

Ashland

localtownpages

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

August 1, 2025

Summer Days In Ashland

By THERESA KNAPP

Maya, 6, and Kyla, 9, of Ashland are participating in this year's Summer Reading Club at the Ashland Public Library.

The Corner Spot, at the corner of Main and Pleasant Streets, is a cool spot to spend time this summer. The park includes swings, a teeter totter, a big chair, picnic area, little library, covered areas, and much more. Even on a 90-degree day in July there was shade and a gentle breeze.

The Ashland Reservoir off scenic Spring Street is a great enjoy a bit of summer.



SUMMER

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ZBA Hearing on Aug. 12 for 40B complex proposed at 55 West Union Street

'Affordable' rates \$2,226 to \$2,946 in 116-unit project

By THERESA KNAPP

The Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Aug. 12 for a 116-unit affordable housing project proposed for 55 West Union Street (Route 135) at the intersection of Memorial Drive.

All documents related to the ZBA filing can be found at www.ashlandmass.com/1273/55-West-Union-Street---40B-Comprehensive.

According to the application form, the owner is "55 West Union LLC" located at 60 Pleasant St., Ashland. It lists the applicant, manager, and owner

as John C. Dudley of United Home Experts at the same address. In the application packet, Dudley describes himself as a real estate developer, community leader, and construction expert.

Dudley's company purchased the 4.9-acre parcel in October 2023 for \$1.1 million.

According to the project narrative, "The applicant proposes to build one four-story elevator building offering a total of 116 rental units, including 87

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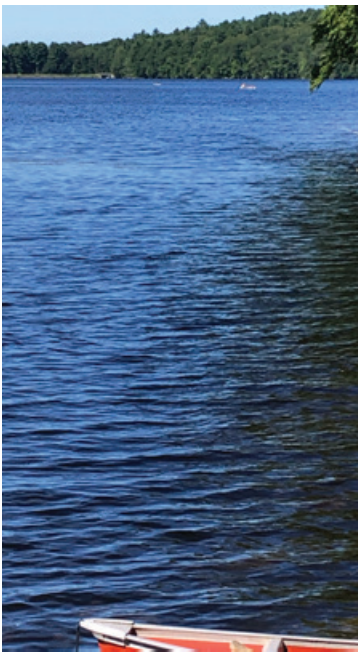
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SUMMER

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✂ Library Funding Was Cut ✂

As of July 1, 2025, statewide digital offerings were significantly reduced. 60% of online database usage comes from Massachusetts schools alone.

What We Lost:

- Boston Globe Article Archive
- Britannica Modern
- Gale Academic OneFile Select
- Gale General OneFile
- Gale Health and Wellness
- Gale in Context: Biography
- Gale in Context: Elementary
- Gale in Context: Environmental Studies
- Gale in Context: Global Issues
- Gale in Context: Middle School
- Gale in Context: Science
- Gale in Context: US History
- Gale in Context: World History
- Gale Interactive Science
- Gale LegalForms
- Gale Literature Resource Center
- HeritageQuest Online
- Peterson's Career Prep
- Peterson's Test Prep
- Science Database (ProQuest)
- Transparent Language Online

What You Can Do:

IMLS' entire program of service costs just 87 cents per person. Support library funding in these ways:

- Sign the petition on [SaveIMLS.org](https://www.saveimls.org)
- Write to Senator Ed Markey, who is pushing back against Trump's latest executive orders, about how the library is important to you: [markey.senate.gov](https://www.markey.senate.gov)
- Contact your state and federal elected officials: malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator congress.gov/members/find-your-member

What You Can Do:

- Funding to purchase eBooks and Audiobooks has been cut.
- Wait times on Libby will increase, and the available selection will decrease.
- Federal grants to local libraries for community needs such as STEAM programming, local history preservation, early literacy interventions, etc., have been ELIMINATED.



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Downtown After Dark

Mark your calendars!

A new event is coming! It will feature local businesses, live music, kids' activities and more. Get ready for the best summer party ever! This event will happen Friday, Aug. 22, from 5-9PM, in downtown Ashland at The Corner Spot, 6 Cherry St.



Dragonfly Street Faire

Come celebrate with the rest of the town at Ashland's 2nd annual Dragonfly Street Faire. The event will be held Saturday, Sept. 27, from 1-6PM in downtown Ashland. Come together to enjoy local vendors, food and drink as well as live music.



Movie Night

Join the community for a back-to-school movie night. The event will be held Friday Sept. 5, from 5:30-9PM. The chosen movie is *Paddington in Peru*. It will take place at The Corner Spot, 6 Cherry St., in partnership with the Ashland Business Association.



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COMPLEX

continued from page 1

units at market and 29 units income-restricted in perpetuity to households earning at or below 80% of area median income.” The unit mixes, sizes, and rents include:

72 one-bedroom units (800 square feet): 54 at market value {MV} (\$2,300), 18 at 80% of AMI [Area Median Income] (\$2,226); 32 two-bedroom units (1,050 sf): 24 at MV (\$2,800), 8 at 80% AMI (\$2,603); and 12 three-bedroom units (1,380 sf): 9 at MV (\$3,300), 3 at 80% AMI (\$2,946).



Architectural plan for a 116-unit affordable housing complex proposed for 55 West Union Street. Image source: www.ashlandmass.gov

The entrance/exit to the complex would be off Memorial Drive. The site has access to public water, sewer, and natural gas. In its application to Mass Housing (whose approval is necessary for 40B eligibility), the applicant stated, “The immediate surroundings also include some single-family homes, local schools, and public open spaces. Notable nearby landmarks include Ashland Middle School, the Ashland Upper Charles Trail, and Ashland State Park. A planned expansion for the MetroWest YMCA is intended to be located across the street from the Site, on Memorial Drive next

to the Dunkin Donuts. Overall, the Site is able to successfully integrate into existing development patterns and is well positioned to support the proposed multifamily residential use.” According to the Mass Housing application, construction costs are expected to be over \$33 million. The ZBA hearing will take place on Aug. 12 at or around 7 p.m. For the exact time (not available at press time), and project documents, visit www.ashland-mass.com/316/Zoning-Board-of-Appeals.

Pups is Back!

This event has been rescheduled after it was rained out earlier this summer. It's finally time to bring your furry friend to The Corner Spot for a day of fun. Shop from local businesses and chat with local organizations. Enjoy drinks and treats and the company of Ashland's animal lovers. The event is Saturday, Aug. 16, from 4-7PM, at The Corner Spot, 6 Cherry St.



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OBITUARY

Jon A. Bomengen, of Manahawkin, NJ, passed away on Wednesday, July 2, 2025. The beloved husband of Barbara, he leaves behind daughters Heather, Kirsten, and Danielle and son Kevin.

Jon was blessed with six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his sister Mary-Jane in 2019.

His three sisters Martha, Rachel, and Claudia grieve their loss along with many nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and great-grandnieces and nephews.

A 1962 graduate of Ashland High School, Jon went on to attend Lowell Technological Institute until called to serve during the Vietnam War, where he proudly served aboard the USS William V. Pratt. Subsequently, Jon continued his education at NJIT and Texas A & M, earning an



MEng as he proceeded to a 34-year career at Picatinny Arsenal.

Prior to retiring, he joined the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, rising to Flotilla Commander and then Division Commander during his 20 years' service.

Jon will be greatly missed by many friends and neighbors of his community, remembered for being the kindest man with the biggest smile and heart, always willing to help out a friend.

Middle School Large Gym Floor Renovation

Ashland schools are excited to announce the refurbishing of the floor in the large gym at Ashland Middle School. The process is currently ongoing and is expected to be wrapped up in the next few weeks.

The new look will feature a lighter colored floor, royal blue painted area in the post area and red lines for volleyball.

Follow the Ashland Athletics Instagram account to follow the progress of the project.



Electronic Collection

The electronics recycling drop-off at the DPW will run on the following schedule for 2025

Saturday, 8/2/2025, 9 am – 12 noon

Saturday, 10/4/2025, 9 am – 12 noon

The following fees will be assessed at electronics drop-off:

- TVs & computer monitors (up to 20" screen, measured diagonally): \$10.00 each
- DVD/CD players; printers; CPUs; receivers; misc. household electronics: \$10.00 each
- TVs & computer monitors (over 20" screen, measured diagonally): \$20.00 each
- Window A/C units, dehumidifiers & microwaves: \$20.00 each
- Refrigerators (small dorm size): \$25.00 each
- Refrigerators (full size): \$45.00 each

As always, our monthly recycle program for used motor-oil, oil based paints, fluorescent light bulbs, contained mercury, Ni-Cad batteries (found in cell phones, cordless phones and camcorders) and rechargeable batteries will continue to be held on the 1st Saturday of each month at the DPW yard located at 20 Ponderosa Road (behind the salt shed) 9 am – 12 noon.

Please refrain from illegally dumping any waste at the facility during non-collection days. The DPW yard is located in a heavily wooded watershed area right next door to the Ashland Animal Shelter and any items that are left while the facility is unattended by staff is subject to ingestion by area wildlife and spillage having obvious negative effects on the environment which only defeats the purpose of the collection facility.



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Your Money, Your Independence

One Big Beautiful Bill - A Planning Perspective



Glenn Brown, CFP

Depending upon your news sources and social media algorithms, the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) is either the worst bill ever and people will die, or it will unleash a new era of prosperity for the US economy. The truth is that it will do neither of these things.

Like all things with Washington, OB BB has the good, the bad and the political virtue signaling (i.e. \$1,000 Trump Accounts for U.S. citizen newborns).

From a financial planning perspective, let's review the 5 areas of broadest impact.

1. Extension of 2017 Federal Tax Cuts. The current tax rate structure, including a top marginal tax rate of 37%, remains in place permanently. It was to expire this year, meaning if you're in the current 12%, 22%,

24% tax brackets, a 3% or 4% increase would have happened. While some disagree with this act, they'd be celebrating if Massachusetts went from 5% to 1% income tax.

Also permanent is the estate tax and gift tax exemption, which prior to 2017 was \$1 million. Today, it is \$13.99 million per individual, adjusts for inflation and is a flat 40% tax on excess over the exemption.

2. Expanded Standard Deduction and Child Tax Credit.

Recall in 2017, the standard deduction was dramatically increased while many subjective write-offs were eliminated. This resulted in 90-93% of tax filers taking the standard deduction over the last 8 years, up from 68.7% tax filers in 2016.

3. New Senior Tax Deduction.

Tax on Social Security benefits was not eliminated, however through 2028 there is an additional \$6,000 deduction per individual for those 65 and older. This equates to 88% of tax filers not paying a federal tax on their social security benefits.

4. State And Local Tax (SALT) Deduction Cap Raised. OB BB temporarily raises the SALT deduction cap to \$40,000 from \$10,000, with a 1% annual increase through 2029.

Good news for deductions on mortgage interest, property taxes and sales tax. However, it's reduced by 30% if modified adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds certain thresholds, such as \$500,000 for joint filers.

The OB BB ensures continued federal deductibility of PTET for pass-through entities, like S corporations and partnerships. These will pay state income taxes at the entity level, effectively bypassing the individual SALT deduction cap.

5. Permanent Small Business Tax Relief. This includes the 20% Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction for pass-through businesses and 100% bonus depreciation for new capital investments. The maximum Section 179 expensing amount is increased, and immediate Research & Development (R&D) expensing is restored with a catch-up deduction option.

Other notables that caught my attention:

- Vocational and trade schools now qualify for 529 Plan expenses.
- Bronze and catastrophic insurance plans qualify as HSA expenses.
- No tax on overtime (\$12,500) and qualified tips (\$25,000).

- Paid leave tax credits are permanent and expanded.
- Increased childcare expense credits.

Finally, Congress got involved with student loan reform rather than defer to executive orders.

To curb the blank-check effect, OB BB has eliminated "Cost of Attendance" loan limits for graduate students and parents of undergraduate students.

Like the pre-existing caps on how much undergraduates can borrow (\$12,500 annually, \$57,500 aggregate), moving forward universities must deal with parents' ability to borrow capped at \$20,000 annually and \$65,000 in aggregate per undergraduate. Graduate student caps are now \$50,000 annually and \$200,000 in aggregate.

It's a start to address the cause and not just the effect.

More to consider beyond this limited space, talk with your Certified Financial Planner to learn how you and your family can benefit.

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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Harvest Fest Sept. 20 In Bellingham

Harvest Fest is making a comeback in Bellingham.

The event, a family-focused activity, is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 20, at Bellingham's Town Common from 11 am to 3 pm. A rain date, if needed, is Sept. 27. The town's two Baptist Churches — First Baptist Church and Bible Baptist Church — are organizing the day's activities.

Harvest Fest began in 2017 and had a three-year run until Covid-19 forced the two churches to curtail the program. It's being revived after a five-year absence.

For the youth, there will be pony rides, an obstacle course, gymnastic and karate exhibitions, hopefully a magician and other exciting activities. A Christian concert is also scheduled.

Many vendors will be on hand to promote and sell their products. The churches are still seeking sponsors and vendors. If interested contact Pastor Baron Rodrigues at 508 844-1843.

After expenses are paid (police detail, permits, entertainment costs, etc.), any funds remaining will go to area food pantries.

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Summer Cleanout 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

Business spotlight

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 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!

Contact Affordable Junk Removal and Dumpster Rental and let a local small business take care of everything for you. Call Jay Schadler at (774) 287-1133 or visit us online at AffordableJunkRemoval.com.

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Does the 4% Rule Still Make Sense For Your Retirement?



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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You may have heard of the “4% rule” when it comes to retirement. The idea is simple: After you retire, you withdraw 4% of your investment portfolio each year. In theory, this helps ensure your savings last for your lifetime. While this rule can be a helpful starting point, it's not a one-size-fits-all — and it's defi-

nately not a substitute for a plan tailored to your specific needs, wants and wishes.

The truth is, how much to withdraw in retirement depends on factors like when you retire, if you'll work part time, how long you expect retirement to last, your lifestyle goals, inflation and whether you want to leave a financial legacy to heirs. So, the 4% rule should be viewed as more of a guide than a strict rule.

Let's start with age. The 4% rule is often based on someone retiring at 65 and expecting to live until about 92. But if you retire earlier, you may want your portfolio to stretch further. In that case, you might need to start with a lower withdrawal rate, maybe closer to 3%. And if you retire later, you might safely withdraw a little more — perhaps 4.5% to 5% — depending on your financial situation.

Your retirement lifestyle also plays a big role. Are you planning to travel the world or spend more time at home? If you ex-

pect higher spending in the early years of retirement, you may need to adjust your withdrawal rate or plan to reduce spending later to balance things out.

Your financial flexibility matters too. If you have less wiggle room with your expenses, rely heavily on your portfolio for income or want to preserve wealth for your heirs, a more conservative approach might be wise. In this conservative scenario, your portfolio withdrawals may be met from interest and dividends. Think of your withdrawal rate as existing on a spectrum from more conservative to less conservative, with your personal situation determining where you land.

Then there's inflation. A well-built strategy usually includes small annual increases in withdrawals to keep up with rising costs — about 2.75% per year. But you don't need to take a raise just because the calendar says so. If the markets have had a tough year or you don't need the extra income, it might be

smart to skip an increase. Being flexible can improve the chances your money will last.

It's also important to understand what's known as your “portfolio reliance rate” — how much of your retirement income comes from your investments versus other sources like Social Security or pensions. The higher this percentage, the more conservative you may want to be with withdrawals.

And don't forget the IRS. If you're drawing from a traditional IRA or 401(k), you'll need to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) once you reach age 73. Your RMD for any year is the account balance as of the end of the prior calendar year divided by a life expectancy factor according to the IRS. These RMDs need to be accounted for in your strategy.

The bottom line? The 4% rule is a useful starting point, but it's just that — a starting point. A good financial advisor can help you build a strategy that reflects your age, your goals and

your full financial picture. By revisiting your plan regularly and staying flexible, you'll give yourself the best shot at turning your savings into a secure, fulfilling retirement.

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

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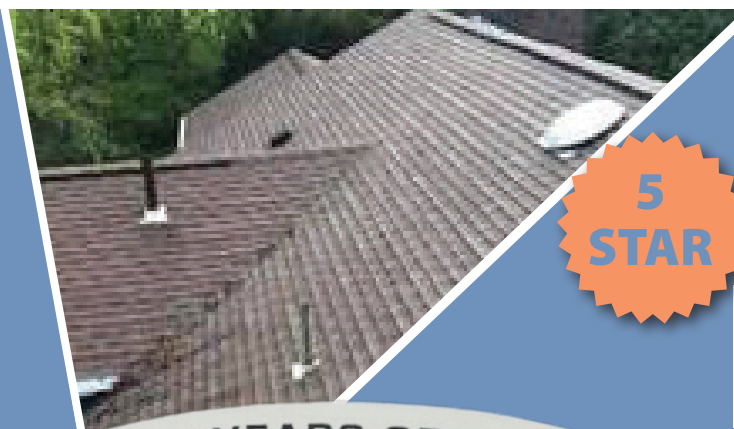
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How to Have a Sting-Free Summer



Jim Maxxuchelli, owner, WPC Pest and Termite Control

From backyard barbecues to sunny beach days, families across the country are enjoying the warm weather. To make sure Americans can safely enjoy their summer, WPC Pest and Termite Control and the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) are sharing how to avoid stinging insects.

"Every year, more than 500,000 people visit the emergency room to be treated for insect stings," said Cindy Mannes, senior vice president of public affairs for NPMA. "Stinging insects can become aggressive and dangerous if provoked, which

makes working with a licensed pest control professional a must for homeowners."

Jim Mazzuchelli, owner of WPC Pest and Termite Control, is sharing these tips on how to avoid painful stings this summer:

Wasps



Wasps, including yellow jackets and the misnamed bald-faced hornet, are commonly encountered during late summer, when colonies are largest. Avoid attracting these insects and keep them out of your home by removing garbage frequently, keeping trashcans covered and ensuring all doors and windows are properly screened.

Sweet-smelling perfumes should also be avoided, as the scent can attract yellowjackets.

Hornets



European hornets can be deterred from your home by changing exterior lights to yellow bulbs, storing garbage in sealed receptacles and removing fallen fruit from trees. If a stray hornet is giving you unwanted attention, avoid swatting at the insect. Instead, blow gently from a safe distance to shoo it away.

Africanized Bees

Africanized "killer" bees can become hostile if



threatened and have been known to chase people for more than a quarter of a mile. Because they look similar to European honeybees, only a licensed pest control professional can identify and remove a nest. If you live within 100 miles of an area where Africanized bees are common, do not approach any nest.

DIY removal of a stinging insect nest is never recommended, as the process requires specialized training and equipment. Call your local professionals at WPC Pest and Termite Control at 508.435.2211.

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Amanda Curley Appointed as Director of Preschool at William Pittaway School

The Ashland Public Schools is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Amanda Curley as the next Director of Preschool at the William Pittaway School. Ms. Curley brings over a decade of experience in early childhood and special education and a deep commitment to inclusive, student-centered learning.

A dynamic and results-driven educational leader, Ms. Curley has recently served as an Early Childhood Educator Mentor and Special Education Teacher in the Natick Public Schools. Her experience includes mentoring educators, facilitating professional development, designing an inclusive curriculum, and building strong partnerships with families and staff. She also served as Co-Director of Natick's Extended Year Program, leading operations for over 180 students and 40 staff members. Previous positions included teaching at the Perkins School for the Blind and working as an ABA (Applied Behavior Analyst) for the Advanced Learning Center.

Ms. Curley holds multiple certifications, including licensure in Administration and Severe Disabilities. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Massa-

chusetts Lowell and a Master of Education in Severe Special Education from Lesley University. She is pursuing her Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Management at Fitchburg State University.

"Amanda's leadership, expertise, and passion for early childhood education make her the ideal choice to lead the William Pittaway Preschool," said Superintendent Jim Adams. "We are confident she will continue strengthening our program and ensure a nurturing and enriching learning environment for all students. I would like to publicly thank Ms. Sara Davidson for her stewardship over the past seven years and look forward to her working as the Special Education Coordinator at Pittaway."

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Curley to the Ashland community.

Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools

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Ashland Welcomes Newest Officer at Swearing-In Ceremony

In July Ashland Police Department officially welcomed its newest member, Officer Edward Sena to the team. The swearing-in was conducted by Town Manager Michael Herbert and attended by Sena's family, friends, and fellow officers, marking a proud and memorable milestone for both the officer and the community.

Officer Sena joins the department following his recent graduation from the Quinsigamond Community College Police Academy, where he trained as a self-sponsored candidate. He also holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, underscoring his commitment to serving and protecting with a strong academic and professional foundation.

Before taking on full patrol duties, Officer Sena will complete a 12-week field training program designed to prepare him for the responsibilities of patrolling and responding to the needs of Ashland residents.

Residents are encouraged to extend a warm welcome when they see Officer Sena around town. Whether it's a quick hello or a friendly wave, every gesture helps strengthen the bond between the community and those who serve it. Welcome to Ashland, Officer Sena!

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Regional Snapshot: Common Tick-Borne Diseases in The MetroWest and How Local Numbers Have Shifted Over Time

BY: THALITA CAMPELO,
REGIONAL HEALTH
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST,
METROWEST SHARED PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICES

Tick-borne diseases pose a significant threat to public health in Massachusetts, with cases on the rise in recent years. Understanding the threat of ticks and how to prevent tick bites is crucial for protecting ourselves and our loved ones from these potential dangers, especially as the weather

warms and outdoor activities begin to increase.

Regional Tick Borne Disease Trends

According to Regional Epidemiologist Pooja Shelke, “In the MetroWest region, Lyme disease continues to be the most common tick-borne illness, with reported cases increasing from just 1 case in 2021 to 185 in 2022 and peaking at 305 cases in 2023.” Anaplasmosis and babesiosis are also on the rise. For example, babesio-

sis cases more than doubled from 10 in 2021 to 23 in 2024, and anaplasmosis has grown from 11 cases in 2021 to 21 already in 2025. Pooja added, “We typically see the highest number of tick-borne disease reports during late spring through early fall, when people are spending more time outdoors. These trends remind us that prevention is critical.”

Prevalence of Tick Borne Disease in MA

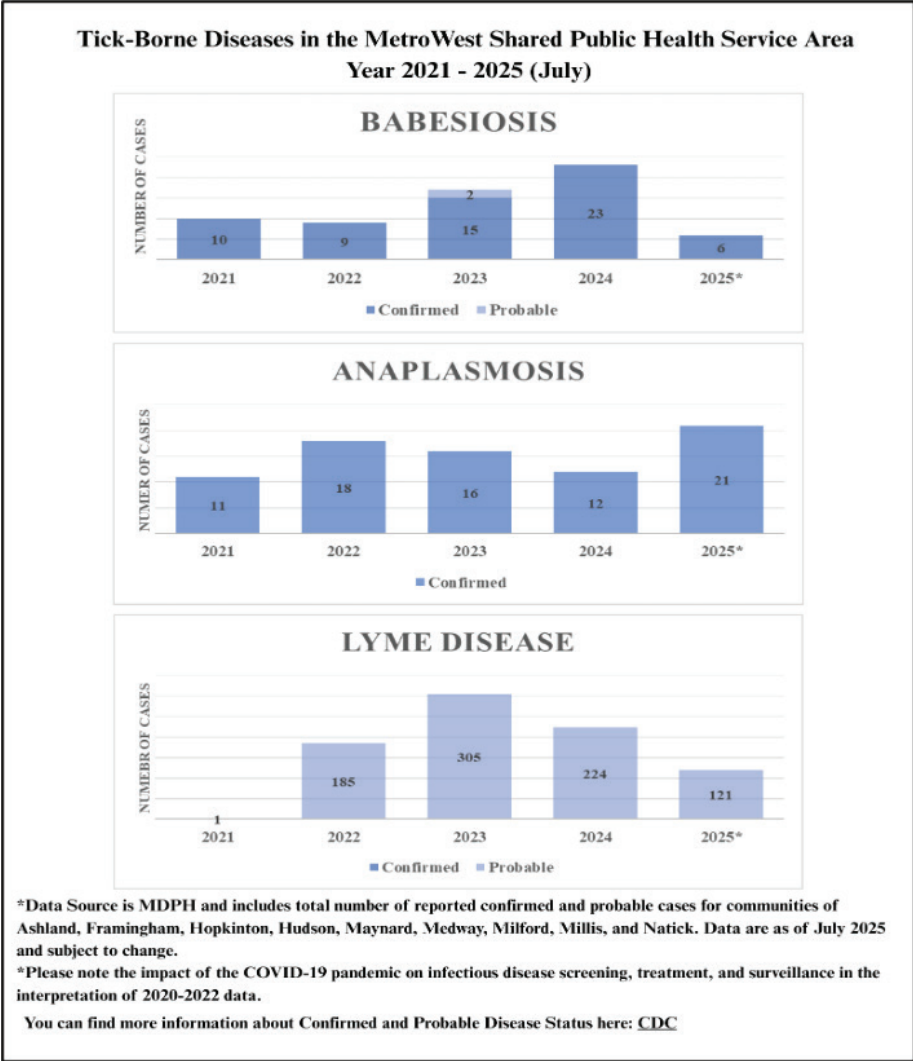
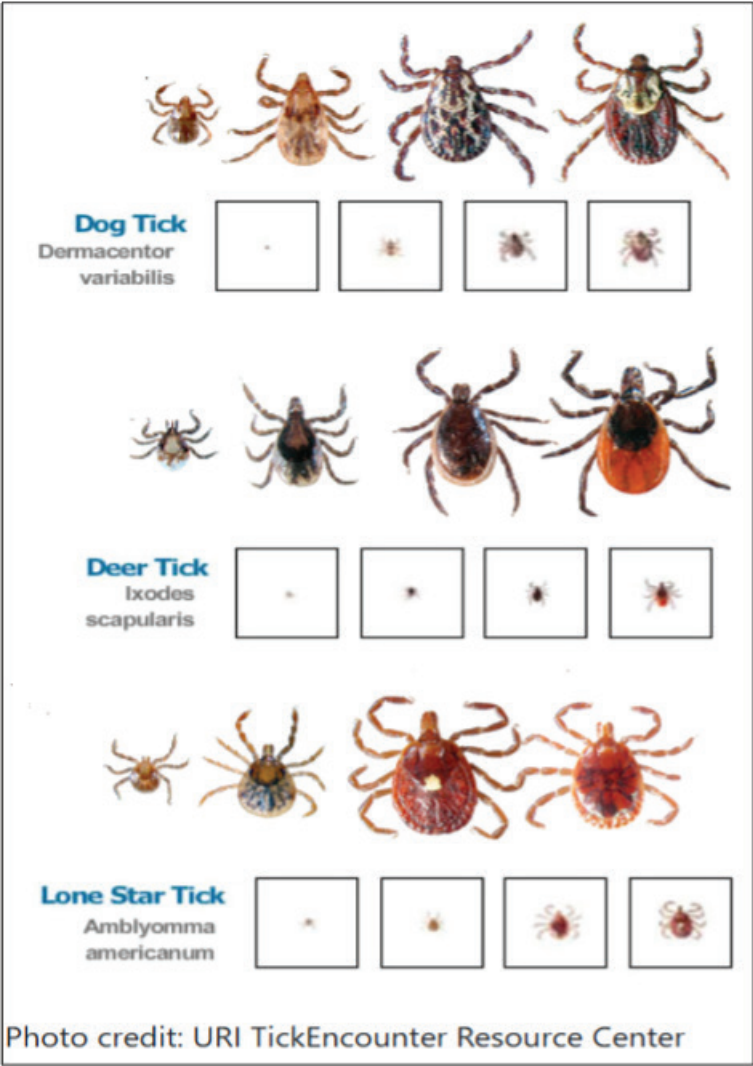
The prevalence of these diseases is closely tied to the abundance of the black-legged tick population, which thrives in wooded and grassy areas, as well as suburban backyards. This makes outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, gardening, and even leisurely walks risky without proper precautions.

“Ticks are most active in Massachusetts from early spring through late fall, which is why we see the highest number of tick-borne disease cases during this period.” Ticks thrive in wooded areas, tall grasses, brush, and even suburban backyards. Their life cycle and behavior align closely with when people spend more time outdoors, making late spring and

summer especially high-risk seasons. “Of particular concern are nymph-stage ticks, which are small, hard to detect, and responsible for most tick-borne disease transmission.”

Tick Identification and Symptoms

Massachusetts has three common tick species: black-legged ticks (also known as deer ticks), dog ticks, and lone star ticks. Deer ticks are brown with black legs and are about the size of a paperclip. They can spread Lyme disease, babesiosis, anaplasmosis and Powassan virus. The highest risk of being bitten by a deer tick



is in the spring, summer, and fall. Dog ticks can be divided into two species: American dog ticks and brown dog ticks. Brown dog ticks are reddish-brown in color and are 1/8–3/16” in length. The greatest risk of being bitten occurs during spring and summer. Lone star ticks are aggressive ticks that bite humans. The adult female is distinguished by a white dot or “lone star” on her back. Lone star ticks will occasionally develop a circular rash similar to the rash of early Lyme disease. The greatest risk of being bitten by the lone star tick during the year is in the early spring through late fall.

The symptoms of Lyme disease can range from mild flu-like symptoms to severe joint pain and neurological complications if left untreated. Anaplasmosis can cause fever, headaches, and muscle aches, while babesiosis, caused by microscopic parasites that infect red blood cells, can lead to symptoms similar to malaria. Powassan virus, though rare, is particularly concerning due to its potential for severe neurological complications.

Prevention Works!

Prevention is the most effective way to minimize the risk of tick-borne diseases. Wearing long sleeves and pants, using insect repellents containing DEET or oil of lemon eucalyptus, and conducting thorough tick checks after outdoor activities are essential practices.

Additionally, creating tick-safe zones around homes by clearing tall grasses and brush, and using tick control products can help reduce exposure. Early detection and prompt treatment are crucial in managing tick-borne illnesses. If you suspect you've been bitten by a tick or are experiencing symptoms associated with these diseases, it's imperative to seek medical attention promptly.

By adopting preventive measures, staying informed, and seeking timely medical care, individuals can enjoy the outdoors safely while minimizing the threat posed by ticks. For more information visit [cdc.gov/ticks](#) or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

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Ashland Residents Take the Stage in Weston Summer Productions

Weston Drama Workshop, a nonprofit youth theater organization in its 63rd anniversary season, will stage six productions this month at Regis College, featuring participants entering Grade 5 through age 23. These young performers have been rehearsing since early June, and will perform at the Regis College Fine Arts Center between July 17 and July 26. With over 30 performances in the span of a jam-packed two weeks, Weston Drama Workshop continues its tradition of providing the MetroWest community and beyond with engaging youth theater programs and entertainment for all ages.

WDW's younger ensemble—participants entering 5th grade through 9th—will perform two productions: Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, the magical musical based on the classic animated film, directed by Skylar Grossman; and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Musical*, a heartfelt one-act musical based on the popular book series by Jeff Kinney, directed by Callie Llewellyn.

The program's older ensemble, made up of actors ages 14–23 with a few younger performers playing children's roles, will perform three musicals and one play. Audiences will explore the dark world of a bloodthirsty barber in *Sweeney Todd*, directed



by Julia Deter; experience the classic tale of love and revolution in *Les Misérables: School Edition*, directed by Chris Brindley; dive into the unique childhood of graphic novelist Alison Bechdel in *Fun Home*, directed by Stephanie Manning; and enjoy a classic Noel Coward comedy in *Present*

Laughter, directed by Tristan Burke. Among the performers starring in these four productions are Ashland residents Caroline Diamond, Kaylie Eng, Jordan Norris, and Vee Slowik.

Tickets are available at westondramaworkshop.org, and questions can be directed to the

box office at 781-768-7070. All performances are held at Regis College's air-conditioned Fine Arts Center.

The performance schedule is as follows:

The Little Mermaid: Saturday, July 19 @ 10:30am; Monday, July 21 @ 7:00pm; Tuesday, July

22 @ 7:00pm; Thursday, July 24 @ 10:30am; Saturday, July 26 @ 10:30am

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Friday, July 18 @ 5:00pm; Sunday, July 20 @ 10:30am; Tuesday, July 22 @ 10:30am; Wednesday, July 23 @ 5:00pm; Friday, July 25 @ 5:00pm

Sweeney Todd: Thursday, July 17 @ 8:00pm; Saturday, July 19 @ 8:00pm; Sunday, July 20 @ 2:00pm; Friday, July 25 @ 8:00pm; Saturday, July 26 @ 2:00pm

Les Misérables: Friday, July 18 @ 8:00pm; Saturday, July 19 @ 2:00pm; Sunday, July 20 @ 7:00pm; Thursday, July 24 @ 8:00pm; Saturday, July 26 @ 8:00pm

Present Laughter: Thursday, July 17 @ 7:00pm; Saturday, July 19 @ 7:30pm; Sunday, July 20 @ 7:00pm; Friday, July 25 @ 7:00pm (sold out); Saturday, July 26 @ 1:00pm

Fun Home: Friday, July 18 @ 7:00pm; Saturday, July 19 @ 2:30pm; Sunday, July 20 @ 2:00pm; Tuesday, July 22 @ 7:30pm; Wednesday, July 23 @ 9:00pm; Thursday, July 24 @ 7:00pm; Saturday, July 26 @ 5:00pm (All performances are sold out; waitlist available)

The Ashland Garden Club Offers a Sustainability Activity

"Growing Your Own Food from Food Scraps"

The Ashland Garden Club is offering an activity for children and adults in support of Sustainability Day at the Farmer's Market on Saturday August 23rd 9:30-11:30 at the Children's Activity table area.

Did you know that a lot of the produce in your kitchen will sprout new growth just by putting it in water or soil? This activity explores growing food from the ends and scraps of produce in your kitchen. Some

examples of food you can use include: potatoes, green onions, celery, garlic, lettuce, carrots, beets, and turnips.

Members of the Ashland Garden Club will demonstrate how to grow food from food ends to children and their parents. They will share photos of

actual plants grown from food scraps, and will give children the opportunity to prepare 1-2 vegetables to grow in water, and eventually plant into a pot with soil. Also available will be

a packet of information about how to grow from food, and a special "Observation Chart" for the children to track the growth of their plant.





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Back to School Eye Health and Computer Vision Syndrome

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

Don't Wait: Now Is the Time to Book Back-to-School Eye Exams

As the back-to-school season quickly approaches, families everywhere are checking off their to-do lists — backpacks, notebooks, shoes, and clothes. But amid all this preparation, there's one essential task that often gets forgotten: scheduling your child's eye exam.

Why Eye Health Should Be a Top Priority This School Year

Vision plays a central role in learning. Whether reading from the board, using a tablet, or completing homework, children rely on their eyesight throughout the school day. With digital learning becoming more prevalent, eye health matters now more than ever. A comprehensive eye exam could be the key to preventing learning struggles, missed milestones, or behavioral issues tied to undiagnosed vision problems.

Unfortunately, vision disorders often go undetected. In fact, *1 in 17 preschoolers and 1 in 4 school-*

age children have a vision problem that remains untreated — problems that can cause kids to fall behind or struggle academically.

Book Now — Avoid the Rush

Late summer is one of the busiest times of the year for eye doctors. Appointments fill up fast. Booking your child's exam now ensures they're seen before the first day of school — giving them the best possible start to the academic year.

The Critical Role of Routine Eye Exams

Eye exams are more than just a quick vision check. They help identify problems early and connect families with treatment options. Regular screenings and exams also help prevent future complications, including potential permanent vision loss. Here's what every parent should know:

Five Key Steps to Protect Your Child's Vision:

1. **Know the Value:** Understand how important vision care is to your child's development and academic performance.

2. **Screen Early and Often:** Make sure your child receives regular vision screenings using trusted tools and trained screeners.
3. **Refer When Needed:** If a screening reveals a concern, follow up promptly with an eye care professional.
4. **See an Eye Doctor:** Choose an optometrist or ophthalmologist experienced in pediatric eye care for a full evaluation.
5. **Follow Through:** Stick to treatment plans and share exam results with schools or caregivers as needed.

Watch for These Signs That Your Child Needs an Eye Exam:

- Frequent squinting or head tilting
- Holding books or devices very close
- Complaints of headaches or eye fatigue



- Trouble concentrating on reading or close-up tasks
- Sensitivity to light or frequent tearing

- **Position Screens Properly:** Keep the monitor about 20–28 inches away and slightly below eye level.

- **Reduce Glare:** Use shades, reposition screens, or apply anti-glare filters.

- **Encourage Blinking:** Remind kids to blink often and use lubricating drops if needed.

- **Use Correct Eyewear:** Make sure your child's glasses are up-to-date, especially for screen work.

If you notice any of these, don't wait — book a comprehensive exam as soon as possible. And remember: *When in doubt, moms always know best.* Trust your instincts. Get a second opinion.

Digital Learning and Eye Strain: A Growing Concern

Screens are everywhere — tablets, laptops, smartboards — and kids spend hours a day using them. This puts many students at risk for Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), also known as Digital Eye Strain.

Symptoms of CVS Include:

- Blurry or fluctuating vision
- Eye burning or stinging
- Light sensitivity
- Frequent headaches
- Neck or shoulder pain

CVS typically develops after two or more hours of continuous screen time, especially if the screen is too close, too bright, or used without proper eye correction.

Tips to Prevent Digital Eye Strain:

- **Follow the 20-20-20 Rule:** Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Despite the buzz around blue light glasses, there's no scientific evidence they help with eye strain. The American Academy of Ophthalmology does not recommend them.

Choosing the Right Glasses for Kids

If your child needs glasses, the right pair makes all the difference. Look for:

- Durable, child-friendly frames
- Comfortable fit
- UV protection for outdoor play
- Skip the blue light lenses — focus on fit and function

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EYE

continued on page 13

Ashland Town Hall Welcomes Two New Team Members to Community Development Department

The Town of Ashland is pleased to announce the addition of two new team members to its Community Development Department. Town leadership and staff extend a warm welcome to Jasmin Farinacci, who joins as Director of Planning & Economic Development, and Melissa Adams, the town's new Assistant Town Planner.

In her new leadership role, Jasmin Farinacci oversees the daily operations of the Economic Development & Planning Department. Her responsibilities include collaborating with the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, and Economic Development Advisory Group to support the town's long-term planning goals and development initiatives. By integrating economic development into the planning role, we aim to align land use strategies with business attraction, workforce development, and long-term financial sustainability. This expanded focus allows her to support not just physical infrastructure and zoning initiatives, but also business retention, entrepreneurship, and investment opportunities.

Jasmin comes to Ashland from the Town of Dover, where she served as Town Planner. She brings a wealth of experience in zoning, regulatory compliance, economic development, and business outreach. Her knowledge and dedication make her a valuable asset as



Ashland continues to grow and evolve.

Joining Jasmin is Melissa Adams, who will serve as Assistant Town Planner. In

this key support role, Melissa will work closely with department staff and town boards to ensure planning deadlines are

met, information is communicated clearly, and operations run smoothly.

Melissa brings with her three years of experience as a GIS Technician at Pike Telecom & Renewables, LLC. With a degree in regional planning and a strong background in mapping systems, Melissa is well-equipped to help navigate the town's busy planning agenda.

"I am excited to have Jasmin and Melissa join us," said Assistant Town Manager for Community Development & Community Affairs, Beth Reynolds. "Their skills and passion for planning and development will be a great benefit to our community. I look forward to working with them both as we continue to shape Ashland's future."

With these new appointments, Ashland's Community Development Department is well-positioned to support thoughtful growth and enhance the town's vision for a vibrant, thriving community. Whether it's revitalizing downtown, supporting small businesses, or attracting new industries, the planning department is equipped to shape a future where thoughtful planning and economic opportunity go hand in hand.

EYE

continued from page 12

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- **Special Back-to-School Offer:** All new patients — children or adults — receive a free pair of select eyeglasses

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Don't delay. Now is the time to schedule your child's back-to-school eye exam. Let's make sure your child has clear vision and the confidence to succeed this school year. Call us today or book online — appointments are filling fast!

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Ashland’s “Clocktown Chronicles” Podcast Wins National Award for Best Audio Programming

Ashland’s very own podcast, Clocktown Chronicles, has received national recognition by winning the Hometown Media Award for Best Audio Programming—a prestigious honor awarded by the Foundation of the Alliance for Community Media (ACM).

The award was presented in June at the ACM’s Hometown Media Awards Celebration, where Town Manager Michael Herbert and Barbara Chisholm, President of WACA TV, proudly represented the town.

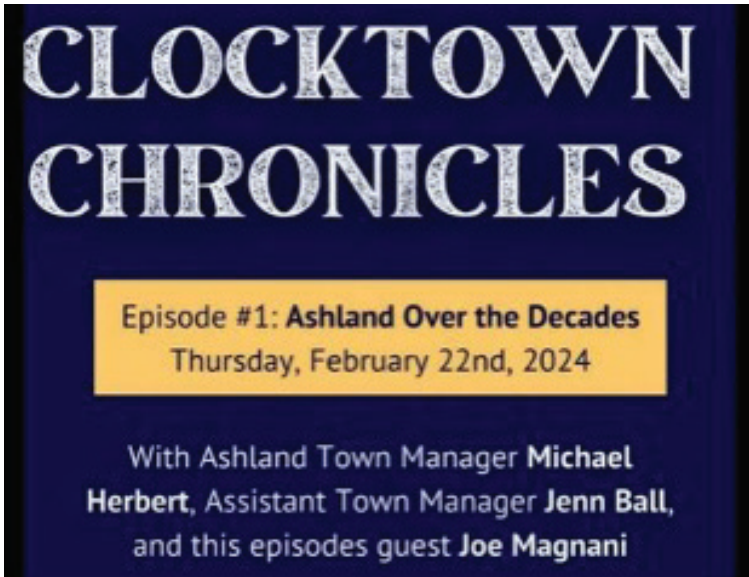
The ACM is a national organization committed to empowering community media centers and supporting public, educational, and government access (PEG) channels across the U.S. Each year, it honors outstanding contributions in local media through the Hometown Media Awards, celebrating excellence in community storytelling, media production, and local impact.

“This recognition is a true testament to the power of com-



munity voices,” said Town Manager Michael Herbert. “It’s an incredible honor for Ashland and everyone involved in Clocktown

Chronicles.” Much of the podcast’s success is due to the behind-the-scenes talent and tireless work of WACA



TV. Special thanks were extended to Barbara Chisholm and Paul Beaudoin, whose dedication and creative vision were instrumental in bringing the podcast to life.

The award-winning episode featured engaging conversations with Select Board Chair Joe Magnani and former Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Ball, whose sto-

ries and humor helped make the show a standout. “I’m honored to be part of this vibrant community of storytellers,” said Herbert. “We’re excited to continue sharing the voices and stories that make Ashland such a unique and special place.”

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Senior Community Center Activities for AUGUST 2025

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

AUG 4th at 7:00-8:00 - NEW!!!! Virtual Program: In Conversation w/ Historical Romance Authors

Shana Galen & Mimi Matthews In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library

Library . Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

AUG 5th at 9:00 - Pressed Flower Votive Candle Jar Craft w/ Milly

Supplies will be provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

AUG 5th at 10:30 - NEW!!!! – Digital Learning Class w/ Jonathan Baron – Stream Movies and Documentaries on your Computer, iPad and Phone

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

AUG 6th & 20th 9:00-11:30 - Veterans Office Hours w/ Richard Sabounjian

Appointments recommend. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

AUG 6th at 11:00 - NEW!!!! Adult Immunizations Talk w/ Anne Fitzgerald, RN

Recommended immunizations according to your age, health, and other lifestyle factors. New vaccines also discussed.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

AUG 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th - 10:00 – 12:00 - SHINE In Person Appointment w/ Lenore Tracy

Call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1.

AUG 7th at 10:00 - Ashland Council on Aging (COA) Meeting. Public Invited.

AUG 7th at 10:30 - Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 3, Episode 9

Tea and coffee provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

AUG 7th at 12:00 - Friends of the Ashland Council on Aging (FOACO) Meeting Public Invited.

AUG 7th 2:00-3:15 - NEW!!!!

Virtual Program: In Conversation w/ Author and Historian Philippa Langley (Take two) In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library

Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

AUG 8th at 10:00 - Bring Your Mending Projects - Pins & Needles Sewing Class w/ Tobi

Bring your own sewing machine. All levels of skill welcome. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1

AUG 8th 10:00-11:30 - Legal Phone Consultation with Arthur P. Bergeron

Call to schedule an appointment at 508-881-0140 x1.

AUG 11th 2:00-3:00 - NEW!!!! Virtual Program: “The Invention of Charlotte Bronte” w/ Author Graham Watson In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library.

Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

AUG 12th at 1:00 - NEW!!!! Popcorn & a Movie, “Identity Theft” (2013) R Comedy

Mild mannered businessman Sandy Patterson (Jason Bateman) travels from Denver to Florida to confront the deceptively harmless looking woman (Melissa McCarthy) who has been living it up after stealing Sandy’s identity.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

AUG 12th 6:30-7:00 - NEW!!!!

Virtual Program: Historical Fiction Book Recommendations w/ Bestselling Author, Jane Healy. In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

AUG 13th at 11:00 - Cook w/ Chef Lee: Chinese Vegetable Fried Rice

Class \$5 pp. Call to reserve your seat 508-881 0140 x1

AUG 15th at 10:00 - Personalize Luggage Tags Craft w/ Elissa

Supplies will be provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

AUG 18th at 12:00 - NEW!!! Lunch – Sponsored by the Ashland Fire Department

Limited Seats Available. Call to reserve your seat by Thursday, AUG 14th at noon at 508-881-0140 x1

AUG 19th at 11:00 - NEW!!! “Bridges That Have Made History – and a Few That Haven’t” w/ Susan Wagner The intriguing history of the construction of some of the world’s historic bridges, plus the toil the designers and engineers went through to bring them to completion. Bridges discussed include the Leonard Zakim Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, and the Nihonbashi Bridge in Tokyo.

Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

AUG 20th at 10:00 - Town Manager’s Coffee Hour – All are welcome! Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1. Drop ins welcome.

AUG 20th at 10:00 - NEW!!!! Sound Meditation Journey w/ Sonia Stingo

During this relaxing hour, you will be led by Sonia Stingo to experience sound waves from crystal bowls. These waves help synchronize brain wave frequencies, foster deep relaxation and a calm mind. They may also help to ease anxiety and stress, while promoting a balanced mood. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x 1.

AUG 21st at 1:30 - NEW!!!! Celebrate National Senior Citizens’ Day

Join Us at Our Ice Cream Bar. Call to reserve your space at 508-881 0140 x1.

AUG 22nd at 10:00 - Sew a Zipper Pouch - Pins & Needles Sewing Class w/ Tobi

Bring your own sewing machine. All levels of skill welcome. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1

AUG 25th at 12:00 - Lunch & Trivia, w/ Karen Spilka’s Lis-

tening Hour Have ideas?

Need help? Senator Spilka’s staff will be here to listen.

The cost of lunch is \$6 per person. Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. Reservations due Thursday, AUG 21st at Noon.

Aug. 26th, 12:00-5:00 - NEW!!! Red Cross Blue Drive at Ashland Senior Center

Donors can schedule an appointment directly at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?>

AUG 28th 10:00–11:30 - Clocktown Memory Cafe w/ music by Wendy and Steve Glick

Clocktown Cafe provides a welcoming place for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or a cognitive impairment accompanied by the caregiver. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Susan McNulty smcnulty@ashland-mass.com or 508-532-7945.

NOTE: We try our best to deliver correct information. Programs and events frequently alter after we produce our schedule. We appreciate your patience!

WEEKLY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

* Note: All classes are a suggested donation of \$4 per person * Unless otherwise noted.

Monday Lunches at 12:00 pm weekly, except holidays. Reservations must be made by Thursday before the scheduled lunch. Please use the payment slip and locked box located outside of the main office to reserve your seat. Cost pp \$6 unless otherwise noted.

Bowling – Tuesdays at Ryan’s Amusement in Millis at 9 am

Blood Pressure Check – Wednesdays at 10:30 am (no Blood Pressure Check on AUG 13th)

Canasta – Wednesdays at 12:30 pm

Chair Yoga – Chair Yoga will resume in September 2025.

Chess – Mondays at 1:30 pm

Craft Class – First Tuesday at 9 am and Third Friday of the Month at 10 am

Cribbage – Thursdays at 12:30 pm

DROP-IN Knitting & Crocheting Group – Second & Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 am

DROP-IN Advanced Watercolor Class – Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 9:30 am

Dull Men’s Club w/ Doc – Tuesdays at 9:30. Coffee and Conversation.

Exercise with Joni – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30 am

Hearing Aid Cleaning – Monday, AUG 18th at 10:30

Line Dancing with Lisa – Thursdays at 12 pm

Mahjong – Fridays 9:30 Beginners (call for appointment), 10:30 am for all levels

Mindful Coloring – First and Third Thursdays of the Month at 1:30 pm

Mindfulness & Meditation – Thursdays at 11 am w/ Mary Green (No class on AUG 7th and 21st)

Parkinson’s Boxing – First and Third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 pm

Pins and Needles Sewing Class– Second & Fourth Friday of the Month at 10 am

Ping Pong – Ping Pong will resume in September 2025

Pitch Card Game – Mondays at 1:00 pm

Tai Chi – Tuesdays at 11:45 am w/ substitute Karen Girard (Jon Woodward will be back in SEPT 2025)

Veterans Office Hours – Every other Wednesday from 9 -11:30 am. Check Calendar for Dates

Zumba Gold with Joni– Tuesdays at 10 am. (Kellie Cassidy will be back on SEPT 30th)

To Advertise

Call Susanne at 508-954-8148 or email sue@sodellconsult.com

The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Struggling with Hair Loss? Here's the Confidence Hack You Might Not Know About

By GINA WOELFEL

Believe it or not, your Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Health Savings Account (HSA) could be the hidden hero in your hair loss journey.

For people dealing with hair loss, the physical and emotional challenges are only part of the story. There's also the cost! What most don't know is that, in many cases, you can use your pre-tax healthcare dollars to help cover the expense. A wig can be considered a qualified medical expense and eligible for reimbursement with pre-tax funds from an HSA or FSA under specific conditions. And if you're working with your insurance, b.LUXE is here to help make it as easy (and stress-free) as possible.

FSA & HSA: Beauty + Health in One Swipe

Think FSA and HSA funds are just for prescriptions and copays? Think again. If you're struggling with hair loss caused by medication or a medical condition—such as alopecia, hormonal imbalance, stress, or treatments like chemotherapy or radiation—you may be able to use your HSA or FSA funds to help cover the cost of a wig.

Insurance Reimbursement

Depending on your individual insurance plan and circumstances, you may also be eligible for full or partial reimbursement from your health insurance provider. Coverage varies, but many of our clients have successfully

used their benefits to help offset the cost of their wig or topper. At b.LUXE, we are uniquely qualified to assist you through the insurance reimbursement process and can provide the necessary documentation and guidance to help you maximize your benefits.

Yes, We'll Help with the Paperwork

We know insurance can be confusing and overwhelming—but that's where your friends at b.LUXE come in. We're here to guide you through the process and help you gather the right documentation to submit your claim with confidence. Our goal is to make everything as simple and stress-free as possible.

We've helped many clients use their pre-tax dollars to cover the cost of their wigs, and while reimbursement is a great outcome, what matters most to us is seeing our clients walk out standing taller, smiling brighter, and feeling like themselves again.

It's important to note that every insurance policy is different, and b.LUXE cannot guarantee coverage. Typically, to qualify, you'll need a doctor's prescription or a Letter of Medical Necessity stating that the wig is medically required—not just for cosmetic reasons. Be sure to keep all related documentation and receipts, including those for wig maintenance, cleaning, or repairs. We always recommend checking with your provider before your appointment to understand what your plan may cover.

LEARN MORE



VISIT OUR HAIR-LOSS SOLUTIONS PAGE

Why Choose b.LUXE?

At b.LUXE in Medway, Massachusetts, we're redefining what it means to support clients going through appearance-related health changes. This isn't a one-size-fits-all beauty counter—it's a private, welcoming, and judgment-free studio designed for personalized service, real conversations, and expert care.

Our founder and in-house hair loss specialist, Heather Cohen, helps people find the right solution to feel confident again. She'll work with you one-on-one in a private, supportive setting—walking you through your options, what qualifies for reimbursement, and how the whole process works. She truly gets it—Heather isn't just a wig stylist; she's also a wig and topper wearer who's faced the challenges of hair loss herself during treatment for rheumatoid arthritis.

Clients love the calm, welcoming vibe of our private wig & topper room. We know this journey can feel overwhelming, so we do everything we can to make your



“Wigs and toppers have truly been a game-changer for me. My hair had become so thin and brittle, and now I finally have the freedom and versatility to love the way my hair looks again.”

— Heather Cohen

appointment feel comfortable, supportive, and empowering.

Confidence Is Priceless—But Sometimes, It's Reimbursable

We've all heard the phrase “you can't put a price on feeling confident,” but we'd like to gently challenge that: you can and

should invest in your well-being.

If you're facing a recent diagnosis, going through medical treatment, or simply trying to reconnect with your sense of self, you're not alone. At b.LUXE, we understand how personal hair loss can be—and **we're here to support you every step of the way.** When you work with b.LUXE, you're getting a partner in your journey back to feeling great about the way you look.

Ready to Learn More? Let's Chat.

Scan the QR code to visit the b.LUXE Wigs & Toppers page and schedule your private consultation. Prefer to talk it through? Give us a call at (508) 321-1624—we can't wait to hear from you!

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio – Medway, MA

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MassBay and Framingham High School Hold Third Automotive Technology Boot Camp in Ashland

For the third consecutive summer, MassBay Community College and Framingham High School is holding an automotive technology summer boot camp to help strengthen the pipeline of trained technicians. The boot camp, which is funded through a Framingham Public School, MassBay, and Youth Connections/MassHire grant, provides the opportunity to engage in a three-week hands-on intensive workshop to learn more about the automotive industry to 25 Framingham High rising junior and senior students.

“The automotive industry continues to face a critical shortage of trained automotive technicians, and MassBay’s leading auto tech program is uniquely positioned to help,” said MassBay Automotive Technology Dean David Protano. “We always enjoy collaborating with our partners at Framingham High School to provide students with a comprehensive look into the automotive field, showing them what it takes to become a tech, and how working at a dealership or independent auto shop can provide a profitable and sustainable career path. We hope the students participating in the boot camp will want to continue in the automotive industry, enabling us to fulfill our mission of building a strong pipeline for the local workforce.”

MassBay automotive faculty designed an extensive curricu-

lum that includes an overview of safety and tool maintenance, tire repairs and balancing, warranty and recall services, automotive repair pay scales, the diagnostic process, safety in the automotive labs, and many other auto services. In addition to the free automotive classes, students participating in the program will receive a \$1,500 stipend. Students who successfully complete the program are eligible to intern with McGovern Automotive Group to immerse themselves in the auto industry.

“At Framingham High School, we are committed to helping every student find a path that excites and empowers them,” said Mark Albright, Principal of Framingham High School. “This partnership with MassBay’s renowned automotive technology program offers our students not only hands-on technical experience, but also a real window into a thriving and essential industry. We’re proud to continue supporting this innovative summer boot camp, which reflects our broader mission to provide meaningful, career-connected learning opportunities that prepare students for success beyond high school.”

Framingham High School and Youth Connections (formerly MassHire) have an extensive partnership that focuses on education and career exploration. The Youth Connections grant supports students in highly engaging and paid STEM internships,



MassBay Community College Automotive Technology Professor Scott Fitzgerald works with a Framingham High student to measure brake rotor thickness during the summer automotive technology boot camp at the College’s Ashland campus, July 2023 (Photo/MassBay Community College).

while increasing opportunities for underrepresented high school students in STEM fields. A portion of the grant was used to fund the MassBay summer automotive technology boot camp.

MassBay’s Auto Technology is the leading automotive training facility in the New England region. It offers programs sponsored by four major automotive brands including BMW, Toyota/

Lexus, General Motors, and JEEP/Chrysler/Dodge/Ram. In addition, MassBay offers a non-manufacture specific All Brand General Studies program, which provides students with a broad education and hands-on training on multiple types of makes and models of vehicles. Students gain experience on the newest cars using state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. The pro-

gram includes a paid co-op component, allowing students to earn money and college credit while learning in a professional setting. These programs provide students with in-depth, product-specific automotive technology education. MassBay’s automotive program has a 99% placement rate of graduates into full-time jobs by graduation.

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August 2025 at the Ashland Library

For more events , look online.

Minuteman Library Crawl 2025
Wednesday, August 6 @ 10:00 AM—5:00 PM

We invite you to spend a day visiting local libraries – find out what is special about each and what they have to offer to you and your family. This is an event for all ages – all you need is a love of libraries and a way to get from place to place (feet, bikes, cars, llamas :)!

The challenge is to visit as many libraries as you can and take a picture of yourself with a designated item in each library – it’s a 21st century scavenger hunt! Post your pics and tag the libraries #mlncrawl2025. Each library will have handouts and giveaways – show your pictures to a librarian (or if you don’t have a camera, just tell a librarian you’re on the crawl, we’re pretty trusting) and receive a **PRIZE!**

Visit our website calendar for all of the details and the “passport”

Adult:

Visit our Website Calendar for Additional Info & Registration links:

<https://tinyurl.com/apl-calendars>

In Person - Paint Night with Ashwini Chitnavis *For Adults Only
Monday, August 4 @ 5:30—7:30 PM

We’re excited to bring Paint Night to Ashland! We welcome Ashwini Chitnavis to host this

session where you learn to paint on canvas. No art experience necessary, just an open mind and a can-do attitude.

Virtual - Historical Romance Authors Shana Galen and Mimi Matthews, In Conversation

Monday, August 4 @ 7pm
We’re such fans of historical romance and we’re huge fans of Shana Galen and Mimi Matthews! We can’t wait to be in conversation with them as they discuss their books, writing, and the state of historical fiction in publishing. Shana’s most recent book is “21 Days with the Lyon” and Mimi’s upcoming one is “Rules for Ruin” - different but amazing! Hope you can join us.

Virtual - “The Women of Arlington Hall” with Author Jane Healey

Tuesday, August 5 @ 7pm
You all know how much we love author Jane Healey, one of the best historical fiction writers out there! So, we’re thrilled to be hosting her for a conversation on her most recent release, “The Women of Arlington Hall”. Using her signature deep dive into research and her wonderful ability to tell a riveting story, Jane delves into the life of a female codebreaker who puts her future and her heart on the line in a stirring novel about love, loyalty, betrayal, and Cold War spy games. You’re not going to want to miss this one!

In Person - Mah Jongg

Wednesday, August 6 @ 6pm
Whether you have a rudimentary knowledge of Mah Jongg or have been playing for years, we would love to have you join us for an evening of strategy, luck and fun. This is an opportunity for the novice to hone their skills and experienced players to share their knowledge.

Virtual - Environmental Book Club
Wednesday, August 6 @ 6:30pm

Read *Before It’s Gone: Stories from the Front Lines of Climate Change in Small-Town America* by Jonathan Vigliotti

Virtual - In Conversation with Author and Historian Philippa Langley (take two)

Thursday, August 7 @ 2:00—3:15 PM
We had so much fun talking with Philippa earlier in the year that we just had to have her back. This time, we’re focusing on Philippa’s discovery of the grave of King Richard III in 2012. Join us as author and historical sleuth, Philippa Langley, discusses her research methods, her team, her findings, and how solving this mystery affects our understanding of the royal monarchy (in the 1500s, of course).

HYBRID - Romance Book Club
Thursday, August 7 @ 6:30pm
Read a Paranormal Romance

Virtual - Declutter series with Jamie Novak: How to Sell Your Stuff (Poshmark & yard sale)
Thursday, August 7 @ 7:00—8:30 PM

Join decluttering humorist Jamie Novak as she shares ways to host a profitable yard sale. Then an overview of selling on Poshmark with a live tutorial. Plus, the one thing she would NEVER sell. Then join the live guided tidy-up for a quick jumpstart!

Virtual - The Many Faces Of Grief
Thursday, August 7 @ 7:00pm
Join this conversation moderated by Michele Bograd, a certified end-of-life doula and psychologist, to explore your thoughts and feelings about such questions as: What are you grieving? How have you felt accompanied or isolated in your grief? What messages have you gotten about the “right” way to grieve? What do we learn socially and culturally that influences how we support and care for others as they grieve?

In Person - Mystery Book Club
Friday, August 8 @ 12:00pm
Read *Old City Hall* by Richard Osman

Virtual - “The Invention of Charlotte Brontë” with Author Graham Watson

Monday, August 11 @ 2:00pm
Based entirely on rarely seen private letters, *The Invention of Charlotte Brontë: A New Life* by Graham Watson sheds new light on the dramatic events of Brontë’s turbulent last years of grief, fulfillment, and tragedy—and exposes the astonishing media scandal that followed her early death, when her friends and family battled to control how history would remember her.

In Person - Card Making with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, August 11 @ 6:30pm
Jan will teach embossing, die cutting, proper stamping, and use of equipment individually and group techniques of creating unique cards.

Virtual - Historical Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Jane Healey

Tuesday, August 12 @ 6:30—7:00 PM
Love Historical Fiction but not sure what to read next? Join bestselling author, Jane Healey (and Ashland fave!), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of historical fiction out there!

Virtual - Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @redreadreviews
Wednesday, August 12 @ 7:30—8:00 PM

Not sure what to read next? Join Jody Blanchette (aka @redreadreviews), monthly, for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of horror and thrillers out there! We’re sure you’ll find something to like from Jody’s many enthusiastic reviews.

Virtual - Q&A with Historical Romance Writer Erica Ridley

Thursday, August 14 @ 7:00
We are so excited to be chatting with fantastic historical romance author, Erica Ridley! And, right before her new book, “A Waltz on the Wild Side”, comes out - we can celebrate early! Erica also wrote “The Perks of Loving a Wallflower”, one of our very favorite books. AND, she also writes young adult horror and thriller novels. What Can’t she

do?? Bring your questions as this is going to be a rapid fire, AMA (ask me anything) Q&A!

In Person - Parenting Book Club: “The Anxious Generation” with Kerri Maher of The Well-Resourced Parent

Monday, August 18 @ 6:00—7:30 PM
We hope all parents can join us for this important discussion on *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* by Jonathan Haidt! We started the discussion a few months ago but we think it’s time to continue that conversation or start again with more thoughts and ideas. Led by Kerri Maher of The Well-Resourced Parent, we hope to delve into the book and how it can benefit parents struggling to do the best they can. You do not need to have come to the first session to join this one, we’ll do a quick overview of the previous discussion and start from new and thoughtful angles.

In Person - Cook Book Club
Tuesday, August 19 @ 5:00pm
Cook from *The Book On Pie: Everything You Need to Know to Bake Perfect Pies* by Erin Jeanne McDowell.

In Person - Bio/Memoir Book Club
Wednesday, August 20 @ 11am
Read *How to Share an Egg* by Bonny Reichert

In Person - Great Decisions
Thursday, August 21 @ 6:30—7:45 PM
Discuss The Future of NATO and European Security

Virtual - SciFi/Fantasy Book Recs with Kristen of the Fantasy Cafe
Thursday, August 21 @ 6:30—7:00 PM

Love Speculative Fiction, SciFi, and Fantasy but not sure what to read next? Join blogger, Kristen, of Fantasy Cafe for this quarterly session of her recommendations of some of the best of SciFi/Fantasy books out there! We’re sure you’ll find something to like from Kristen’s many enthusiastic reviews.

Virtual - Inclusive and Diverse Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @sometimesleelynnreads

Thursday, August 21 @ 7:30—8:00 PM

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have an upcoming event?

Do you have a concern about things happening around town?

Email us at editor@ashlandtownnews.com

and let us know!

LIBRARY

continued from page 18

Looking for the best books with BIPOC/LGBTQ+/Neuro-divergent/Disabled etc. characters or by representative authors but not sure what to read next? Join bookstagrammer, Leelynn Brady (aka @sometimesleelynnreads), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - any genre as well as YA and Middle Grade books, as long as they are by diverse authors or have inclusive storylines!

Virtual - Art on Thursday: American Palaces: The Grandeur of Biltmore and Vizcaya
Thursday, August 28 @ 7:00—8:15 PM

Discover the splendor of America’s grand estates and gardens in this captivating introduction to architectural and botanical masterpieces. Immerse yourself in the rich history and stunning beauty of iconic landmarks, and envision a world where luxury and nature intertwine seamlessly.

Adult Weekly:

Knit and Crochet Club
Mondays @ 6pm
Walk-In

No Yoga in August

ESL Conversation Group
Wednesdays @ 6:30pm
Walk-In

Children:

Teacher Tales are back!
Come meet Ashland Public Schools teachers in a relaxed storytime setting! This is a great opportunity for your child to meet their teacher for the fall. No registration required.

Mrs. Mackay
Wednesday, August 13 @ 6:30—7:00 PM Mrs. Forrest
Tuesday, August 19 @ 5:00—5:30 PM

Mrs. Clifford
Monday, August 18 @ 6:30-7:00 PM Mrs. Robshaw
Wednesday, August 20 @ 6:30-7:00 PM

Special Programs:

Music at the Blissful
*For families
Thursday, August 7 @ 4:00-5:00 PM

6x Boston Parent Paper Family Favorite and National Touring Musician, Music at the Blissful (Evan Haller) from Boston Massachusetts comes to the Ashland

Public Library for a high energy, fun filled, interactive, movement packed music experience for the whole family. Come join the fun as we sing, jump, shake, laugh and go slow and fast with Music at The Blissful. Playing featuring songs off his new album, “This” It is sure to be an action packed good time for all. Registration required.

Zen Gardens
*For ages 6-12
Monday, August 4 @ 4:00—5:00 PM

Join us for a fun and calming activity where kids can make their own mini Zen gardens! Using sand, rocks, and other natural items, children will create peaceful little spaces and learn how to feel calm and focused. It’s a relaxing, hands-on way to explore nature, creativity, and mindfulness. Registration Required.

Movie Day: The Super Mario Bros Movie
*For families
Saturday, August 9 @ 2:00—3:30 PM

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon as we watch The Super Mario Bros. Movie! Bring a cozy blanket (or two), sit back, and enjoy the show—we’ll take care of the snacks! Registration Required.

Family Puzzle Race
*For families
Wednesday, August 6 @ 1:00-2:00 PM

Families are invited to compete in a race to finish a puzzle! Pit your puzzling skills against those of other families for fun, bragging rights and a small prize. Puzzles will be provided. Registration required as space is limited!

Gummy Bear Slime!
*For ages 6-12
Friday, August 15 @ 2pm

Get ready for a sweet and squishy science adventure! In this hands-on program, kids ages 6-12 will turn gummy bears into gooey, colorful slime. Young scientists will explore how heat, mixing, and simple ingredients can create a stretchy slime that’s safe to play with—and even taste! Registration Required.

Movie Night: Sonic the Hedgehog
*For families
Wednesday, August 20 @ 6:00—8:00 PM

Join us for a fun-filled evening as we watch Sonic the Hedgehog! Bring a cozy blanket (or two), sit back, and enjoy the show—we’ll take care of the snacks! Registration Required.

Little Picassos
*For grades K-6
Tuesday, August 5 and 26 @ 4:30-5:30 PM

Calling all budding artists! Join Miss Kayla for this special summer edition of Little Picassos Club where we’ll be taking our messy and creative fun outside into the sunshine! We’ll work on different mixed media projects each week, ranging from outdoor painting to nature collages and so much more. For grades K-6. Registration required.

Pokemon Club
*For grades 2-6
Tuesday, August 19 @ 6:30-7:30 PM

Are you a Pokémon master? Kids in grades 2-6 are welcome to join us for our NEW and exciting Pokémon Club! We’ll watch episodes of the anime, work on crafts, play games, talk about our favorite Pokémon—you might even get a chance to show off your card collection! Come hang out and make new Pokémon friends. Registration required.

Coding for Kids
Monday, August 4 @ 6:00-7:00 PM
*For grades K-4

Gear up for a tech-tastic adventure with our Coding Class for Kids! Kids will dive into the thrilling world of coding, where imagination meets innovation. With hands-on fun taught through an interactive game, your child will master the basics of coding. Whether they’re building games or solving puzzles, this class promises excitement and discovery at every turn. Space is limited and registration is required.

Weekly Storytimes:

Tuesday Clocktown Rockers!
*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Tuesdays at 10:30-11am

Join Miss Katrina for this new music and movement program! We’ll dance to favorite kids’ tunes, have fun with instruments and other props, and read a story, all while building your child’s early literacy and executive function skills.

Friday Clocktown Rockers!
*For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Fridays at 10:30-11am

Join Miss Katrina for this new music and movement program! We’ll dance to favorite kids’ tunes, have fun with instruments and other props, and read a story, all while building your child’s early literacy and executive function skills.

Storytime Sprouts
* For ages 0-3 with a caregiver
Wednesdays @ 10:30am-11am

Join us for a fun and interactive story time filled with singing, reading, bounces, fingerplays, puppets, instruments, and more! This engaging program is designed to introduce young children to the joys of literature and music while promoting early literacy skills.

Saturday Stories
*for ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Saturdays @ 10:30am-11am

Join Miss Kayla for a new Saturday morning storytime! We’ll read lively stories, do fun rhymes and movement activities, and work on simple crafts. For families with children ages 2-5. No registration required.

Recurring Weekly Programs:
Sensory Bin Exploration
Mondays @ 10:30-11:15am
*For ages 2-6

Bring your little ones to enjoy an open play sensory bin exploration! Every session will feature a new theme, offering hands-on fun. No registration required.

Coding for Kids
Saturdays, August 2 & 9 @ 11:30-1:00 PM
*For grades K-4

Gear up for a tech-tastic adventure with our Coding Class for Kids! Kids will dive into the thrilling world of coding, where imagination meets innovation. With hands-on fun taught through an interactive game, your child will master the basics of coding. Whether they’re building games or solving puzzles, this class promises excitement and discovery at every turn. Space is limited and registration is required.

Messy Art Storytime
Thursdays @ 10:30-11:15am
*For ages 2-6

Join Miss Paige for storytime and messy, hands-on fun! Kids will enjoy a new art project that lets their creativity shine. Dress for a mess and get ready to create! No registration required.

Teen:
Life-Sized Board Games
Tuesday, August 5 @ 5:30—6:30 PM

If bigger is better, then we’ve got the best board games around! Roll on scooters to win in life-sized Hungry, Hungry Hippos. Run to the correct card in Memory Match. Toss bean bags to the best square in TicTacToe. Who will win? That’s up to you. Registration is Requested

Snack Club
Thursday, August 14th @ 5:00—7:00PM

Join us for the second meeting of the snack club! Each month we will do a snack related activity or game- from rating to making. Snacks and friends. What more could you ask for? See you there! Registration required.

VEX Robotics Camp - August Session

Monday, August 11 @ 6:00-7:00 PM
Tuesday, August 12 @ 6:00-7:00 PM
Wednesday, August 13 @ 6:00-7:00 PM
Thursday, August 14 @ 6:00-7:00 PM
Friday, August 15 @ 3:30-4:30 PM

Welcome to Robotics Summer Camp! Middle school students will spend a week learning robotics by building and programming VEX robots. Topics include programming robots to pick up objects, understanding gear ratios, and building robots from scratch. Students are expected to attend the full week of classes.

Friends of the Ashland Public Library Monthly Book Sale & Donation Day!

Saturday, August 2 @ 9:30 AM—1:00 PM

The sale includes thousands of titles, organized by genre and author, with a special section for children’s books. To keep the shelves stocked with fresh selections, the Friends will be accepting donations in the library parking lot of gently used books, audio books and DVDs. Friends volunteers will be available to assist donors from 9:30am until 1pm on Saturday. There is also a cart in the mezzanine lobby for donations at any time during library hours.

Proceeds from these monthly book sales and all fundraising efforts made by the Friends fund 100% of children, teen, and adult programs, our wonderful Museum Passes, and so much more! If you can’t make it to the sales, the Friends have a book sale corner on the 1st floor of the library (in the beautiful original part of the building). There, you can find great books for yourself and your family any time the library is open.



Gearing Up For Fall Sports

The summer is moving incredibly fast. Start dates for most sports are a little more than five weeks away.

Specific practice times and locations for each sport will be shared by coaches in early August which is why it's extremely important to register as soon as possible.

If your child plans to try out for a team, please make sure they are available during the first few days is important for team placement and preparation. Some teams may hold tryouts during the first few days, while others will jump right into practice depending on roster size and structure.

A more detailed schedule will be made available but please plan for a busy and exciting kickoff to the fall season.

2025 Fall Start Dates

Friday, August 15 - Cheer Football

Monday, August 18 - Cross Country, Field Hockey, Golf, Soccer, Volleyball

Monday, August 25 - Middle School Football

All other MS and Unified sports start after Labor Day.



High School Athletic Awards

- | | |
|---|--|
| MALE STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
Will Child | MIAA PILLAR AWARD - COMMUNITY SERVICE
Yash Pawnarkar |
| FEMALE STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
Vanessa Thompson | MIAA PILLAR AWARD - SPORTSMANSHIP
Dante Merloni |
| MALE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS AWARD
Keshawn Graham | MIAA PILLAR AWARD - LEADERSHIP
Liam Fitzsimons |
| FEMALE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS AWARD
Paige Tripp | NFHS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
Nathan Gerlovin |
| MIAA PILLAR AWARD - WELLNESS
Noah George | NFHS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
Amanda Reid |



Middle School Athletic Awards

Ashland Athletics handed out end of year awards for middle school sports. They are listed below. Congratulations to all of those who were honored.

Middle School Awards

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| BASEBALL
MVP: Ryan Passalaqua
Coaches Award: JP Duffy | UNIFIED BASKETBALL
Coaches Award: Brady Giles | Coaches Award: Laura Gragen |
| BOYS BASKETBALL
MVP: Anish Muthyala
Coaches Award: Nolan Gorman | Coaches Award: James Walker | FIELD HOCKEY
MVP: Madeline Sanders
Coaches Award: Ava Carroll |
| GIRLS BASKETBALL
MVP: Julia Frias
Coaches Award: Elaina Earley | BOYS CROSS COUNTRY
MVP: Ethan Goutis
Coaches Award: Logan Abrams | FOOTBALL
MVP: Nolan Gorman
Coaches Award: Owen Gaiero |
| | GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY
MVP: Leah Dittenhafer | BOYS SOCCER
MVP: Tommy Palermo
Coaches Award: Lorenzo Rezende |



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- | |
|---|
| GIRLS SOCCER
MVP: Kaycie Purpura
Coaches Award: Ally King |
| SOFTBALL
MVP: Bella Domestico
Coaches Award: Ava Venditti |
| BOYS TRACK & FIELD
MVP: Chris Deshommes
Coaches Award: Rishabh Gohil |
| GIRLS TRACK & FIELD
MVP: Leah Dittenhafer
Coaches Award: Corrine Consiglio |
| VOLLEYBALL
MVP: Caroline Bremmenkamp
Coaches Award: Jennyfer Martins |

Sports

Freshman on the Move

By Christopher Tremblay,
Staff Sports Writer

Neko Ustaris is a three sport (field hockey, basketball and softball) athlete for Ashland and luckily for her coaches she has just finished her freshman year and will be around for another three campaigns for all three Clocker teams. While softball is her favorite sport, basketball is a close second. The Ashland athlete finds softball to be more of a calming sport, but one in which you need to continually focus.

As a youth she began playing first base at the coach's request, but over time she found that she wasn't growing as fast as the other girls and soon found herself to be too short to play the position. Ustaris found that she enjoyed playing shortstop and centerfield in addition to her always being a part-time pitcher.



"In middle school I was originally moved to short because there were girls who were taller than I was and the coach had them play first-base," the freshman said. "I was playing centerfield because of my speed and range and found that it was a really fun position with a lot of action. It was also a position (point guard) that translated to my position on the basketball court."

As an eighth grader Ustaris tried out for the high school team and along with three other friends made the junior varsity squad.

"It was very intimidating at first being a middle schooler playing on a high school team with a lot of older girls," Ustaris said. "Not only that but we had to take a bus to the high school for practice and the first time walking

onto the field was overwhelming."

As an eighth grader playing on the JV team, Ustaris found herself playing shortstop, centerfield and pitcher. Having always been a pitcher growing up, it was the JV team that started to rely on her arm more than usual.

"I didn't mind it, in fact I enjoy having the ball in my hand and being the one that is in control of the flow of the game," she said.

Having gone through the season playing for the JV squad Ustaris was more than willing and excited this year to try out for the varsity team as a freshman. She went into the tryouts with the utmost of confidence and would have been highly disappointed if she didn't earn a spot on the team.

"I knew there was little to no pitchers and that was a role that I could fill," Ustaris said. "I also played other positions so that gave me an advantage and I was a good batter."

Ustaris started the season as the team's number 2 pitcher but with work on her speed she soon found herself jumping into that number one role, while still playing shortstop when not in the circle.

Coming into the season Ashland Softball Coach Matt Matsen was aware of the incoming freshman's capabilities, but just didn't realize that she'd take off the way she did on the varsity level.

"Having played on the JV last year I knew of her but didn't know what we were going to get from her. Even as a pitcher I was unsure of what she would be able to do on the varsity level, but thankfully it translated quite well," the Clocker Coach said. "In the field, I believe that shortstop is one of the harder positions to play and her skill out there bodes well for the future of the team."

The first-year varsity player finished the season as the Clocker's number two batter with a .435 average at the plate, where she recorded a .493 on base percentage and a .661 slugging percentage as the team's lead-off hitter. Ustaris would record 27 hits that included two doubles, three triples, two homeruns with seven RBI and 27 runs scored. She also led the team with 20



stolen bases and was only caught once. Ustaris was also named to the Tri-Valley league All Star team this past season.

In the early part of the season the freshman threw a no-hitter and she believes that was the turning point in the season.

"Going into the season I wasn't really thinking too much about pitching, but since throwing that no-hitter my confidence soared – it was a breakout game," she said. "I really had no idea that I was working on a no-hitter, so I was surprised to learn that I threw one; to me it was just another regular day."

Ustaris first was notified of the accomplishment when she was awarded the game ball and congratulated on the no-hitter. She said she was totally taken by surprise to record such an accomplished feat, something that is hard to come by, especially by a freshman.

Now that the high school season is over, Ustaris will go back to playing for her AAU team, the Blackstone Valley Venom, where she'll continue to play all three positions while improving her game. During the summer she is hoping to not only get stronger but wants to increase her pitching speed. At the plate she considers herself a consistent contact hitter that can create some occasional power.

As an athlete that will be entering her sophomore campaign next spring, Matsen is ecstatic that he has Ustaris for another three seasons on the field. Ustaris on the other hand is already eyeing collegiate play and believes that she has the ability to play on the college level. While this is a goal of hers, she knows that being so young she is in a wait and see



situation so for the time being she will continue to play for the Venom as well as the Clockers for the next three years while improving her skill set on the field.

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Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
07/15/2025	194 Captain Eames Circle	\$535,000
07/11/2025	263 Meeting House Path	\$495,000
07/11/2025	85 Howe Street	\$850,000
07/11/2025	77 Trailside Way	\$500,000
07/10/2025	87 E Bluff Road	\$555,000
07/09/2025	94 Hilldale Road	\$741,000
07/09/2025	23 Ramblewood Drive	\$750,000
07/08/2025	17 Longhill Road	\$630,000
07/08/2025	65 Spyglass Hill Drive	\$500,000
07/01/2025	107 America Blvd.	\$726,500
06/30/2025	222 Algonquin Trail	\$665,000
06/30/2025	18 Irene Circle	\$1.73 mil
06/27/2025	173 Leland Farm Road	\$488,500
06/25/2025	54 Sudbury Road	\$885,000
06/25/2025	13 Meeting House Path	\$490,000
06/24/2025	61 Stagecoach Drive	\$800,000
06/24/2025	4 Morey Drive	\$1.00 mil
06/23/2025	44 Hardwick Road	\$1.27 mil
06/23/2025	27 Longhill Road	\$775,000
06/23/2025	12 Edward Drive	\$760,000
06/17/2025	104 W Union Street	\$620,000
06/16/2025	103 Spyglass Hill Drive	\$555,000
06/16/2025	24 Washington Avenue	\$710,000
06/16/2025	0 Caroline Road (6.9 acres)	\$450,000



The 3-bed, 3-bath, 2,012-square-foot home at 54 Sudbury Road in Ashland recently sold for \$885,000. www.zillow.com Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages

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Real Estate Corner

Specs Of Home Inspection



Kim Foemmel
Real Estate Broker

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Whether buying or selling a home, it’s important to understand the specifics of a home inspection.

The purpose of a home inspection is to assess the condition of a property. This differs from a home appraisal, which serves to determine a home’s market value. A home inspection identifies potential problems, safety issues and needed repairs on a structure and its systems, such as roof and foundation, electrical and wiring, plumbing and HVAC. Depending on the age and location of the dwelling, the inspection might also include testing for radon, lead paint or water and air quality.

An inspection offers advantages to both parties. For the buyer, it uncovers information critical to making an informed decision on a significant in-

vestment. It advises them of any safety hazards and enables long-term maintenance and financial planning. It also can provide leverage for negotiations. For the seller, an inspection promotes transparency and trust, increases buyer confidence and reduces potential liability as a result of undisclosed problems. Additionally, having a pre-listing inspection, known as “pre-home inspection,” will allow the seller to anticipate and address issues that could impact the transaction.

While a home inspection is not legally required to complete a home purchase, a seller is required to grant one if requested by the buyer. New

state laws protecting a buyer’s rights regarding inspections (760 CMR 74.00; see mass.gov) will go into effect Oct. 15 of this year.

Inspections should be conducted by a licensed professional. Referrals can be solicited from your real estate agent, friends or family. Licensed inspectors also can be found on the state government website (mass.gov) or through professional organizations such as the American Society of Home Inspectors (homeinspector.org) or the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (nachi.org). If you know the house needs work, you might want to include a contractor in the

process to provide pricing for any repairs or updates.

Whether on the market or in the market, a home inspection will arm you with information to help you cover your assets — and that’s always advisable.

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