

localtownpages Hopedale

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

September 1, 2025

Ninth Annual Fairy Walk was Magical

By SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

Imaginations young and old turned out this summer for the ninth annual Friends of Historic Hopedale Fairy Walk.

Organization President Tracey Philips said the walk, as usual, was a success.

"Thank you for another magical (there just isn't another word to describe it) day at 2025 Hopedale Fairy Walk!" She said in her annual thank you letter.

Philips said they were about 40 houses this year.

"This was our 9th year and we had about 40 houses built for the walk this year. A great turnout despite the sprinkles the first half of



WALK

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Special Town Meeting approves purchase of two condos to relocate Town Hall offices

\$600,000 approved for costs associated with two units in Professional Building

By THERESA KNAPP

At a June 17 Special Town Meeting, Hopedale voters allocated \$600,000 for costs associated with the purchase of two condominium units in the Hopedale Professional Building at 54 Hopedale Street. Units 1 and 103 will be renovated to serve as new municipal offices, and the current Town Hall will be closed.

There was one question on the warrant which generated a 20-minute discussion

about the need, and related implications, to moving out of the current Town Hall - a building that was built in 1886, at the direction of George Draper of the Draper Corporation, and has been riddled with issues over the years.

The Finance Committee supported the purchase.

The article passed overwhelmingly, with one nay-sayer.

MEETING

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WALK

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the day. Nothing stops our fairies and magical fans from visiting,” she said.

Pleased with the turnout, Philips said the kudos should go to those who build the houses and those who volunteer.

“This event is A LOT of work and to be honest, in the days leading up to it, I get pretty tired and start questioning why I still do it after 9 years.

“And then the day before the event arrives and my very dedicated (but VERY small) team of volunteers start to show up to help with the monumental task of physical setup, and the next morning 7am arrives and they show up again, 8am the very talented vendors start driving in (despite the forecast), then our sweet house builders bringing the stars of the show...and then (and I literally just got choked up as

I'm about to write it) 10am and you all came!

“I actually got to be at the entrance this time at opening and watch you all come from so many different directions (again, despite the forecast) to participate in this wacky idea I had 9 years ago. And those of you who come in costume, I adore you!

“Seeing you all, kids to adults, show up and interact with each other and enjoy each others company and find like minded souls, it is amazing,” said Philips.

And in case anyone is wondering, yes, there will be a 10th annual Hopedale Fairy Walk, June 13, 2026. Next up for the Friends of Historical Hopedale: the Winter Stroll and Shop Hop on Dec. 6. Interested businesses should reach out by mid-October to info@friendsof-historichopedale.com.



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Chuck Tashjian

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Susan Manning

Send Editorial to:
editor@hopedaletownnews.com

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

Advertising Director
Jen Schofield
508-570-6544
jenschofield@localtownpages.com

Creative Design & Layout
Michelle McSherry
Kim Vasseur
Wendy Watkins

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MEETING

continued from page 1

At the meeting, Town Administrator Mitch Ruscitti said, “As of right now, whether or not we purchase these condo units, [Town Hall] is going to be closed for health and safety reasons.”

The offices that will move into the condos include the Town Administrator, Treasurer, Assessors, Board of Health, Building Department, and the Town Clerk. Hopedale Cable, whose current lease is about to expire, will also move into the space and will pay rent to the town.

It was noted that the lease for the Beyond Full restaurant is coming to an end, and the Curiosity Shoppe will also be leaving the building.

While voters allocated \$600,000, all funds may not be spent. Ruscitti said the purchase price of the two units is

\$450,000, and moving costs are between \$30,000 and \$38,000. He said the renovation costs will be covered by ARPA funds and will not come from the tax levy.

Other sites were considered, including space at the airport, but Ruscitti noted that residents have said they want to keep municipal offices in the center of town. This space will also keep town offices “close in proximity to our police, fire and highway departments in addition to school administrative offices.”

When renovated, the condo space can accommodate smaller meetings but larger meetings will be held elsewhere, likely at the public library or in a school building, said Ruscitti.

The Town also looked at leasing space but, “The lease cost would be in excess of \$200,000 a year for the same space,” said Ruscitti. He also said the town, over the last year, has spent over \$258,000 to keep Town Hall

running, and most of that was in heating and plumbing repair. “We can’t, during any given year, spend over a certain threshold without triggering ADA compliance, which would require us to put in an elevator which we can’t afford.”

“When you factor in what we are going to spend this year to keep the Town Hall operational versus what it costs us to winterize Town Hall and move into these units, over the fiscal year, we are going to save in tax levy more than \$130,000.”

The Town will pay about \$24,000 in condo fees per year which will include snowplowing,

sanding, common area maintenance, minor repairs, some utilities, and master insurance (the town will also purchase supplemental insurance).

Ruscitti said that, to own and operate these condos, including HOA fees, “equals about \$64,000 a year, which is about a quarter of what we’re going to spend in just keeping the Town Hall open, nevermind that we’re keeping it open with numerous building and health code violations that we know exist.”

When Town Meeting member Dalton Haynes asked how long it would take for the Town to break even with its costs, Ruscitti said, “When you factor in what we are going to spend this year to keep the Town Hall operational versus what it costs us to winterize Town Hall and move into these units, over the fiscal year, we are going to save in tax levy more than \$130,000.”

When Town Meeting mem-

ber Ed McGrath asked who would pay the taxes on the condos, Ruscitti said the Town would not pay property taxes on the units, noting the units previously taxes on the units were \$9,700 a year.

He explained, “However, when you factor in that \$9,700 against the \$250,000 that we’re spending to keep Town Hall open, we’re still well ahead on what’s going out. Keep in mind as well that, if move forward to selling the Town Hall building for private redevelopment, it’s also going to be bringing in in far excess of the \$9,700 in property taxes, so we are looking to make money on this transaction.”

A Request for Proposals for the reuse, rehabilitation, or disposition of the current Town Hall went out in July and responses were due by Sept. 1. For the fully story, visit <https://bit.ly/HopedaleTownHallReuseProcessMovingForward>.

BVT’s School Lunch and Breakfast Programs Policy

Families Encouraged to Check Eligibility Chart & Submit Application

UPTON – The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District (BVT) is pleased to continue offering its students one free breakfast and lunch at school, thanks to permanent funding from the USDA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While meals are provided at no cost, families are still encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced Price Meal Application on the school website. Doing so helps expand other educational and nutrition initiatives across the district and sustain funding for the program in future years.

You do not need to complete an application to receive free

meal benefits if you receive a letter stating that your child is eligible for free meals via the direct certification process. Families who qualify for free or reduced price meals may also become eligible for Sun Bucks, a new program launching in 2026 that offers grocery assistance during the summer when school is out. Families may also qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which offers monthly financial assistance for grocery expenses. If you're not currently receiving SNAP but think you may be eligible, contact Project Bread's Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 or apply online at DTA Connect.

To see if children from your household are eligible for free or reduced price meal services, please visit the school website where you can view the federal eligibility income chart, find answers to frequently asked questions, and complete an online application at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/freereducedmealsfaq.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton,

and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, Blackstone Valley Tech creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.



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Hopedale Day In The Park

Plans for the 45th Hopedale Day in the Park are underway.

Because of the proposed renovation of the Hopedale Town Park, this year the event will be held on the grounds of the Hopedale Community House on Saturday, Sept. 20, from 10am to 4pm.

Applications for vendors, art show information, and sponsor forms can be found on the town website.

<http://www.hopedale-ma.gov> > Boards and Commissions > Cultural Council.
hopedaleculturalcouncil@yahoo.com

Hopedale Day in the Park September 20, 2025

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Daniel Soares, Electrician
Buma Funeral Homes
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Dewey Pest and Wildlife
Homefield Credit Union
Edwards Memorial Funeral Home
Braza and Mancini, Inc.
Antonia C. Maki, M.D.

Silver Level

Gene's Variety
Watson Colonial Funeral Home

Art Show Purchase Prize

Bright Insurance
Frank's Appliance

Welcome Back to School

By KAREN CREBASE,
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Hopedale Public Schools are off to a successful start to the 2025–26 school year. New staff members were welcomed during our orientation session on July 30th, where they were introduced to our district's culture, expectations, and resources for success. On August 25th, all staff will gather for our district-wide meeting to set the course for the year, followed by school-

based meetings and classroom preparation. Finally, on Tuesday, August 26th, we will open our doors to students, filling our hallways once again with energy, excitement, and the promise of a productive year ahead.

Over the summer, our team was hard at work preparing our schools for the year ahead. We are proud to have accomplished several important improvement projects, including updated flooring in key areas of all three buildings, development of the

Memorial School Center for Innovation, Research and Creativity, and the replacement of the Junior-Senior High School roof. In addition, many smaller upgrades and refreshes have taken place across the district to ensure safe, comfortable, and welcoming learning environments. At the same time, our teachers and staff thoughtfully prepared their classrooms and lessons, ensuring that every student felt welcomed back to spaces where they can learn, grow, and thrive.

We are hopeful that families will join us for our Back to School Nights. These are scheduled for September 11, 2025 at BBC, September 18, 2025 at Memorial, and September 25, 2025 at the Junior-Senior High School. Principals will send detailed information to families as the dates draw closer.

Welcome back to school. We look forward to a productive and exciting year together.

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Hopedale Public Schools Offers Meals at No Cost for All Students

Hopedale Public Schools participates in the **National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program**. As part of this program **Hopedale JSHS, Memorial and Bright Beginnings** offers healthy meals every school day. The Commonwealth is supplementing National School Lunch Program funds to ensure all students have access to healthy school meals in Massachusetts, regardless of household income. We ask that families complete a Meal Benefit Application as this provides data for school funding and community resources. The results from each Meal Benefit Application is used to ensure sustainability for this program.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2024-2025						
	Maximum Household Income Eligible for Free Meals			Maximum Household Income Eligible for Reduced Price Meals		
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$20,345	\$1,696	\$392	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$557
2	27,495	2,292	529	39,128	3,261	753
3	34,645	2,888	667	49,303	4,109	949
4	41,795	3,483	804	59,478	4,957	1,144
5	48,945	4,079	942	69,653	5,805	1,340
6	56,095	4,675	1,079	79,828	6,653	1,536
7	63,245	5,271	1,217	90,003	7,501	1,731
8	70,395	5,867	1,354	100,178	8,349	1,927
Each additional person:	+7,150	+596	+138	+10,175	+848	+196

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available **Main office at each school, Hopedale Public Schools website, <https://www.hopedaleschools.org/page/food-services>**.

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. Contact **Cheryl Bober** 508-488-5625 or email cbober@hopedaleschools.org at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced price policy, **the Food Service Director** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **Lynne Davis, 25 Adin Street Hopedale MA 01747, 508-488-5503**

When known to **Hopedale Public Schools** households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to Hopedale Public Schools households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible," because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster
- Homeless,
- Migrant,
- Runaway,
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits. For more information, you may call **Cheryl Bober at 508-488-5625** or e-mail at cbober@hopedaleschools.org

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- 1. mail:**
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- 2. fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- 3. email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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Bancroft Memorial Library

Library News

The Library will be closed on Monday, September 1st for the Labor Day weekend holiday.

Our Friday Regular Hours (1pm-5pm) resume on September 5th.

Cribbage Tournaments

We are excited to partner with Blackstone Valley Libraries to host Cribbage Tournaments! Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, this event is open to players of all levels. Enjoy an evening of strategy, fun, and great company! Registration is mandatory; please contact the hosting Library directly to sign up.

At Bancroft Memorial Library, Wednesday, September 17th 5:30-7:30pm

At Millbury Public Library, Wednesday, October 8th 5:30-7:30pm

We are looking for suggestions!

As a community gathering place, we welcome ideas from residents for programs and passive activities - whether it's a coloring/puzzle table, or space to play Cribbage or Mahjong!

Helen Symonds Book Group – Wednesday, September 3rd at 1:00pm

The group will be discussing James by Percival Everett.

Community Conversations – Wednesday, September 3rd at 6:30pm

Community Conversations will meet in the Program Room to talk about “Lessons on Tyranny, Part II”. This meeting can be attended via Zoom; please email kbethel-penny@cwmarc.org to request the link.

News from the Friends of the Hopedale Library:

The next Friends of the Hopedale Library Meeting is Wednesday, September 10th at 6:30pm.

Hopedale Day in the Park – Saturday, September 20th from 10am to 4pm

Be sure to stop by our booth at the Day in Park on the Hopedale Community House lawn (NEW location). We will have puzzles and books for sale and our 125th Anniversary Glass Ornaments! These glass ornaments are perfect for your window or the Christmas tree. The commemorative ornaments are handcrafted by Becker Glass and are available in blue and clear for \$20. They also can be purchased at the Library during open hours.

Travels Through the Heart and Soul of New England by Ted Reinstein – Monday, September 29th at 6:30 pm

Join us as journalist and au-

thor Ted Reinstein shares his new book Travels Through the Heart and Soul of New England: Stories of Struggles, Resilience and Triumph. Ted Reinstein has spent 25 years covering New England, sharing its rich history and evolving character. Now, he brings together his travels in one heartfelt journey through all six states, highlighting unforgettable people and their surprising stories – tales of resilience, humor, and hope that capture the true spirit of New England and the best of America. From a surfer on New Hampshire’s short coast to a one-man music museum in Maine, treehouse dreams in Vermont, and a Rhode Island cartoonist spreading comfort citywide – each story unfolds in the voices of those who live them. This is New England as you’ve never seen it: honest, intimate, and full of unexpected wonder. Books will be available for purchase. To register for this free program, please stop by the Library, call 508-634-2209, or sign up through the online program calendar. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Hopedale Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Book Donation Day – Wednesday, September 24th from 5:30-7:30pm

The Friends of the Hopedale Library would love your like-new books for our Ongoing Book Sale. Children’s books of any age are welcome. Due to space constraints, we ask that adult books be published within the last 10 years or later. Unfortunately, we cannot accept old books, textbooks, or cookbooks. We depend on books in saleable condition to raise money to support our programming.

Honey Dew Fundraiser – Thursday, October 2nd from 7am to 11am

Stop by either Milford Honey Dew location for delicious coffee and treats and help the Friends of the Hopedale Library raise funds for programs! No special flyer or code needed. Honey Dew Donuts is generously donating 10% of the sales. A big thank you to them for their support of our community!

FlowerPower.org Fundraiser

Please support The Friends of the Hopedale Library by shopping our FlowerPower.org fundraiser through October 15th! You can order fall bulbs online and have orders shipped directly to you. The Friends of the Hopedale Library earns 50% which goes right back to the Library. Shop at <http://hopedalelibrary.fpfundraising.com>.

Ongoing Book Sale

Did you know that you can support the Friends of the Hopedale Library anytime the library is open by shopping at the Ongoing Book sale? We offer a selection of adult and children’s titles, and even puzzles! You can find the sale area downstairs just outside the Program room. All monies raised go back to the Bancroft Memorial Library to pay for children's and adult programs, museum passes and other expenses not covered by the library budget. Thank you for your support!

About the Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Hopedale Library, founded in 1983, is an active volunteer, non-profit organization with a town-wide membership and a representative executive board. We work with the library staff and the trustees to support the library in providing funds for equipment, mate-

rials, and programs not covered by the library's regular operating budget. The Friends of the Hopedale Library meets the second Wednesday of the month, September through June at 6:30 pm. New members and ideas are always welcome.

News from the Marjorie Hattersley Children's Room:

Summer Reading 2025

Our Summer Reading Program wrapped up on Friday, August 15th and with over 330 participants, it was our most successful summer yet! More than 132,000 reading minutes were logged in the Children’s Room – that’s the equivalent of 91 straight days of reading! A huge thank you to our sponsors, readers, and the entire community for making this program possible – we couldn’t do it without you!

Now accepting gently used costumes and dress up clothes!

We are now accepting donations of gently used costumes and dress-up clothes – from infant to teen sizes – for a Halloween Costume Swap! This program allows kids to pick out “new-to-them” Halloween costumes and accessories. This is a fun way to recycle costumes, reduce waste, and offer affordable options for our community. Stay tuned for more information!

Just a reminder: There will be no regular Children’s Programs during September, as Miss Laura prepares for her fall programs that will begin in October.

For updates throughout the month, Friend us on Facebook and sign up at www.wowbrary.org to discover the Library’s newest books, movies and music. Our webpage is www.bancroftmemoriallibrary.org

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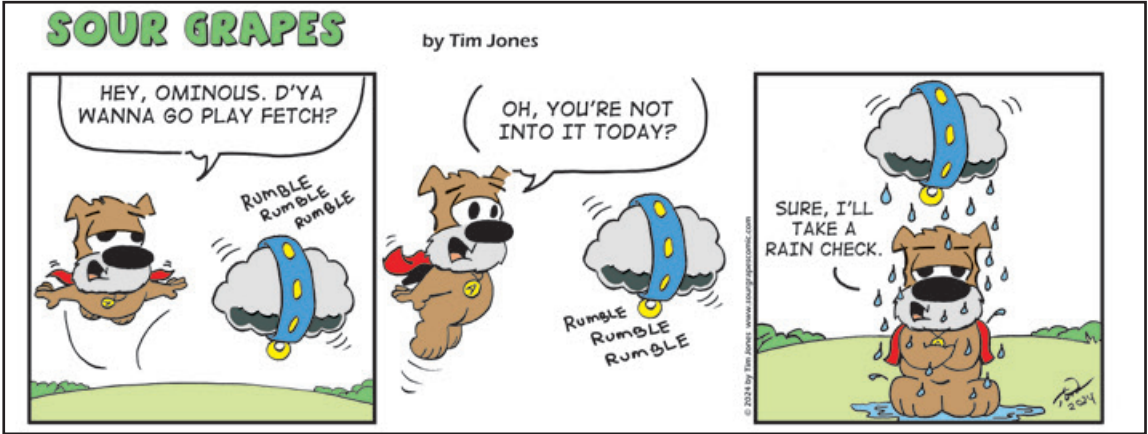




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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



Family-run Affordable Junk Removal takes the stress out of cleanups

By CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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

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

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

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



During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

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

In addition to delivering an

Business spotlight

in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Hopedale in particular, Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. The Schadlers live in nearby Milford and have coached and sponsored many youth sports activities in both Hopedale and Milford.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships



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

with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

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Popsicles with the Principal Welcomes BBC Families Back to School

The start of a new school year is always filled with excitement, anticipation, and a touch of nerves. At the Bright Beginnings Center, the preschool for the Hopedale Public Schools, families were given the perfect opportunity to ease into the transition with a warm and welcoming community event: *Popsicles with the Principal*.

Held on the school's playground, this back-to-school gathering invited preschoolers and their families to meet Principal Kristen Poisson and get acquainted with School Facility Dog Sunny. Designed to be informal and family-friendly, the event provided a relaxed setting where parents, caregivers, and children could connect with one another while enjoying popsicles under the late-summer sun.

Principal Poisson shared that the goal of the event was to build a bridge between home and school, setting a positive tone for



BBC families enjoy the school playground while at Popsicles with the Principal

the year ahead. "Starting preschool is such a big step for children and their families," she said. "We want our youngest learners to feel comfortable and confident as they walk through our doors. Popsicles with the Principal gives everyone a chance to meet me, meet Sunny, and meet each other before the first day."

Children were especially excited to spend time with Sunny, the school's beloved facility dog,

who has become a calming and cheerful presence throughout the building. Sunny greeted students with tail wags and snuggles, helping ease any first-day jitters before they even began. For many children, their first "official" school memory now includes a popsicle in one hand and Sunny's paw or nose nudging the other.

The playground setting also allowed children to explore a space they will soon call their

own. Families could watch their children climb, slide, and laugh with new classmates, while parents and guardians had the chance to meet one another. Conversations among families often included shared hopes for the school year, introductions of siblings, and plenty of smiles.

For BBC staff, the event highlighted the importance of community partnership. Preschool is not just a place where children learn academic and social skills—it is often a family's first experience with the Hopedale Public Schools. As classroom teacher Lizzie Reardon said at the event, "By creating opportunities for personal connections early, we can strengthen our relationships with families. We love seeing our new and returning families come together."

The popsicles themselves provided a lighthearted touch, bringing joy and simplicity to the day. As Principal Poisson

noted, "Sometimes the best way to welcome families is through something small and fun—like sharing a popsicle together. It's a way to remind our students that school is a place where they will be cared for, supported, and celebrated."

As the event came to a close, families left with sticky fingers, happy smiles, and a stronger sense of belonging. The excitement of a new year at Bright Beginnings Center was already buzzing, with children talking about their new friends, parents feeling reassured about their choice of school, and Sunny contentedly resting after a busy evening of tail wags.

The *Popsicles with the Principal* tradition, now in its fifth year, has quickly become a hallmark of the Bright Beginnings Center experience—one that embodies the school's commitment to fostering connection, joy, and confidence in every young learner.

Hopedale Schools Family Engagement Center

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We are excited to announce the opening of our new Family Engagement Center, made possible through a generous state budget earmark supported by our local legislators, State Representative Brian Murray and Senator Ryan Fattman.

This new space, transformed from a large storage closet on the third floor of the Junior-Senior High School, will serve as a welcoming hub for families across our district.

The center will be used for new student registration and will offer a variety of support services to help connect families with resources and strengthen the home-school partnership. We are deeply grateful for the funding that allowed us to create this important and inclusive space for our community.



Take a look at our before and after photos, or feel free to stop by for a visit.

If your family needs any support, please email Sara Gerges at sgerges@hopedaleschools.org.

Your Money, Your Independence

Navigating College Admissions with Financial Planning



Glenn Brown, CFP

The college admissions process can feel overwhelming for both students and parents. From understanding early application options to maximizing financial aid and planning for expenses, every decision matters. Let's break down key aspects to help families make confident, informed choices.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

These two common early application paths are typically due around November 1, but they work very differently: Early Action (EA): Students apply earlier and receive admissions decisions sooner, without any binding commitment. EA applicants can apply to multiple schools and compare offers before deciding. Early Decision (ED): A binding commitment—if admitted, students must attend. ED can improve acceptance odds because schools see these applicants as highly motivated. However, families must request merit aid at the time of application; later financial aid concerns can jeopardize an acceptance.

Maximizing Merit-Based Aid

Merit aid is awarded for academic, athletic, or artistic achievements rather than financial need. To improve chances:

Look Beyond Trophy Schools. Highly competitive universities offer little merit aid because of their abundant applicant pools. Instead, consider niche colleges or specialized programs where your student's strengths stand out. Build Recruiter Relationships. Merit decisions often hinge on personal connections. Encourage students to reach out to local recruiters, share interests, and stay in touch. These relationships can lead to introductions with faculty and admissions staff. When students apply, they should express enthusiasm directly—making their case for both admission and merit support. Let Students Lead. Recruiters prefer authentic student voices. Parents should support, but avoid writing, editing, or speaking on behalf of the student.

Making the Most of 529 Plans

A 529 plan offers tax-free growth and withdrawals when used for qualified education expenses. To use funds effectively: Adjust Investments Over Time: As college approaches, consider shifting a portion of funds into more stable investments—such as bonds or money markets—to reduce volatility. Stick to Qualified Expenses: Withdrawals must cover costs like tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Non-qualified expenses can trigger taxes and penalties.

Understanding Loan Options

Loans can help bridge financial gaps, but terms vary widely. Federal Student Loans: Typically lower interest rates and flexible repayment terms. Includes Direct Subsidized Loans (interest covered while in school) and Direct Unsubsidized Loans (interest accrues immediately). Parent PLUS Loans: Federal loans taken by parents. They

carry fixed interest rates and repayment flexibility, but parents assume the debt burden. Private Loans: Offered by banks and lenders. Usually higher interest rates and fewer protections, making them a last resort. Policy Update: Student Loan Reform For the first time in years, Congress—not just executive orders—has taken the lead on student loan reform. The One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) changes the “blank-check” borrowing effect: Parent PLUS Loans: Borrowing is now capped at \$20,000 per year and \$65,000 total for parents of undergraduates. Graduate Loans: Master's/ general graduate programs are now \$20,500 annually and

\$100,000 lifetime, while professional programs (e.g., law, medicine) are \$50,000 per year and \$200,000 total. Undergraduate Loans: Existing limits remain unchanged at \$12,500 annually and \$57,500 aggregate. By placing borrowing caps, OBBS shifts responsibility back to universities to manage affordability, rather than allowing unlimited borrowing. It's a step toward addressing the root cause of rising education costs—not just the symptoms. Final Thoughts Families who plan ahead—by understanding application strategies, targeting schools wisely, and exploring funding options—set themselves up for both financial stability and a smoother transition into college life. For tailored guidance, talk to your Certified Financial Planner. 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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Development of the Center for Innovation, Research, and Creativity (CIRC) at Memorial

This summer, the media center at Memorial Elementary School was transformed into the Center for Innovation, Research, and Creativity (CIRC), an exciting new space designed to spark curiosity and support hands-on learning. The CIRC will provide all students with access to STEM-focused activities, creative problem-solving opportunities, and innovative resources that encourage exploration and discovery. In addition to new furniture which was donated to the district, staff members wrote grants to secure new and exciting equipment such as a 3-D printer and a wide format printer. This transformation reflects Memorial's commitment to developing critical skills in young learners and creating dynamic, engaging learning environments that inspire future-ready thinking. These innovative experiences will lead directly into the innovative pathway opportunities that await our students at the JSHS.



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Sports

Colin Haynes looking To Lead Hopedale On The Links

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last fall the Hopedale golf team were co-champions of the Dual Valley Conference, finished third at the District Tournament and found themselves one shot short of advancing to the State Tournament. Coach Brett Boyd called it a successful season after having lost four seniors who helped the Blue Raiders to the best season in school history.

This year Hopedale will be looking to continue their success, while hoping to improve upon their post-season play. Senior co-captain Trevor Lachiatto will be relied heavily this fall to keep the team in the hunt once again teeing off in the number two slot.

“Two years ago with the group of seniors we really didn’t have to rely on Trevor and he could just go about his business and do his thing,” Coach Boyd said. “Last year he put too much pressure on himself with expectations, this year I expect him to settle in and help these kids perform as a team.”

Another senior, Brady Wajda, will follow Lachiatto on the tee as the team’s number three golfer. Boyd loves the seniors determination and mentality moving past his mistakes and is looking forward to what he’ll be able to give the team this year. Rounding out the top six will be senior Dylan Ferris, junior Jacob Whyte and sophomore Cam Vaillette. The trio of golfers have all shown flashes of putting together solid rounds but occasionally still find themselves having issues on the course in some form. Boyd believes that they are all capable of lowering their scores this season.

Hopedale will open the season in late August and will have completed seven matches before the first week of September.

While the Blue Raiders two through six golfers will be looked upon to help get the squad into he post-season; its main golfer will be co-captain Colin Haynes. The team’s number one golfer has been a team medalist in every match last year, including 14 out of 16 as a match medalist and was named the DVC’s Player of the Year last fall as a sophomore.



“As a freshman playing with seniors during his first season Colin continuously found himself playing as our number two or number three that year,” the Hopedale Coach said. “Being so young, he really didn’t have a voice on the team, but over the years he has become an incredible leader. The way he talks to the younger kids is phenomenal.”

Last year Haynes was by far the team’s number one golfer and was ready to put the team on his shoulders.



Golf was something that had been in Haynes’ family for several generations and his dad, who Haynes said was very good, taught him everything growing up. It was around the age of 13 he began committing himself more to golf.

“I was playing baseball as well as golf and although I was one of the better baseball players at that age, but I found that I put up even better performances at junior golf tournaments,” he said.

“That summer before seventh grade I figured I was wasting my time with baseball, especially if I wanted to play golf in college, so I quit baseball.”

Upon entering the Hopedale Jr/Sr High School Haynes was named the teams number two golfer while shooting an average of 44 per round. Being the youngest athlete on the golf course was very intimidating to the seventh grader, but his teammates had his back and helped

the youngster get through the season and all its difficulties.

“Being the team’s number two golfer was some big shoes to fill and it was an important spot on the team,” Haynes said. “I was nervous and it did put a lot of pressure on me that year, but I just learned to shutoff the background noise going into matches.”

Over the next two seasons the Blue Raiders found themselves with overall good teams, while Haynes continued to improve

Haynes qualified for the Individual State Tournament with an average of 36 throughout the season and was named the DVC Player of the Year, something that blew him away.

“It was really important being named the Player of the Year in the conference,” he said. “Playing in my fourth season in the DVC and having strong bonds with all the coaches it really meant a lot for them to vote for me.”

As he enters his junior season Haynes doesn’t want to look too far ahead. He is hoping that he can once again help his team put together yet another successful regular season, qualify for the post-season and win the District Tournament.

Last year the Blue Raiders top four golfers tied Ayer-Shirley’s top four golfers so it went to a card off and Hopedale’s fifth golfer was edged out by Ayer-Shirley’s fifth golfer. Haynes would like another shot to avenge last year’s narrow loss at the District Tournament.

Although he still has two years to complete at Hopedale, the junior is already looking into playing collegiate golf once he graduates. Haynes is looking at all three divisions and everything will all depend on the school and what they have to offer. Although everything is on the table, he is looking to stay in the New England area when he eventually makes his final decision on where to continue his schooling and golf career.

his game as well. Playing alongside of Lucas Levasseur Haynes learned a lot from the team’s number one golfer.

“Lucas showed me what it would take if I wanted to be a college level player,” he said. “A lot of golf is mental. You can have all the skills in the world, but it all comes down to what you have between your ears and can you avoid the mistakes.”

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By: ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.

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Mark D. Barsamian, D.O.

Dr. Barsamian is a vitreo-

retinal specialist affiliated with UMass Memorial Medical Center. He earned his DO degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed a two-year fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery at Ohio State University. With over 20 years of experience, he is board-certified and active in multiple professional societies. He also teaches as a Clinical Instructor of Surgery at Brown University. Patients value his expertise, compassion, and dedication.

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Donald L. Conn, O.D.
Dr. Conn received his optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry and completed a residency in Ocular Disease and Primary Care at the Bedford VA. He provides care to both adult and pediatric patients.

Purvi Patel, O.D.
Dr. Patel earned her Doctor of Optometry at SUNY and completed a residency in Ocular Disease. A Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, she has held leadership roles at Boston community health centers and focuses on diabetes, glaucoma, and community-based care.

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Senior Center News

Flu shot

Free flu shot clinics will be held on Thursday, October 9, and Thursday, October 23, from 4 to 6 PM, in the Hopedale High School cafeteria.

Bring your health insurance and/or Medicare cards. Note: HMO and Medicare Advantage Plan insurances are not accepted.

Wear a short-sleeved top. Pre-registration is not required, but registration will be required at the clinic.

Flu shots are available for those five years old and up. The over-65 flu vaccine will be available, as will the Covid vaccine. Pre-registration is required for the Covid vaccine two weeks before the clinic.

For more information or questions, call the Hopedale Senior Center: 508 – 634–2208.

Veterans Day Signs

Signs for the Hopedale veterans for the Community Center and Senior Center lawns display on Veterans Day are available by calling the senior center: 508–634–2208. The veteran must be a resident of Hopedale or, if deceased, must have been a resident.

Art show

Hopedale watercolor art class art show is going to be held on Thursday, September 25, at 6:30 PM, in the Hopedale Senior Center.

UMass Amherst Announces Spring 2025 Grads

Approximately 5,000 students received bachelor’s degrees in over 100 majors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Undergraduate Commencement on May 16, 2025 at the McGuirk Alumni Stadium.

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EYES

continued from page 12

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We are especially proud of our state-licensed and QUAD A-accredited, state-of-the-art surgery center in Milford. Unlike other practices that may perform cataract surgery in an office setting without anesthesia staff and without IV sedation, our patients have access to a fully accredited surgical facility close to home. At the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, your safety comes first: all patients receive IV sedation for comfort, and every surgery is staffed with an anesthesiologist.

Most importantly, we live in the same communities we serve. Whether in the office, at the local supermarket, or in the ER at 1 a.m., our focus remains on you, your vision, and delivering world-class care close to home.

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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, 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 (fee for vendors is \$20). 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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Hopedale Senior Center Calendar of Activities - September 2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY 	2 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge	3 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Cribbage	4 9:00 am Walking Grp. 10:00 am Watercolor Class 1:00 pm Tai Chi 6:30 pm Let's Talk About It	5 Senior Center closes at 12:00 pm
8 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:00 am Mah Jongg 12:30 pm BINGO	9 9:00 am Pilates 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge	10 9:30 am Nurse Clinic 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30pm Cribbage	11 9:00 am Walking Group 10:00 am Watercolor Class 1:00 pm Tai Chi	12 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise Senior Center closes at 12:00 pm
15 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:00 am Mah Jongg 12:30 pm BINGO	16 9:00 am Pilates 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance	17 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 11:15 am Dean Bank Fraud and Scam Presentation 12:30pm Cribbage	18 9:00 am Walking Group 10:00 am Watercolor Class 1:00 pm Tai Chi 6:30 pm Let's Talk About It	19 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise Senior Center closes at 12:00 pm
22 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:00 pm Lunch @ Senior Center 12:00 am Mah Jongg 12:30 pm BINGO	23 9:00 am Pilates 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance	24 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30pm Cribbage 1:00 pm Movie "Nonnas"	25 9:00 am Walking Group 10:00 am Watercolor Class 1:00 pm Tai Chi 6:30 pm Art Show	26 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise Senior Center closes at 12:00 pm
29 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:00 am Mah Jongg 12:30 pm BINGO	30 9:00 am Pilates 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance	 September		

Real Estate Corner

Recent Home Sales

Date	Hopedale	Amount
08/15/2025	6 Crockett Circle	\$629,000
08/11/2025	192 Laurelwood Drive	\$430,000
08/08/2025	77 Mill Street	\$750,000
07/31/2025	168 Laurelwood Drive	\$390,000
07/30/2025	2 Northrop Street	\$329,000
07/25/2025	121 Mill Street	\$565,000
07/23/2025	3 Five Bancroft Park	\$700,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages



The 3-bed, 3-bath, 2,009-square-foot unit at 121 Mill Street in Hopedale recently sold for \$565,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages

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Susanne Odell Farber

at 508-954-8148

or by email at

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