 2025 campaign.

But that outlook changed early on, when the squad battled opponents with some key players on the disabled list. The often-used adage that "injuries are part of the game" became a reality for the Blackhawks. Never-

theless, they finished their league season with a 2-3 record while Medfield became the conference's Small Division champs.

"We had our eyes on a winning season and if things broke our way, we thought we had a chance to be in the mix for the league title," LaCasse said. "But injuries hit us hard when four consistent scorers were sidelined."

The Blackhawks opened their season by posting a narrow victory over Millis without their four injured players. The four were absent again versus Medfield and BHS bowed. Losses built up against Dover-Sherborn and Medway with some of the sidelined players back in action. The dual-meet season, however, ended on a high note — a tri-

umph over Norton with only one key player sidelined.

Senior captains Mason Jacques and Hunter Knox led the team admirably and competed intensely. Jacques competed in the 100 and 200-meter runs, the 4x100-meter relay and he threw the javelin. Knox threw the javelin and the discus. (An in-depth feature story on Jacques is included in this edition of The Bulletin).

"Mason and Hunter are quality leaders," LaCasse said. "Mason is a great role model who sets a great example for his teammates. Hunter is our best javelin thrower. A quiet leader, he works hard and is highly skilled."

Seniors John Doucette and Jack Taylor and junior Eli

Cowell also competed at a high level during the league season. Doucette runs the 100, 200, the 4x100 relay and competes in the triple jump. Taylor runs the 800, the mile and the 4x400 relay while Cowell runs the 100 and 400-meter hurdles, the 400-meter event and he also participates in the triple jump.

"John works extremely hard and is a solid competitor," said LaCasse who's coached the boys' team for 13 years. "Jack, who's very coachable, also is a hard worker who relies on speed and endurance, and Eli is not only coachable, but also a high-level competitor."

LaCasse, who led the boys' outdoor team to a TVL title in 2014, is optimistic about the future. "The rest of the boys' team

is young, versatile and talented," he said. "And, that should translate to a bright future."

And, as one football coach one said, "The future is now." Indeed it is, because the boys still have an opportunity to finish strong since three post-season events remained on their schedule, all of which were on tap past The Bulletin's deadline. The meets are the divisional relays, the TVL meet and the state meet.

"We could have a positive end to our season," LaCasse noted.

That would be welcomed news for a team that endured injuries throughout its league season.

Sports

Volt Hockey – Fast, Fierce, and Fully Inclusive

By JENNIFER RUSSO

When we think of sports, we usually imagine professional or collegiate athletes who appear strong, with toned muscles - who run fast, throw far, jump high, and do everything they can to prove their physical ability. We are entertained by them competing with others of equal prowess, in part because we enjoy the excitement and perhaps a little because we admire them going over and above what the “average” person would ever consider themselves capable of.

Sports have the power to unite and inspire, but for far too long, people with certain disabilities have been left watching from the sidelines. Thankfully, that IS changing, as more and more adaptive sports become available and technology advances. From wheelchair basketball and tennis to sound-based sports that aid those with vision loss in playing baseball or soccer, modifications have been made to enable people with physical challenges to be able to play.

Though adaptive sports have come a long way, what if there are more severe limitations to physical movement, caused by an injury to the spine or a genetic or congenital factor that causes skeletal and muscle weakness or atrophy? What if someone has little to no ability to move their legs, arms, neck, or all three? Is a

competitive team sport possible? Yes, it is.

While many adaptive sports still require some strength and dexterity, Volt Hockey breaks these barriers. This form of indoor floor hockey uses motorized wheelchairs which are joystick operated, making it accessible for people with very limited mobility. The chairs are affixed with specially designed hockey sticks and can spin 360 degrees. Matches are played on a flat gym floor and players zip around at a fast speed, spinning and making turns to gain control of the ball. It requires a lot of strategy and is incredibly exciting to play.

Volt Hockey originated in Scandinavia back in the 1990s, when the Crowned Prince of Denmark made a donation to the Danish Disabled Sports Foundation. It quickly became popular across Europe and made its way to Canada in 2016. Massachusetts is the first, and so far, the only state that has Volt Hockey teams. In 2021, the first official team was established in Boston, called the Boston Whiplash.

Helena and Helge Liedtke, who had a daughter born with spinal muscular atrophy, quickly realized how far there was to go when it came to true inclusion and decided to take action by founding a nonprofit organization called Space2Thrive in 2015.



STRENGTH

DETERMINATION

RESILIENCE

“Despite the progress I thought we’d made as a society, our daughter was often excluded from community life and meaningful peer interaction. I couldn’t find a space where she could simply belong - especially one where she could play alongside her sister or a friend. That painful gap drove my husband and me to start Space2Thrive, a place where kids and families with and without disabilities can connect, play, and grow together,” says Helena.

When they discovered Volt Hockey in 2022, they saw it as the perfect way to expand that mission. They created a second U.S. team, called the Rolling Warriors, named after a book by activist Judith Heumann. The team practices at the North Attleboro YMCA and takes part in scrimmages with the Boston team as well as tournaments overseas.

“Volt Hockey is so much more

than a sport; it’s empowerment, independence, and belonging. It’s where ability meets opportunity,” Helena shares.

To cover expenses for the program, Space2Thrive relies on funding partners and supporters who want to help expand their impact, creating more equitable opportunities. They have their annual 5K fundraiser coming up on Saturday, June 14th at West Hill Dam in Uxbridge and hope that people will be inspired to become a part of their inclusion mission. People can choose to run, jog, walk, or wheel down the path, and there will also be a raffle and silent auction for some really great items, including gift cards to local businesses, signed sports memorabilia, and a vacation home stay.

Beyond the goals made, Volt Hockey also plays a powerful role in the push for true inclusion. It enables people to compete and be recognized, celebrating tal-

ent and drive, and inspires confidence. The Rolling Warriors are working on growing their team and reaching more youth and adults who could benefit from the transformative program. Long term, Helena hopes to have teams where everyone can play together, regardless of ability.

“Imagine a generation of children growing up alongside one another, learning to see each other’s strengths instead of their limitations. That’s the world I want to help build. That’s the power of Volt Hockey—and the mission at the heart of Space2Thrive,” she says.

To learn more about Space2Thrive and their Volt Hockey program, or to sign up for their upcoming 5K Fund-raiser, visit www.space2thrive.org.

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Sports

3-Sport, 3-Time Captain Jacques Handled Adversity in a Classy Way

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Mason Jacques could write a book or conduct a class on how to overcome adversity.

The 18-year-old Bellingham High senior, who'll play football for the University of New Hampshire, has gracefully dealt with a plethora of setbacks.

Jacques played football, basketball and ran track during his Blackhawk career but injuries cost him 2½ years of football because of two fractured collarbones, a dislocated shoulder and a torn labrum. When he was a sophomore, in his only year of basketball, a high ankle sprain sidelined him for half of the season.

In spite of all the physical trials and all the physical therapy, the Bellingham native never considered quitting. Because of his grit and determination, the 5-foot-11, 175-pound Jacques became a two-time captain in football and a captain in track. And, he also achieved all-star status in the Tri Valley League—in football and track. His one year of basketball, as a guard/forward, ended with his winning the team's Defensive Player of the Year Award.

"What helped get me through all the injuries was a combination of faith, family and mental toughness," Jacques emphasized. "When I fractured my collarbone the second time, it was my junior season, an important time for recruiting. I was furious. I asked 'why me?' and felt lots of sadness.

"Then, when I suffered the two shoulder injuries and missed our first four football games last fall, I was determined. There was a fire inside me. All I wanted was a chance. My parents (Holly and Jonathan) were supportive and encouraging and my mental toughness kicked in. My parents' support and my mental approach helped, but it was my faith that that played a major role, enabling me to fully regain my health."

Jacques attended church as a youngster, and his faith got stronger in his teenage years. "I was able to understand the Bible better and learned the importance of prayer," he noted. "I realized



Mason Jacques missed 2½ years of football because of two fractured collarbones, a dislocated shoulder and a torn labrum.

when I was recovering from my injuries that God gives tough situations to people who can handle them. I knew there was a reason for my setbacks."

During the football season last fall, coach Dan Haddad, who usually offered a pre-game prayer, handed that assignment to Jacques.

"Mason was a tremendous leader, even though he was dealt a horrible hand for 2½ years," Haddad said. "Breaking his collarbone twice, most young men would fold, but because of Mason's strong faith and mental toughness, he was able to become such a tremendous influence in the locker room and on the field. He was our spiritual leader, giving our pregame prayer—not written or rehearsed, just straight from his heart. It was truly inspirational. When he was able to return, he had the best seven-game stats at receiver that I have ever seen. A true warrior."

His statistics included: 27 receptions for 681 yards; a per-catch average of 25.2 yards; and 9 touchdowns. Because of those numbers, Jacques earned the Offensive Back/Receiver of the Year Award at the team's annual banquet.

Jacques' favorite sport is football, and he plans to compete for playing time at UNH where former Blackhawks QB Rick Santos is head coach. "I'm very excited



Mason Jacques, middle, is thrilled being a part of the record-breaking 4x100 relay team. He's a top-notch sprinter in the 100 and 200-meter runs.

to play football at the Division 1 level," he said."

Jacques, who was an honor student at BHS, finished with a GPA of 3.6. He plans on majoring in liberal arts.

Since the track season was his final time wearing BHS colors, he was determined to finish strong. He runs the 100, 200, the 4x100-meter relay and throws the javelin. His best efforts in those events are—11.34 seconds for the 100; 23.9 seconds for the 200; and 135 feet-3 inches for the javelin. Last year, Jacques ran a leg on the 4x100 relay team that holds the school record (44.92 seconds). Being a part of the record-breaking 4x100 team is his top thrill in track.

"My goals at the start of track season were to break the school record in the 100-meter run, for both the boys' and girls' teams to win the TVL title, and for our 4x100 relay team to surpass our record time," Jacques offered.

So far, one of his objectives has materialized, and two others could be achieved in three post-season meets scheduled after The Bulletin's deadline.

"Mason displays great character as our captain," said track coach Peter Lacasse. "He's intense, sets goals and strives to

achieve them. He also is relentless in his preparation. He's got strong beliefs, is vocal about them and never compromises on them."

Jacques admired outstanding coaches and teammates.

"My coaches were all motivating and made athletics a family affair," Jacques said. "My teammates were all terrific, and they all put the track, basketball and football teams first."

The three-time captain loved the role's responsibility, leading by example and by being communicative and supportive. "Being a captain helped me to be a better person and an effective leader," he said.

Jacques emphasized he learned valuable life lessons from sports.

"I learned early on how to handle adversity and how to be resilient," he said. "I also learned to be a quality teammate and leader, and how to accept accountability and responsibility."

Labeling his final season (track) at BHS as "bittersweet," Jacques said, "I'll miss my teammates, classmates and teachers, but there's a new chapter ahead at UNH," he said.

Jacques was a special student-athlete at BHS. He had great athletic attributes, like speed, strength, agility, skills, mental toughness and a high compete level, and a faith he was willing to share. He personifies dedication, desire and devotion to whatever task he faces.

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Bellingham Public Library News & Events for June

For updates about library programs and services, please see the library website, www.bellinghamlibrary.org.

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

The library will be closed Thursday, June 19th for the Nineteenth Holiday.

Children's Programs

Summer Reading 2025 – Level Up at Your Library

Track how much you read either by the number of minutes or number of books and win prizes as you make your way through the game board-styled reading tracker! Summer Reading runs June 23rd until August 16th.

STEAM Saturday – Saturday, June 7th, 11 a.m. to noon

Join us on the first Saturday of the month for some family STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) activities! For families - No registration needed!

Science Heroes: Adventures of the Missing Color – Monday, June 23rd, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Celebrate science with hands-on experiments and fun, interactive stories! For families. *This program is supported by the Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, Friends of the Bellingham Library, and a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.*

Kids Coding Club – Tuesday, June 24th, 4-5 p.m.

A beginner coding club for kids! Please register.

The Write Stuff – Tuesday, June 24th from 6-7 p.m.

A creative writing program where the group will publish a book together at the end!

For grades 3-6 - Please register.

ter.

Summer Story Time with Junior Librarians – Wednesday, June 25th from 10:15-11 a.m.

Summer story and craft with our Junior Librarians (summer volunteers in grades 3-6). For ages 2-5 (siblings welcome)

Green Thumb Club – Wednesday, June 25th from 1-2 p.m.

A weekly program where families can plant different types of seeds during each session and watch them grow throughout the summer! Please register.

Krafty Kids – Thursday, June 26th from 1-2 p.m.

A weekly craft program for families! Please register for each week.

Fri-Ya Open Play – Friday, June 27th from 10:15-11 a.m.

Open-ended art and activities for ages 0-5. No registration needed.

Ongoing Children's Programs

The Baby Bunch – Mondays at 9 a.m., for infants 0-18 months and their caregivers.

Ring a Ding – Mondays & Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. – no class 6/23

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

Sensory Story Time – Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m.

Join us for a story, sensory activities, and open play! For children ages 2-5 of all abilities (younger siblings always welcome). Please register for each session.

Lego Builders – June 2nd, 16th and 30th from 4:30-5:30 p.m.

An open hour to build with Legos - use a design or your imagination! For Grades K to 3 – Creations will be displayed for two weeks.

Alphabet Stories – Wednesdays & Fridays through June 13th from 10:15 to 11 a.m. Congratulations to all graduates of Alphabits 2024-2025! We have finished all 26 letters - now let's put them all together, read some stories about the alphabet, and make some crafts that incorporate all the letters in your name. No registration needed - For ages 2-5.

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

Adult Programs

Summer Reading for Adults – Bellingham Library Bingo!

Adults (ages 18+) – Pick up a Bingo Card at the Library in late June and read books over the summer that meet the bingo card description and be entered to win prizes!

Yoga for the Seasons

Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. No class on June 10th. Check the library calendar for details.

Book Discussion Group – Generally meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 pm. Attend in person or on Zoom. Contact Cecily Christensen, cchristen@cwmar.org, for more information.

- June 2: *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding
- July 7: *The Little Liar* by Mitch Albom
- August 4: *The Collected*

Regrets of Clover by Mikki Brammer

A Novel Idea: A New Book Club for Adults – Tuesday, June 3rd from 6:30-8 p.m.

A Novel Idea is a new book club designed for adults who love to read. Light refreshments. This month, we are discussing *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. If interested, please contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmar.org.

English Conversation Groups

Practice speaking English with other adult English language learners in a relaxed, comfortable place, and meet new friends. Conversations will be facilitated by a library staff member or volunteer. Drop in classes offered weekly on the following dates/times:

Monday, June 2nd from 1-1:45 p.m.

Tuesday, June 10th from 6-6:45 p.m.

Wednesday, June 18th from 11-11:45 a.m.

Thursday, June 26th from 5-5:45 p.m.

Needlecraft Night – Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m.

Do you enjoy knitting, crocheting, or any of the other fiber arts? Come and join us on Wednesdays. All skill levels are welcome. Please bring your own materials.

Writing Group for Adults – Tuesday, June 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Writers, readers, listeners – come join us! Local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman welcome you to hear what local writers are working on and share what you are working on. Works of fiction or non-fiction are welcome. Reading limit is 9 minutes per reader, with a brief opportunity

for positive, personal comments only. Contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at marjorie@marjorie-turner.com.

Library Board of Trustees Meeting – Thursday, June 12th at 7 p.m. in the Conference Room at the library.

Friends of the Library Meeting – Tuesday, June 10th at 7 p.m. Email library@bellinghamlibrary.org for Zoom link.

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

Bring your laptop or use one of our Chromebooks on the fourth Monday of the month to work on your family history in the company of other family historians! For the summer this program will be run by new library staff member and Framingham State University graduate and history major, Molly Garten. Free library resources available. Registration preferred.

Virtual Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellingham>. Recordings of these talks are also available on the library website in the days following the event.

Wednesday, June 4th from 2-3 p.m. – Virtual Talk with Smithsonian Scientists

Tuesday, June 10th from 2-3 p.m. – Online Talk with Bestselling Author Lisa Jewell

Tuesday, June 24th from 4-5 p.m. – Living the Otter Life with Katherine Applegate

New Online Resource!

The library is now subscribing to **Fiero Code**, a learn-to-code platform that uses gamification to teach coding skills to people of all ages. Patrons with a Bellingham Library card can access Fiero Code at: <https://app.fiero-code.com/sign-in?club=1450>. Learn about our Kids Coding Club starting on June 24th!

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Cruise Nights Every Monday at VFW Post 7272

The warm weather is back, and so are Cruise Nights at the VFW Post 7272, located at 940 S. Main Street in Bellingham. Share your love and the detail you've put into your car or truck with others!

Coffee with Veterans also takes place at the post on the last Saturday of each month, from 9 a.m.- 11 a.m. Come on down and enjoy coffee and donuts with your local veterans!

For more information about the post or helping a local veteran in need, email vfw7272@gmail.com.

Norfolk County Sheriff's Office Issues Scam Warning

False Jury Duty Swindle Costs Bourne Man \$68.7K

Dedham, MA – Sheriff Patrick McDermott and the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office are once again warning residents to be on alert for fraudulent calls from people who pretend to be members of law enforcement, after a man from Bourne said he was duped out of \$68,700 in a jury duty scam.

The victim called the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office on Friday, May 2, to report the fraud. The victim said he had received numerous calls starting on April 28th from two men, who claimed to work for the sheriff's office. They claimed he faced a "contempt of court order" for "failure to appear" for jury duty and would be arrested if he did not pay.

"Please, just hang up on people who make these claims," said Sheriff McDermott. "No one from our office, or any other law enforcement agency, makes these calls. This is a scam."

The victim has since filed a report with the Bourne Police Department.

The scammers told the victim he would be arrested if he did not pay the restitution of \$68,700. He said they were very intimidating. The man says he transferred the funds at a local convenience store.

The man shared documents sent to him from the imposters which included bogus "mobile

escort orders" asking for a "verbal sobriety statement" from "US District Court, Inc." with an address that comes back to a residential neighborhood in Washington, D.C., not a federal office. One document said court and processing fees would be waived if the man paid a bail amount of \$30,000. Another document referenced a former US Treasurer, with a misspelling of the word Treasurer.

"Don't act hastily if you receive a call like this. Do not send someone money while under duress," said Sheriff McDermott. "Call your local police department or the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office if the scammers are acting like they work for us."

More information on juror scams and other fraud, and ways to report them are below.

Juror Scams:

Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/news/call-of-jury-duty-scam>

US District Court: <https://www.uscourts.gov/court-programs/jury-service/juror-scams>

FTC: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2024/09/did-you-get-call-or-email-saying-you-missed-jury-duty-and-need-pay-its-scam>

Reporting Fraud:

FTC: <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/>

FTC FAQs: <https://report-fraud.ftc.gov/faq>

BVT students use skills to 'FUSE' connections

With a little bit of help from their friends, the Friends of Upton Seniors (FUSE) are making great strides in their mission. The newly established non-profit organization supports social events, services, and programs that enhance the quality of life for its senior residents. They recently partnered with Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), where skilled students used their vocational training to assist FUSE with creating a logo and a tri-fold brochure.

Design & Media Production seniors Noah Marvelle of Blackstone and Faith Ellis of Northbridge worked closely with FUSE President Steven Rakitin to create promotional items that, by design, will help raise awareness about the group, what it does, and how to support them through meetings, fundraising activities, and donations.

In addition to Noah and Faith, students Ethan Novelli, Joe Bache, and Kaydence McCabe helped capture and edit footage of the Senior Soiree held at the community center. The students agreed, "Gaining professional experience and expanding our portfolios were a bonus. We truly had a fun time connecting with the seniors."

Friends of Upton Seniors (FUSE)

The FUSE group gathers at the Upton Community Center, 9 Milford Street (Rte. 140). It is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and offers enlarged spaces for the town's library and senior center. The group holds a monthly meeting on the first Monday of each month. If you share in this mission and want to make a difference, please join them at their next meeting or activity. Also,

tax-deductible donations can be made to Friends of Upton Seniors, Inc., and mailed to PO Box 13 Upton, MA 01568. They would love to have your support.

BVT Community Projects

Whether it's creating a brochure, or a sign for a business, our students take great pride in completing community projects. All projects are reviewed and selected based on relevance to the curriculum, available school resources, and the district calendar. Projects are accepted and completed between **September 1st and April 30th** of each school year. If you submit a project request from May 1st through August 31st, it will be assigned and processed at the beginning of the next school year. For more information, please visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/communityprojects1.

Franklin Rod & Gun Fishing Derby June 7th

Local Family Event on Free Fishing Day, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Franklin Rod & Gun Club will hold its annual Fishing Derby on Saturday, June 7th, from 7 a.m.- 2 p.m. at its location on Uncas Pond, 53 Florence St., Franklin. Families from Franklin and surrounding areas are invited to take part for just \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under, with no fishing license needed on

this day. The event will include trophies for kids 16 and under and cash prizes for adults com-

ing in 1st, 2nd or 3rd, as well as raffles, an all-you-can-eat breakfast for \$5 and free homemade pizza for lunch. Participants may take their own equipment, or the club offers free bait, gear, rod and reel while supplies last.

Save the Date!

5th Annual RSNP Color Run/Walk for Recovery October 5th

5th Annual RSNP Color Run/Walk for Recovery—a vibrant, family-friendly event that honors those in recovery and brings our community together in celebration and support.

This year's event will take place on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Town Park, Milford (corner of Congress Street and Spruce Street).

To participate in the Run/Walk, visit <https://forms.gle/k4m15JGD82CjTFo7>

For vendors, visit <https://forms.gle/ZSATwbH3EK9NkFj36>

For information on sponsorship, visit <https://forms.gle/Y6NUQ7ccDF3CPDzJ7>

All funds raised will directly support local initiatives and assist those in need through Chris' Corner and other community efforts.

For questions, contact Lisa Trusas at (508) 922-9032 or ltrasus@chriscornermilford.com.

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Library Resources of the Month – Museum Passes

The Bellingham Public Library offers passes that provide discounted or free admission to a number of area museums and attractions! These passes are funded by the generosity of the Friends of the Bellingham Library and the following local businesses: Bellingham Business Association, Berkshire Hathaway Page Realty, Charles River Bank, Jennifer DeLuca – Realtor, NCK Bellingham, Mass Renewables, Middlesex Savings Bank, and Owen Financial Services.

Passes can be reserved in advance only by Bellingham residents and members of the Friends of the

Library with a valid library card. Some passes may be limited to Bellingham residents only. Reservations may be made online, in person or by phone by Bellingham residents, if overdue charges on the library card are under \$10. Residents of other towns who are members of the Friends of the Library must call or visit in person to reserve passes. Non-residents who are not members of the Friends of the Bellingham Library may borrow passes on the day they wish to visit, provided the desired pass is available.

Currently the library has discount passes to the following area attractions:

Outdoor Activities

- Massachusetts State Parks Pass – Go to [Mass.gov/DCR](https://www.mass.gov/) for a full listing of locations.

- New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, Boylston, MA
- Silver Lake and Arcand Park – Bellingham residents and Friends of the Library members only.
- Southwick’s Zoo, Mendon, MA - Discounted tickets are available for purchase at the library for \$25 each, cash only, limit 4 per person, for Bellingham residents and Friends of the Library members only. We suggest you call the library to check our supply of tickets before stopping in.
- Zoo New England – Valid for Franklin Park Zoo in Boston or Stone Zoo in Stoneham, MA

Indoor Activities

- EcoTarium Science Museum, Worcester, MA
- Museum of Science, Boston, MA
- New England Aquarium, Boston, MA
- USS Constitution Museum, Charlestown, MA
- Hall of Fame at Patriot Place, Foxborough, MA
- Massachusetts State Police Museum & Learning Center, Whitinsville, MA

For more information and to reserve a pass, go to the library’s website at www.bellinghamlibrary.org and click on the link for Museum & Attraction Passes.

Franklin PMC Kids Ride June 8, 2025

Get ready to ride for a cause! On Sunday, June 8, 2025, the Franklin PMC Kids Ride returns as one of 25 youth cycling events taking place across New England this year. These rides are part of the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC) Kids Rides program, which inspires children to get involved in philanthropy by riding their bikes and raising money for cancer research and treatment at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Since its start, the program has raised over \$12 million to support the fight against cancer.

Now in its 19th year, the Franklin event offers young cyclists (ages 3 to 14) a meaningful and fun way to get involved. Riders can choose from 3, 6, or 10-mile routes. For younger children not quite ready for a full course, there’s a “Tikes and Trikes” area that offers a safe, enclosed space to ride. The day is filled with fun activities, interactive stations, and a festive post-

ride celebration with games, food, music, and more. In 2024, Franklin saw 126 kids take part, raising over \$42,000. This year, organizers are aiming to hit \$50,000 — with every single rider-raised dollar going directly to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The event takes place at Jefferson Elementary School (628 Washington Street) from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on June 8, 2025. Registration is open to families from any town. There is a \$20 sign-up fee and a minimum fundraising goal of \$40 per rider.

The PMC Kids Rides program is made possible by Yawkey Foundations, with support from Yasso, 105.7 WROR, and Landry’s Bicycles. The PMC is co-presented by the Red Sox® Foundation and M&T Bank.

To register, donate, or learn more, visit kids.pmc.org/franklin or reach out to Lisa Marchioni at lisabxyz@verizon.net.



Bellingham Senior Center Highlighted Events June 2025

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

Kalifornia Karl: Well-known musician/entertainer from West Greenwich, RI, Friday, June 6, at 11:30 a.m. Please call ahead to reserve your seat.

Walking at the West Hill Dam: Lisa Loo at the West Hill Dam at 518 East Hartford Ave. in Uxbridge on Thursday, June 12 at 8:30 a.m. for a roughly 2-mile walk. Bring a picnic breakfast.

Identity Theft: Robin Putnam from The Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation will provide you with essential information to stay steps ahead of fraudsters. Registration is required. Call (508) 966-0398. Friday, June 13th at 1 p.m.

50+ Job Seekers: Every month, Career Coach George

Armstrong is at the Center and ready to help you find a great new job. On Mondays — June 9 and 23 — from 2:15-3:45 p.m. More info. at www.50plusjobseekers.org. Please call the Center to reserve your seat.

Gen Silent Film and Discussion: The 2011 documentary *Gen Silent* explores the experiences of LGBT seniors in Boston who faced the difficult decision of hiding their identities to navigate healthcare and long-term care systems. Tuesday, June 17, at 3 p.m. Please sign up!

Dennis the Magician: Dennis has been performing magic with his wife Janet for more than 50 years. Friday, July 18 at 1 p.m., free, made possible by support from Bellingham Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Balance Therapy: FYZICAL is an out-patient physical therapy clinic that specializes in Balance Therapy, Vestibular Rehab, and Falls Prevention. Please call ahead to reserve your spot. Tuesday, June 17, at 11:30 a.m.

Spiritual Book Club: The Club meets via Zoom on Mondays at 9 a.m.

Discussion will be about The Power of Meow by David Michie. Please call host Josie Dutil at (508) 657-2705 to join or for more information.

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

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

June Birthday Party: Thursday, June 26th. Dinner is chicken parmesan by Chef du Jour.

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Calendar

June 2

Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding

June 3

Bellingham Town Election, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m., Bellingham High School gymnasium, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham

A Novel Idea: A New Book Club for Adults –6:30-8 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmar.org.

June 4

Virtual Author Talks: Virtual Talk with Smithsonian Scientists, 2 p.m., through Bellingham Public Library – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellingham> .

June 6

Bellingham High School graduation

June 7

Franklin Rod & Gun Club Fishing Derby, 7 a.m.- 2 p.m., 53 Florence St., Uncas Pond, Franklin, \$10 adults, \$5 children 12 and under, \$5 all-you-can-eat breakfast, free homemade pizza for lunch, trophies, raffles, no license needed this day

Franklin Porchfest, 12-6 p.m., various locations around Franklin, free musical performances, schedule at <https://franklin.porchfest.info/>

SAFE Café after Dark, 6:30 p.m., SAFE, 31 Hayward St., Franklin, featuring music by the Zajac Brothers, visit <https://www.safecoalitionma.org/>

June 10

Virtual Author Talks: Online Talk with Bestselling Author Lisa Jewell, 2 p.m. – through Bellingham Public Library – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellingham>.

Writing Group for Adults: 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, facilitated by local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman. Works of fiction or non-fiction welcome. Contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at marjorie@marjorieturner.com.

June 13

Franklin Strawberry Stroll, 4-8 p.m., Main Street from Dean Bank toward Dean College and Franklin Public Library, includes strawberry shortcake at Dean Bank, Dean College inflatable, interactive activities by Children’s Museum of Franklin, music, and vendors, presented by Franklin Downtown Partnership, www.franklindowntownpartnership.org

June 14

Pin Down game for BFCCPS Alumni and Parents, 11 a.m.- 2 p.m., BFCCPS, 500 Financial Park, Franklin, presented by Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation (BFEF), visit <https://tinyurl.com/BFCCPSPinDown>

Norfolk Fireworks, 6-10 p.m., Freeman Kennedy School, 70 Boardman St., Norfolk, live music, food trucks and fireworks, sponsored by Norfolk Recreation

June 19

Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Recognition Banquet, 6 p.m., Willowbrook Restaurant, Mendon, MA, \$40 per person by June 2, drop check payable to St. Blaise with LoSA Banquet on the memo line and place it in an

envelope addressed to Ladies of St. Anne in collection at any Mass before then. For info. contact Ann-Marie Lavallee-Kell, (508) 488-8528, or Jay Castonguay (774) 262-9605

June 21

Celebrate with Pride Franklin, 12-4 p.m., Franklin Town Common

June 24

Virtual Author Talks: Living the Otter Life with Katherine Applegate, 4 p.m. – through Bellingham Public Library – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellingham>.

June 28

Bellingham Pride Fest, Bellingham Town Common, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Millis Fireworks, 9:30 p.m., Millis Town Park, 900 Main St., Millis, sponsored by Millis Recreation

June 30

Bellingham Genealogy Club, 6-7:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham.

July 2-6

Franklin 4th of July celebration, carnival, music each day, Blues Festival and Fireworks July 5th. Schedule at www.franklin4th.com .

July 7

Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *The Little Liar* by Mitch Albom

Champlain College Offering Financial Literacy Course Free to 20 MA Educators

Middle and high school educators in Massachusetts interested in honing their personal finance teaching skills, or newcomers to the field, can attend a free, online, asynchronous graduate course offered by the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College.

John Pelletier, director of the Champlain Center, notes that the three-credit course was recognized by the White House, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the FDIC, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and President Obama’s Advisory Council on Financial Capability. The course also has been the subject of two studies showing the impact of the instruction (see most recent study Prepped for Success).

Scholarships are available for middle and high school educators from Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island.

This course is a continuation of the Champlain College’s nationally recognized financial literacy educator training program that has trained more than 400 educators in New England and New York State since 2011.

The 20 scholarships are generously sponsored by the Rauch Foundation, which supports and promotes financial preparedness of rising generations of students by supporting schools in the delivery of financial literacy programs.

The course runs from June 30 through August 22. Deadline

for applying is June 20. Scholarships will be awarded on a rolling basis. To apply, visit <https://financialliteracy.champlain.edu/programming/current-graduate-offering/> .


For registration questions contact: cfl@champlain.edu.

Pelletier says Massachusetts earned an F in Champlain’s 2023 *National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools™*. He says personal finance is not included in graduation requirements and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses. The state does not specify that specific courses be taken in high school in order to graduate; this is done at the district level.

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