

## Southwick's Zoo welcomes newborn giraffe

Southwick's Zoo is thrilled to announce the birth of a baby giraffe, born Aug. 11, 2025, and already standing tall as the newest member of the zoo's family. The healthy calf, measuring just over five feet at birth, is a remarkable addition to New England's largest zoo and arrives during a year of special celebration for the zoo's 60th anniversary.

"This birth is a very special moment for our zoo and our community," said Betsy Brewer, Zoological Director and Executive Vice President at Southwick's Zoo.

The calf was born to Molly, who herself was hand-raised at Southwick's Zoo after she was too weak to nurse as a newborn.



**GIRAFFE**  
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## Mendon Senior Center celebrates seniors 85 and better



Mendon Senior Center hosted its annual Senior Tea on Aug. 10 for Mendon seniors aged 85 and over. Attendees included (front, L to R) Judith Violet, Frank Halsing, Pat Randor, Joan Marino, Dick Chace, and Max Grady. (back, L to R) Walter Unruh, Honey Vartabedian, Ann Halsing, Kay Holmes, Betsy Edsall, Warren Goodnow, John Palumbo, Lois Baldiga, and Bob Baldiga. Courtesy photo

By Theresa Knapp

On Aug. 10, the Mendon Council on Aging and the Friends of Mendon Elders hosted a Senior Tea for Mendon seniors aged

85 and over.

The event was funded by the Friends of Mendon Elders.

**SENIORS**  
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# Dottie Leighton, Mendon's oldest resident, dies at age 99

On Aug. 4, Mendon has lost its oldest resident, Dorothy "Dottie" Leighton, who was 99 years young.

Dottie (1926-2025) was a lover of dance, an active member of the Senior Center, Senior of the Year in 2020, and a long-time senior worker in the abatement program, among other distinctions. She was awarded Mendon's Boston Post Cane in 2022. She was a past member of the Mendon Council on Aging and a past member of the Mendon Baptist Church.

According to her obituary, "Dottie had many achievements during her lifetime her greatest achievement was her family especially when her son became a Mendon Police Officer and when her daughter graduated from Dean College. She was proud of every accomplishment her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren made and was always present for those accomplishments."

To read her full obituary, visit <https://legacy.co/46ggg8k>.



**Dorothy E. Leighton, 99, died in August. Dottie received Mendon's "Boston Post Cane" in 2022 as Mendon's oldest resident. Photo source: www.legacy.com**

# Upton Senior Center news for September 2025

## Pen Pal Program Info Session Monday, Sept. 15 at 1 p.m.

Are you an Upton Senior interested in becoming pen pals with a local 3rd grade student? To learn more about the program, please attend our upcoming information session on Monday, Sept. 15 at 1 p.m. in the Greatroom. If you are interested in participating this year, we strongly encourage you to attend this information session to secure your spot on our growing list! Space in the program is limited and only open to Upton residents. RSVP by Thursday, Sept. 11.

## Memory Café Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 2 p.m.

Memory Café is Back! After our August break, we are back and ready to reconnect! Join Tania and our new intern Sophia for a friendly conversation about ways to enhance our gatherings and welcome new faces who could benefit from the support. The Memory Café offers a safe, welcoming space for people experiencing memory changes—whether or not they have a formal dementia diagnosis—and for their caregivers, family, and friends. It's a place to connect, share stories, and enjoy activities together. Come have fun, make connections, and remember: come as a stranger, leave as a friend! Free lunch and dessert provided. RSVP at the Senior Center by Sept. 3.

## Office Hours with Rep. David Muradian Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 10 a.m.

Come and meet with our State Representative, ask questions, and share your thoughts on the issues that matter most to you and our community.

## FUSE News

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Senior Center's first Annual Senior BBQ and Ice Cream Social, co-sponsored by FUSE and Upton Fire & EMS. The event sold out and was a tremendous success!

FUSE T-Shirts are here! Shirts are \$20 and available at the Senior Center and upcoming events like Heritage Day on Sept. 27. Sizes are M, L, XL and 2XL and all proceeds support events like the Senior BBQ and Gadgets for Seniors.

Gadgets for Seniors. FUSE provides gadgets free of charge to Upton Seniors to help with daily living tasks like opening milk cartons and jars. If you could use one of these, call the Senior Center or stop by the desk. So far, over 38 gadgets have been distributed free to Upton Seniors!

The Friends of Upton Seniors (FUSE) collaborates with the Elder and Social Services staff to help fund social events, services and programs that enhance the quality of life for Seniors. We are a non-profit and all donations are tax-deductible. We welcome your donations, support and participation! For more info, contact us at: [friendsofuptonse-niors@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofuptonse-niors@gmail.com)

## Zumba® Gold Mondays at 11:45 a.m.

Ready to move, groove, and feel fantastic? Join our Zumba Gold classes — a low-impact, easy-to-follow dance workout perfect for active older adults or anyone looking for a gentler fitness option. Led by expert instructor, Dawn George, you'll

## UPTON SENIOR CENTER

*continued on page 4*

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## 2025 Summer Reading recap for Taft Public Library, names winners of boat race, Oreo stacking, worm race, rubber duck race

The Taft Public Library would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, Trustees, Friends, and town departments that made the summer reading program such a success in Mendon this year. It was a busy summer highlighted by storytimes around town, bubble shows, beach concerts, balloon twisting, frisbee dogs, crazy contests, ice cream raffles, and zoo animals. Special thanks to the Mendon Police Department and Fire Department, Southwick's Zoo, and JJ's Ice Cream for their participation in Read Around Town and a thank you from the library to all who helped make the 25th Taft Public Library Great Cardboard Boat Race the fun and memorable event that it was. The race day assistance of the Friends of the Taft Public Library, the Taft Library Trustees, Dan Byer and the Parks Department lifeguards and staff, and other town staff including

Town Administrator Jeremy Stull, Town Clerk Ellen Agro, and the Highway and Police departments was infinitely appreciated. On a personal note, the library director would like to thank Children's Librarian Tara Windsor for another year of determined work putting together an impressive summer reading program. She and the Taft staff (Kris Heumann, Monika Schmid, Jen O'Brien, Brenda Whitner, and Jane Blackwood) time and again approach the summer reading program with energy and enthusiasm. The end result may look effortless, but the preparation is anything but.

Below is a recap of some Taft Summer Reading special events and contest results:

### THE 25TH TAFT PUBLIC LIBRARY GREAT CARDBOARD BOAT RACE

On the evening of Wednesday,

July 23 over 440 people gathered at the Mendon Town Beach to witness and take part in the 25th Taft Public Library Great Cardboard Boat Race. The race was started in the late 1990's by then Children's Librarian Susan Bertram. Over 25 years later it has grown into the marquee event of the library's summer. The library was honored to have Susan Bertram on hand for the 25th, recognizing her prior to the races and including her as part of the 7-person Judges Panel that determines the special awards given out at the end of the night. The library was also honored to welcome Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boston SCPO Scott M. Dupre as a judge on the panel. 29 boats were entered in seven races total, nearly matching the highest number of entrants (31) in one of the first years of the con-

test. The seventh race was a just-for-fun contest between library personnel. Tara Windsor and Library Trustee Gaye Porciello finished first and second in that race. Library Director Andrew Jenrich and Monika Schmid's boats both sank.

Official winners in the speed categories were as follows:

#### One-Person Boat Race:

- 1st Place: *Life of Pi* (Brian Murphy)
- 2nd Place: *Do Not Tip* (Greyson Michael)
- 3rd Place: *The Hopeful Puffin* (Alexis Thach)

#### Two-Person Boat Race:

- 1st Place: *Cardboard Cousins* (Sadie Flanagan and Frances Halterman)
- 2nd Place: *Princess Pirates* (Lilly McNaughton and Eva Golden)
- 3rd Place: *The Row Away Chicks* (Bella Flannery and Olivia Flannery)

#### Three or More Person Boat Race:

1st Place: *Soggy Cookies* (Mendon Girl Scout Troop #65246: Caroline Bangma, Nora Fleck, Brie Tetreault, and Madison Dorval; Rosie Holden and Cadence Chenelle, alternates)

2nd Place: *The Joseph Conrad II* (Mendon/Upton Cub Scouts: Ava Horner, Emily Horner, Javier Duffy, Mark McNaughton, Bodie Gates, Hunter Gordon, Waylon Dienna, Daisy Lehberger, Hazel Moore, and Grady Gomes)

#### Adults Only Boat Race:

1st Place: *Douglas Battle Axes* (Douglas Sunshine Club with Adult Social Center: Anna Marcoux, Kathy Gleason, Pam Schwartz, and Brenda Bretz)

2nd Place: *The Silver Dollar* (Mendon Senior Center: Peg Nogueira, Paul Bouchard, Karen Mills, and Sandra Washburn; Kathy Hunt, alternate)

### WINNERS

*continued on page 4*



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**Please submit to:**

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**WINNERS**

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**Family Boat Race:**

1st Place: *We Know the Way* (James Horner, Julianne Horner, Ava Horner, and Emily Horner)

2nd Place: *BumbleMcBees Sailing the Seas* (Willa McBee, Laina McBee, Elisa McBee, and Jon McBee)

3rd Place: *Runaway Ed* (Nate Chadwick, Cora Chadwick, and Lane Chadwick)

**Group Challenge Race:**

(Note: This race was a challenge for charity. Winner of this race was able to donate the proceeds to the charity of their choice).

1st Place: *Mendon Highway Submarine Division* (Mendon Highway Department: Andrew Goyette and Justin Specht)

2nd Place: *Express Wagon* (Mendon Fire Department: Moritz Schmid)

3rd Place: *Spirit of Brotherhood* (Mendon Brothers of the Brush)

Mark Gomes and Chad Labastie) Special awards were as follows:

**Pride of Mendon Award** (Most Creative Design): *Endurance* (Martin Blenkhorn and Beau Blenkhorn)

**Captain's Choice Award** (Most Attractive Boat): *BumbleMcBees Sailing the Seas* (Willa McBee, Laina McBee, Elisa McBee, and Jon McBee)

**Esprit de Corps Award** (Most Spirited and Organized Team): *The Joseph Conrad II* (Mendon/Upton Cub Scouts: Ava Horner, Emily Horner, Javier Duffy, Mark McNaughton, Bodie Gates, Hunter Gordon, Waylon Dienna, Daisy Lehberger, Hazel Moore, and Grady Gomes)

**Perseverance Award** (Honors the Competitor(s) Who Never Gave Up): *Princess Pirates* (Lilly McNaughton and Eva Golden)

**Titanic Award** (Most Spectacular Sinking): *The Row Away*

*Chicks* (Bella Flannery and Olivia Flannery)

**Surprise Award** (We're Surprised It Floats): *The Whale* (Emily Watson and Willa Montag)

**Silver Celebration Award** (Best Commemorates the 25th Cardboard Boat Race): *Cardboard Cousins* (Sadie Flanagan and Frances Halterman)

**Library Award** (Best Reflects the Love of Reading): *The Hopeful Puffin* (Alexis Thach)

**THE TAFT LIBRARY WORM RACE**

The library's Worm Race was started back in 2008. This year the prospect of rain forced the races indoors, but 14 competitors still took part. The top four finishers were:

- 1st Place: *Camila Miranda and Squirmy*
- 2nd Place: *Jaxon Pollard and Batman*
- 3rd Place: *Leo Garcia and Blanky*
- 4th Place: *Colton Mager and Sonic 2*

**OREO STACKING CONTEST**

19 competitors faced off in this year's Oreo Stacking contest. The high number of Oreos stacked in a single tower this year was 17 accomplished by Dorothy Black, Juliana Garcia, and Emmet Raposo during the early rounds. In the finals, the towers were tipsy and 9 stacked Oreos won the day:

- 1st Place: *Matthew Kanak*
- 2nd Place: *Wyatt Recko*

**THE TAFT LIBRARY RUBBER DUCK RACE**

Take four capped gutters filled with water, four oversized rubber ducks, and four spray bottles to propel the ducks forward, and you're off to the races! In its second year the Taft Rubber Duck Race brought in 25 competitors to go head to head for racing glory. The top finishers were:

- 1st Place: *Noella Antonellis*
- 2nd Place: *Cayden Dion*
- 3rd Place: *Quinn Bucchino*

**UPTON SENIOR CENTER**

continued from page 2

enjoy energizing music, simple choreography, and a welcoming environment where everyone can succeed — no dance experience needed! Just \$3 per class.

**Line Dancing** Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

This class will start with basic steps so no experience is necessary and no partner needed. Just bring your enthusiasm and a comfortable pair of shoes. Line dancing is an extremely fun way to exercise while also reducing stress. These dances will be put

to all different types of music. Come by yourself or bring a friend! With a passion for music and exercise Marcus Mancini will be the instructor. He has over fifteen years in both taking and teaching line dancing. It all started for him with a class just like the one we are offering. Classes are \$5 each.

**Lunch Trip** Friday, Sept. 12 at 12:30 p.m.

This month, we're heading to Sky Buffet in Milford. Known for its wide variety of Asian cuisine, fresh sushi, and all-you-can-eat buffet, it's the perfect spot to relax and enjoy a great meal together.

**Upton Food Pantry**

Do you need food assistance? The Upton Community Food Pantry is open to all Upton residents!

Hours of Operation: Wednesdays 12 - 2 p.m. and Fridays 11 - 1 p.m.

Are you unable to come at these days and times? Contact us for more information or to set up an appointment: 508-529-4558

The UCC Food Pantry is seeking donations:

- Tissues
- Dish soap
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# Upton Heritage Day Celebration Sept. 27

Upton Historical Society presents Upton Heritage Day on Saturday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Upton's Town Common and surrounding areas, which is a special occasion dedicated to honoring and celebrating the rich tapestry of culture, tradition, and rich history that shape our vibrant community. The significance of Heritage Day lies in its ability to remind us of the importance of preserving our cultural legacy. By acknowledging our heritage, we not only affirm our identity but also promote respect and appreciation for the differences that make our town unique.

Upton Historical Society plays a central role by organizing exhibitions, storytelling sessions, and tours that teach younger generations about their roots. Such initiatives help strengthen our community and ensure that traditions and history are passed down through the years. The following offerings will be available on Upton Heritage Day.

- **Town-wide yard sale:** Start your day early with the town-wide yard sale, where you can find hidden treasures across Upton. Maps of participat-

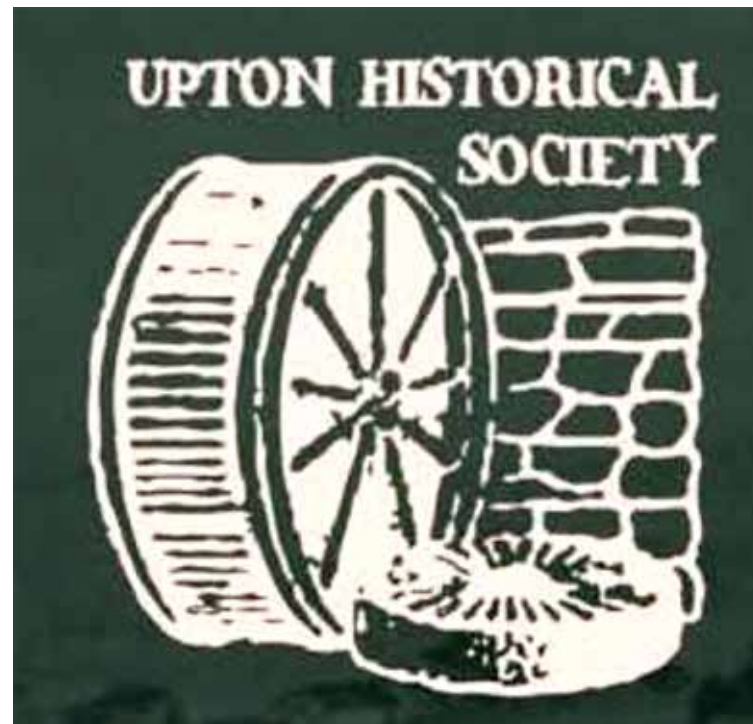
ing locations will be available at the United Parish for \$3 <https://www.unitedparishupton.org/>

- **Vendor Fair on the Common (Main St.):** Browse the diverse selection of goods from local artisans and learn about local business and non-profit organizations on the Town Common 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- **81st Grange Harvest Fair at the VFW (Main St.):** Experience a taste of agricultural heritage at the VFW Post, featuring farm animals, flowers and crafts.
- **Community Center Open House (Main St.):** Stop by to meet the staff, tour the facility and learn about the Friends of Upton Seniors. In addition, Friends of the Upton Library will be hosting their annual library book sale 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. If the kids need a break visit the Upton Veterans Memorial Playground for some fun next to the community center!
- **EMS/Fire Department Open House (Church St.):** The Upton EMS/Fire Department will be holding an open house focused on fire prevention and safety, history of the dept. and offering

fire truck rides! We hope that Smokey the Bear will also make an appearance too. The Upton Police and Dept. of Public Works will also have equipment on display at the EMS/Fire House.

- **Live Entertainment:** Enjoy musical performances on the Town Common with Bob Nicole Jazz Group and stop by Rushford and Sons Brew-house on Grove St. for Uptoberfest starting at 11 a.m.
- **Culinary Delights:** Savory delicious food from the United Parish Snack Bar (hamburgers, hotdogs, apple crisp), Soul Fuel Café (baked goods) and Rushford and Sons Brew-house (food trucks: Mortar & Pestle and Gasthof Catering)
- **Upton Historical Narrated 1hr Mini-Bus Tour:** Limited to 28 people, fee is \$12 per person and reservations are strongly recommended [uptonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:uptonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com)

The tour includes various sites listed on the National Register



of Historic Places: Upton Common, West Upton Center, 1812 Boot Shop, Heritage Park Cave ~1500 AD and the 1935 Civilian Conservation Corp Camp at Upton State Forest.

Upton Heritage Day serves as

a celebration and a way for the community to come together. It is a fantastic way to connect with the town's history, support local businesses and non-profit organizations, and enjoy a day of fun and community spirit.

**TOWNWIDE**

Sponsored by  
**United Parish of Upton**  
**Saturday, September 27**  
**Upton Heritage Day!**

- Residents interested in hosting a yard sale at their homes may register at [UnitedParishUpton.org](http://UnitedParishUpton.org) or at the church office.
- Yard Sale descriptions will be included on a Town Map.
- Sellers receive a Yard Sign indicating the place of the sale.
- Yard Sale Shoppers can purchase Maps at the Church beginning at 7:30am. The cost of a Map is \$3.

**United Parish will host a Snack Bar featuring grilled items & our popular Apple Crisp with real whipped cream!**

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# Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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

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

### Booksale – Saturday, Sept. 27 at 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Friends of the Upton Library fall booksale will be held on Heritage Day, Saturday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Come enjoy the booksale along with all the other events around the town common for Upton's Heritage Day!

Purchase gently used fiction, non-fiction and children's books. All proceeds benefit the Upton Library museum pass program and summer reading program.

Hardcovers \$2, paperback \$1 and children's books 50¢.

Don't miss the Totebag deal! Bring your Friends Totebag and fill it for \$20, or purchase a new tote for an additional \$5.

New - Teacher Discount – show your teacher ID for a 50% discount.

Donations to the booksale are accepted during the month of

September, and the Friends of the Library are always looking for new members and volunteers!

### End of Summer Reading Bingo

September is the last month to participate in our Summer Reading Bingo for adults! Turn in your bingo sheet with a completed bingo at the library front desk by the end of the day on Sept. 30 to earn raffle tickets to compete for prizes!

### Virtual Program: Your Brain on ChatGPT

Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 7 - 8 p.m.

Does using ChatGPT and AI have a cost on our brain cognition? A new study from MIT found the answer could be yes. Hear from lead researcher and professor Dr. Nataliya Kosmyna of MIT Media Lab about this groundbreaking study and its implications. Please note this is a virtual program and it will

not be recorded. Registration required to receive a link to the webinar. Register for the program at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org). This program is organized and sponsored by Watertown Free Public Library.

### ADULT EVENTS

**Drum Circle with Dave Curry** - Saturday, Oct. 4 at 7 - 9 p.m.

Ages 8 - Adult  
Join facilitator Dave Curry for an evening of freestyle drumming. Instruction and extra drums are provided, but you can also bring your own drums and percussion instruments. No prior experience is necessary, so the circle is suitable for beginners on up to experienced drummers. Registration is requested. \*Now a monthly program on the first Saturday of each month, sponsored by Friends of the Upton Library

**Tabletop Game Night for Adults** – Thursday, Sept. 18 at

5:15 - 7:30 p.m.

Join our tabletop game series for adults! Meets every third Thursday of the month from 5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Beginners and experienced players both welcome! Register at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org).

### Virtual Author Talk Series

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

**Author Talk with Gabe Henry:** Our Failed Attempt to Make English Easier to Spell - Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 2 p.m.

**Author Talk with Leigh Bardugo:** 10 Years of Daring Heists and Lovable Outcasts in YA Fantasy - Thursday, Oct. 9 at 7 p.m.

### CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

**Financial Literacy for Teens** – Sept. 11 at 6 p.m.

Join us as we welcome Stephen Venezia from Upton's UniBank branch. He will share topics such as banking terms, setting up a checking account, how to read a payroll or personal check, what are money markets and CDs, using ATM

and debit cards, electronic banking, budgeting, and much more! For ages 12+. Pre-registration required. Caregivers are encouraged to attend this program with their child.

**Track the Blackstone** – Sept. 20 at 10 a.m. - offsite

Animal Tracking 101! Join Children's Librarian Lee Ann Murphy and Park Ranger Sherine Hamade for a hike at Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge. Learn about the Blackstone River and about the life that it supports along the way. Please be sure to dress accordingly for the terrain and weather. There is no rain date for this event. In the event that we cancel, participants will be contacted. Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park (Riverbend Farm) is located at 287 Oak Street, Uxbridge, MA 01569. We will meet in the conference room inside of the visitor center (the big red barn on-site). For ages 5 to 12. Pre-registration is required. Not a drop-off event. Caregivers must attend with their child.

### UPTON LIBRARY

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September is Life Insurance Awareness Month and the perfect time to consider whether you have adequate coverage to protect your loved ones. While no one likes to think about what would happen if they weren't around, doing so is an act of love.

Life insurance is fundamentally about protecting your loved ones should something happen to you. If you pass away, your

family will not only face the challenges of grief and loss but they could also find themselves financially strapped. Life insurance can help provide them with financial security in the event you no longer can.

### Who needs life insurance:

You're a good candidate if you have a spouse or partner who depends on your income or if there are children or other loved ones whom you support. Insurance protection can also be a solution if you have outstanding debts like a mortgage, credit cards or a car loan, or if you simply don't want to burden your loved ones with your final expenses.

### Insurance through work:

While many people have life insurance through their employers, this coverage may not be enough for you, depending on your situation. Among employers who offer group life insurance, only 2% offer more than two times the employee's annual salary — essentially just two years of income — according to

the Guardian's 2023 Workplace Benefits Study. And remember that it's only good as long as you're employed there. With all this in mind, many people purchase individual insurance as a supplement to their workplace coverage.

**How much:** You might hear that you need life insurance equal to about seven to 10 times your pretax annual salary. That's not a bad "ballpark" figure, but not everyone is playing in the same ballpark. To get a true sense of how much of a death benefit is right for you, use the "L-I-F-E" guide to calculate your needs:

- **Liabilities:** Will your family need to pay off a mortgage, credit cards, car loan or other debt?
- **Income:** Will your family need to replace your income for a period of years?
- **Final expenses:** Do you have the resources to cover funeral and burial expenses?
- **Education needs:** Do you need to put children through

a private school or college?  
- **Which type:** You can choose between two basic types of life insurance: term and permanent. As its name suggests, term insurance is designed to provide coverage for a designated period, such as 10, 15 or 20 years. In general, term insurance is quite affordable for most people, especially when they buy policies as young adults. On the other hand, permanent insurance, such as whole life or universal life, is usually considerably more expensive because in addition to providing a death benefit, your premiums build cash value. In choosing between term and permanent insurance, you'll want to evaluate several issues, such as how long you think you'll need coverage and how much annual premium you can afford to pay.

Life insurance needs can change over time, so it's important to review your coverage every three to five years or after major life events like marriage

or birth of a child. Consider working with a financial advisor who can look at your complete financial situation and help you choose a policy that truly fits your family's needs. Taking action sooner rather than later could be one of the most important gifts you give your loved ones.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA  
Edward Jones Financial Advisor  
77 West Main Street,  
Hopkinton, MA 508-293-4017  
Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

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- Trench Sand

# Community gathers for laughs at 'Hot Scripts, Cold Beer'

On July 19, 140Arts Collaborative hosted "Hot Scripts, Cold Beer," a casual and fun-filled evening of live script reading at Rushford & Sons Brewhouse in Upton. The event ran from 4 – 6 p.m. and drew a creative crowd ready for some laughs and good beer.

Led by Matthew Fear, drama director at Nipmuc Regional High School, participants read short, funny scripts together in small groups. No acting experience was required—just a sense of humor and a willingness to join in. Ten readers took turns bringing characters to life, while another 15 folks relaxed and enjoyed the show.

"We read a selection of one-act plays from 'All in the Timing' from David Ives, and people really leaned into the

fun," said Fear. "Some were seasoned performers, and others were totally new to it. It was just a great mix of people sharing stories and having a good time."

"I've never done anything like this before," commented Sue Perry of Upton. "But everyone made me feel welcome and it was the best time. I can't wait for the next one."

Hot Scripts, Cold Beer is part of 140Arts Collaborative's mission to make the arts accessible, engaging, and fun for everyone. More events are planned for the coming months, including workshops, performances, and pop-up creative experiences. To learn more or get involved, visit [www.140arts.org](http://www.140arts.org).

*Submitted by 140Arts Collaborative*



140Arts Collaborative members during "Hot Scripts, Cold Beers" in July. (L to R) David Perry, Deborah Bottomley, Mosh, and Matthew Fear. Photo courtesy of Laurie Wodin

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**UPTON LIBRARY**

*continued from page 6*

**MONTHLY LIBRARY EVENTS – REGISTER NOW!**

All programs and events require pre-registration at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org) or call 508-529-6272. Registrations open the month prior to events.

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

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

**Preschool Storytime** – Thursdays at 9:30 & 10:30 a.m.

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

**Saturday Storytime** – Oct. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

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

**Drop-In Storytime** – Sept. 15 at 9:30 a.m.

Our Children's Department offers a Drop-In Storytime session, once a month. No registration required! This is a blend of our Baby and Preschool Storytimes; however, no craft will be provided. We will feature stories, songs, rhymes, and fun! This will be held in the Greatroom and will be a larger group size. For ages 0 to 5.

**Music & Movement** – Sept. 22 and Oct. 6 at 9:30 a.m.

This program features Deb Hudgins and is an interactive program, perfect for children and their caregivers to enjoy together. Deb plays guitar and sings, and is sure to incorporate stories, dancing, fingerplays, games and more at each of her fun, themed performances. This program is partially funded through a grant with Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. For ages 1 to 5. Pre-registration is required.

**Storybook Art Club** – Sept. 16 at 10 a.m.

This program meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Children will enjoy a picture book and create a craft inspired by the story. Pre-registration required. For ages 3 to 5.

**LEGO Club** – Sept. 17 & Oct. 1 at 4 p.m.

This group meets the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 4 - 5 p.m. This group is led by Library Director, Mat-

thew Bachtold. We provide the LEGOs while you have fun building and making new friends. This program is for ages 3 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

**Crafternoon** – Sept. 25 at 3 p.m.

This is a new drop-in program that will meet the 4th Thursday of each month. Children can make a simple craft using materials such as crayons, scissors, paint, and glue. This month, hoot into the fall with torn paper owls! For ages 3+. No registration required.

**Tween Book Club** – Sept. 18 at 6:30 p.m.

This club is especially for our middle grade patrons, ages 10 to 14. This group reads popular middle grade titles selected by our members. This month, we will be discussing the title *Light & Air* by Mindy Nichols Wendell. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

**Kids' Book Club** – Oct. 1 at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile chapter books on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m.

We will be discussing the title *Secret Spy Society: Case of the Musical Mishap* by Veronica Mang. This group is for ages 7 to 10. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

**Chess Club** – 1st Tues/Thurs each month, 2 - 5 p.m.

Learn to play chess or just play with new players. Chess boards are provided. For ages 8 to 16. No registration required.

**Crafting Club** – 2nd Tues/Thurs each month, 2 - 5 p.m.

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

**Gaming Club** – 3rd Tues/Thurs each month, 2 - 5 p.m.

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

**Magic the Gathering: Commander** – 4th Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m.

Join us for an introduction to the popular card game, Magic the Gathering - Commander format.

We will be joined by local patron, Josef Vargas, as he shares his knowledge with those wanting to learn and play! If you have a Commander deck, please bring it to play. For ages 8+. Please register.

**Upton Reads Book Group**

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

Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, Oct. 16 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Stolen Queen* by Fiona Davis.

**Fic or No Fic Book Group**

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

Sept. 24 at 6:45 p.m.: *A Map of Future Ruins: On Borders and Belonging* by Lauren Markham.

For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email [mbachtol@cwmmars.org](mailto:mbachtol@cwmmars.org)

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# Decades of service to the community and 2 new offices

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center has been serving the community with advanced, compassionate eye care for more than four decades. With a staff of 59, an award-winning surgery center in Milford, and offices in Milford, Franklin, and now two new locations in Hopkinton and Medfield, we are proud to be one of the leading eye care centers in Massachusetts. We are also one of the few ophthalmology practices in the state to own and operate our own surgical facility, the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford. This means patients can receive world-class cataract surgery close to home. Our team includes fellowship-trained ophthalmologists and five optometrists, offering eyecare for the entire family.

## Meet Our Providers

**Roger Kaldawy, M.D.**

Dr. Kaldawy is an eye physician, surgeon, and corneal specialist. He trained at the

University of Rochester and the University of Iowa, later serving as Assistant Professor at Boston University. With more than 32,000 surgeries performed, he pioneered corneal transplants, innovative glaucoma surgery, advanced implants, and bladeless femtosecond cataract surgery in the region. He has trained numerous physicians and has been featured in many news articles including on Channel 5. He also serves as Medical Director of the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford.

**Mark D. Barsamian, D.O.**

Dr. Barsamian is a vitreoretinal 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.

**Dan Liu, M.D.**

Dr. Liu graduated from Northwestern University and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, where she was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. She completed residency at Albany Medical Center, where she was Chief Resident, and a fellowship in Cornea and Anterior Segment Surgery at Tufts. Her expertise includes cataract surgery with ORA, corneal transplants (DMEK, DSEK, PK), keratoconus treatment, glaucoma MIGS, ocular surface tumors, and pterygia. She is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology.

**Shalin Zia, O.D.**

Dr. Zia earned her Doctor of Optometry from Indiana University. She provides care for patients of all ages, specializing in routine vision exams, contact lenses, and management of eye disease.

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**Michael Adams, O.D.**

Dr. Adams graduated from John Carroll University, completed a Master's in Biochemistry at Ohio State, and earned his optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry. He has advanced training in corneal pathology, specialty contact lenses, and ocular disease.

**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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**Why Choose Milford-Franklin Eye Center**

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**New Offices: Expanding to Serve the Community**

**Boston Eyes in Hopkinton**  
Located at 66 Main Street,

**EYE**

*continued on page 11*

**A HELPING HAND...**

**Food Pantry at United Parish of Upton**

**Sept. 23 and Oct. at 7: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.** - The Food Pantry serves residents from Upton as well as nearby towns. Proof of income or church affiliation is not required. We offer non-perishable food, toiletries, paper products and infant needs. Donations can be dropped off in our donation shed located outside the church office on 1 Church Street, Upton. 508-529-3192 [www.unitedparishupton.org/food-pantry](http://www.unitedparishupton.org/food-pantry)

**Community Supper on Sept. 18**

**Sept. 18:** Community Supper - on the third Thursday of each month from September through June at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., our Faith in Action committee provides a delicious and nutritious meal for the community. This month we're serving Shredded Honey Garlic Chicken over Rice with a veggie side. Vegetables over Rice will be available for vegetarians. Everyone is welcome. Please call the church office at 508-529-3192 by Sept. 12 to make your reservation. If you forget to reserve, please come anyway. We always make extra and would love to serve you.

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

**Mendon Historical Society program on Sept. 28**

On Sept. 28, Mendon Historical Society member, Dennis LaPlante, will give a PowerPoint presentation on Fort Ninigret, a 17th century fortified settlement in Charlestown, RI; Conanicut Battery, an 18th century fortification in Jamestown, RI; and the 1778 "Battle of Rhode Island" during which a number of British ships were scuttled including the discovery of Captain Cook's ship, the Endeavor, and the process Dennis employs

to build historical ship models. Dennis received a BA in Anthropology with a concentration in Archeology from URI and an MBA in Management from Bryant University. He also has a degree in Boatbuilding and Design from the Marine Trade Center in Deep Cove, Eastport, Maine. He is a member of the Nautical Research Guild, the USS Constitution Model Shipwright Guild, and The USS Constitu-

tion Museum. Dennis, his wife Heather, and their three children (Avery, Hannah, and Gregg) have lived in Mendon for the past 27 years. The program will take place on Sunday, Sept. 28, at 2 p.m. at the Mendon Senior Center. Reservations are suggested. To RSVP or for more information, email [mendonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mendonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).  
*Submitted by the Mendon Historical Society*

**SENIORS**

*continued from page 1*

Attendees enjoyed each other's company, meeting old friends and making new ones over music and refreshments.

Joan Marino attended this year's Senior Tea with her daughter.

"It was delightful," said Marino, who will be 90 later this month. "It's a pretty little china cup, and refreshments, and it's just delightful how they set it up."

John Palumbo, 92, also attended the event. "I thought it was super, everything was very well done," said Palumbo. "And the man on the piano was playing great songs; it was wonderful, it really and truly was."

Both Marino and Palumbo praised the senior center staff for the many programs and events they offer area seniors.

Events such as the Senior Tea are coordinated annually by the Council on Aging who handle the invitations, coordinate transportation, and supply the tea

pots and cups/saucers collected over the years by volunteer Ann Haling over the years. The Friends of Mendon Elders is the primary sponsor. The Friends volunteer, Dottie Garceau, who collaborated with the COA, coordinated the finger sandwiches, table decorations and tea.

The event is staffed by COA staff and members, and Friends volunteers. COA board member Earl Pearlman has been playing piano for many years with songs from the Great American Songbook.

**EYE**

*continued from page 10*

even receive a complimentary pair of select glasses. 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.

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## Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
08/15/2025	112-112A Millville Road	\$370,000
08/15/2025	114-114A Millville Road	\$370,000
08/08/2025	49 Asylum Street	\$675,000

Date	Upton	Amount
08/22/2025	8 Miscoe Hill Road	\$925,000
08/11/2025	290 Westboro Road	\$775,000
08/11/2025	16 Rawson Farm Drive	\$1.10 mil
08/08/2025	140 Main Street #A	\$490,000
08/05/2025	22 Cider Mill Lane	\$925,000
08/01/2025	244 North Street	\$810,000
07/31/2025	12 Stoddard Street	\$1.20 mil
07/31/2025	20 Maple Avenue	\$780,000
07/31/2025	5 Briarwood Lane	\$1.05 mil
07/31/2025	6 Boot Shop Road #34	\$917,975

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



The 4-bed, 4.5-bath, 5,202-square-foot home at 12 Stoddard Street in Upton recently sold for \$1,195,000. Photo source: Robyn & Sean Sold My House

## Mendon Senior Center news for September

### A Fond Farewell

With regret, the Mendon Council on Aging must inform its patrons of the recent departure of Janet Hubener, Outreach Coordinator. Janet provided dedicated, caring service to Mendon seniors and their caregivers for nearly 10 years. She will be greatly missed. We wish her the best in the future.

### Senior Van Transportation

Our van service is available Monday thru Thursday for trips to medical appointments within a 15-mile radius, local shopping or just coming down to the Senior Center. Our friendly drivers are available to pick you up at your front door and take you where you need to go within a 15-mile radius. If you have any mobility issues, the van does include a lift, and our drivers are trained in wheelchair securement. Please make your ride reservations at least 48 hours in advance by calling Shawna Timperio at the Senior Center, 508-478-6175. Rides are based on availability of the van; medical appointments get highest priority. Ride fees are \$1 for local roundtrip rides and \$4 for out-of-town rides. Vanbucks are available, get a 12-punch card for \$10. Please inquire at the front desk.

### Shine Health Insurance

### Counseling

Certified SHINE counselors are available to assist you with questions about Medicare. SHINE services are free and unbiased: we are available to discuss all options related to Medicare and additional coverage, and we do not sell any plans. Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to make an appointment or call the Regional SHINE Office in Milford at 508-422-9931. SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) is funded through the federal agency, Administration for Community Living and administered through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

### New Players Welcome!

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

**Cribbage**—Wednesdays 9:45 a.m. The Cribbage group is always looking for new players. All levels welcome.

**Hand, Knee and Foot card game**—Tuesdays 1 p.m.

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

**Brain Games**—Thursdays 11:30 a.m.

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

you'd like to see offered!

### Tri Valley Nutrition Program

Tuesday, Sept. 16: Hot Dog, Baked Beans & Coleslaw  
 Thursday, Sept. 18: Baked Potato with Chili & Cheese  
 Tuesday, Sep. 23: Turkey with Supreme Sauce with Cornbread Stuffing  
 Thursday, Sept. 25: Shepherd's Pie, Carrots and Peas following Music Bingo!  
 Tuesday, Sept. 30: Teriyaki Beef with Steamed Rice  
 Friendly Reminders! Meals are served at noon. The cost is \$3 donation per meal. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. Transportation is available. Call 508-478-6175 to schedule. Meals are subject to change.

### Dine-Out

This Friends of Mendon Elders sponsored program is open to all. Join us on the appointed Wednesday at either the Senior Center at 11:30 a.m. to carpool or at the restaurant at 12 p.m. Please sign up with the Senior Center. The cost of lunch is your responsibility, but the awesome company is free!  
 Wednesday, Sept. 17 – Empire Buffet, Woonsocket

## MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 14



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# BVT's school lunch and breakfast programs policy

**Families encouraged to check eligibility chart and submit application**

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](http://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.

# Bellingham Harvest Fest returns Sept. 20

Bellingham's Harvest Fest is making a comeback.

The family-focused event is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 20, at Bellingham's Town Common from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. 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

**The churches are still seeking Sponsors and Vendors. If interested, call 508-844-1843.**

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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**MENDON SENIOR CENTER**

*continued from page 12*

**Mendon Minstrels Chorus Returns! Music Lovers Invited!**

The Senior Center Chorus will begin rehearsals this September on Mondays from 1 - 3 p.m., starting Sept. 15. It's not too late to join even if you miss the first few sessions! The chorus and musicians, under the direction of Dave Clinkman, will be focusing on music for the November veteran's program, their upcoming fall program with a sports related theme as well as a spring "Garden Party" theme. New members are welcome! Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 if you are interested in joining.

**Senior Citizens Day Luncheon**

Please plan to attend the annual Senior Citizen Day sponsored by the Mendon Lions Club to honor all Mendon senior citizens, especially Leo and Peg Tetreault this year's Senior Citizens of the Year. The event, scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 21 at 11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Church of Mendon/Uxbridge, 13 Maple St., Mendon. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the senior center to register for this event.

**Music Bingo**

Join us for a musical blast from

the past on Thursday, Sept. 25 at 11 a.m. for Musical Bingo by Good Thomas!

Come enjoy the songs of the 50s, 60s and more. You may even win a prize!

This program is sponsored by the Friends of Mendon Elders. Reserve your space early and consider staying for lunch afterwards. Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the senior center to register for one or both programs. Transportation is available.

**Fitness Programs Intro to Tai Chi**

The Senior Center will be offering two Introductory Tai Chi classes funded by the Friends of Mendon Elders for you to try in an effort to gauge interest in offering future sessions.

Monday, Sept. 29 at 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 11 a.m.

Tai Chi, per instructor Faith Kennedy is "meditation in motion" and is gentle for all ages. Please call or stop by the center to register.

**Evening Yoga**

Evening Yoga is returning to the Senior Center on a new day and time beginning Monday, Sept. 15 at 6:30 p.m.

The cost of this eight-week session is \$60 per person. Please call or stop by the center to register. Space is limited.

**Mendon Senior Walking Group**

The Mendon Senior Walking Group will continue this September, weather permitting, on Mondays and Fridays at 8:30 a.m. at various locations. The average distance we walk is approx. 2 miles.

If you are interested or have questions, contact Diane at: [diane.m.howell@icloud.com](mailto:diane.m.howell@icloud.com) or call her at 508-473-3081. New Walkers are always welcome. Please call the center for more information about ALL our exercise programs.

**Reserve Now! Senior Day Trip - Yankee Candle & Bright Nights Trip ~ Friday, Dec. 12, 2025**

Get in the holiday spirit with this fun-filled day! At Yankee Candle learn how candles are made and get a chance to dip your own.

Enjoy a late lunch afterwards at the Golden Corral featuring an all-you-can-eat buffet. As darkness falls a ride through Bright Nights a renowned village of Christmas lights will be enjoyed!

Cost is \$99 per person. (No refunds given after 11/12/25) Please register at the Mendon Senior Center.

For more info or questions, please contact Bev Fior at 508-473-8382. Checks are to be made out to Friends of Mendon

**Planning for Medicare: Countdown to 65** (Duration: 60 minutes) **Monday, Sept. 22 at 6 p.m.**

Planning for Medicare is a general presentation and discussion led by a Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts representative. It's geared towards individuals approaching Medicare Eligibility. Topics covered include health insurance information outside of employer sponsored coverage, such as an explanation of Medicare, the Medicare enrollment timeline, Medigap and Medicare Advantage plans and programs available to early retirees, and COBRA. This is a great presentation to offer to seniors in your community who may still be working and looking to transition. Evening programs may also be available. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Senior Center to register or for more information.

**Medicare Supplement Plans or Medicare Advantage Plans? Which Coverage is Best for Me?** (Duration: 45 mins) **Thursday, Oct. 9 at 6 p.m.**

This is the #1 question most people have when deciding on the coverage that is best for them. This presentation will discuss the differences between Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advantage plans, show real life case studies, and provide resources to help in the decision process. This presentation is great for people new to Medicare and for existing Medicare members that will have the option to make changes to their plan during the Annual Election Period from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 or during the Medicare Advantage open enrollment period from Jan. 1 through March 31. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Senior Center to register or for more information.

The Mendon Food Pantry located at the Senior Center is currently open for Mendon residents one Friday per month by appointment. Upcoming dates are as follows: **Oct. 3, Oct. 31 (for November) and Dec. 5.**

For more information or to make an appointment call Amy Wilson Kent at 508-478-6175

Elders (please add 'trip account' in memo line.) Mail to 62 Providence St., Mendon, MA 01756 Trip Operated by Bloom Tours

**Octoberfest Celebration: Mark Your Calendar!**

Join the Friends of Mendon Elders for a festive fall tradition at the Annual Octoberfest Celebration—a community favorite filled with cheer, treats, and treasures!

Saturday, Oct. 25 at the Senior Center. There will be raffle baskets, delicious baked goods and handmade crafts.

This special fundraiser is made possible by the support of community groups, talented crafters, and our generous bakers. Your participation helps keep the spirit of Octoberfest alive year after year!

Can't make it? You can also view and purchase raffle baskets at the Mendon Lions Club Craft & Vendor Fair on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025.

More details coming in September—don't miss it!

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## Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

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

### ADULT PROGRAMS SEPTEMBER 2025

#### Upcoming Events:

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

#### Adult Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join the Adult Handcrafting Group on Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on! Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. No registration is required. Crafts are not supplied.

#### Adult Book Club

Upcoming book club discussions are as follows:  
 Monday, Oct. 13 at 6:30 p.m.: Discussion of *The Women* by Kristin Hannah  
 Monday, Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m.: Discussion of *The Things We Keep* by Sally Hepworth  
 Monday, Dec. 8 at 6:30 p.m.: Discussion of *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue  
 Copies of the Adult Book Club book for October can be picked up at the downstairs

desk. For additional information on upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259.

#### Awards Book Club

Hosted by Taft Library Assistant Jane Blackwood, the Awards Book Club meets on a quarterly basis to discuss fiction award winners of the year. Jane selects from the books that took home the coveted Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Booker Prize and more! Stop at the downstairs circulation desk to pick up the latest Awards book for discussion.

The current book in the Awards Book Club discussion series is Hernan Diaz's *Trust*, recipient of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in fiction. Discussion date for *Trust* is Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. Copies of *Trust* can be picked up at the downstairs circulation desk.

#### Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club is back with a whole new slate of books to discuss for 2025-26! Led by Library Director Andrew Jenrich, the club will tackle *There's Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension*

by Hanif Abdurraqib first. Discussion of the Abdurraqib book will be on Thursday, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. Other upcoming books in the Footnotes series include:

*Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe* by Laurence Bergreen

*An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong

*There is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America* by Brian Goldstone

*Material World: The Six Raw Materials That Shape Modern Civilization* by Ed Conway

*A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon* by Kevin Fedarko

Dates for discussion of the upcoming books are to be determined. The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club typically meets on a quarterly basis. Those interested can pick up a copy of the next book at the downstairs circulation desk.

#### German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun! Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. The group will meet next on Monday, Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

#### Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. downstairs in the Art Holmes Community Room, unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend. If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendssoftaftli-

brary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library web site. The meeting in September is on Monday the 15 at 7 p.m.

#### Coming in October! A Paranormal Double Feature with Jeff Belanger and Dustin Pari

Two of our favorite speakers on the haunted and unexplained team up for a Paranormal Double Feature at the Taft Public Library! This is a multi-media program, meet and greet, and book signing. Join us on Oct. 6 upstairs in the library at 7 p.m. Registration is required and limited. Visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org to register.

#### Ted Reinstein Returns for Travels Through the Heart and Soul of New England

**TAFT LIBRARY**

*continued on page 17*

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### GIRAFFE

*continued from page 1*

“Molly has always been one of the most loved animals here,” Brewer added. “She’s curious, she’s social, and many of our guests recognize her instantly during giraffe encounters. To now see her raising her own baby, and to know visitors will be able to witness this bond, is truly special.”

Within hours of her birth, the calf was standing and nursing, strong indicators of health and vitality. The animal care and veterinary teams are closely monitoring both mother and calf while they spend time in a protected space, ensuring they can bond safely. “We want them to

feel secure and give the calf every chance to thrive,” Brewer explained. “As she grows stronger, she’ll join the rest of our giraffe herd, including her father, in the larger habitat, likely within the coming weeks.”

Giraffes are considered vulnerable in the wild, with populations having declined nearly 30% in the past decade. The calf’s arrival underscores the zoo’s ongoing commitment to education and conservation. “We really pride ourselves on creating close interactions with animals here at Southwick’s Zoo so guests can learn about them and, importantly, care about their future,” Brewer said. “Funds raised through giraffe encounters directly support conservation

**To celebrate, Southwick’s Zoo will also launch a public naming contest, giving the community an opportunity to be part of this exciting moment in the zoo’s history. Details will be announced on the zoo’s website and social media channels.**

efforts, including giraffe preservation in Africa.”

As of today, guests are able to witness the curiosity, rapid growth, and playful personality of the calf. To celebrate, Southwick’s Zoo will also launch a public naming contest, giving the community an opportunity to be part of this exciting moment in the zoo’s history. Details will be announced on the zoo’s website and social media channels.

Since 1965, Southwick’s Zoo has remained a family-owned and operated destination, dedicated to connecting people with wildlife and nature. Accredited by the Zoological Association of America (ZAA), the zoo upholds high standards of animal



care and welfare while providing meaningful education and unforgettable experiences for its guests. “We’re thrilled to share this milestone with our visitors,”

added Brewer. “This giraffe calf is not only an exciting addition for families to enjoy, but also a symbol of our zoo’s mission.”  
*Submitted by Southwick’s Zoo*

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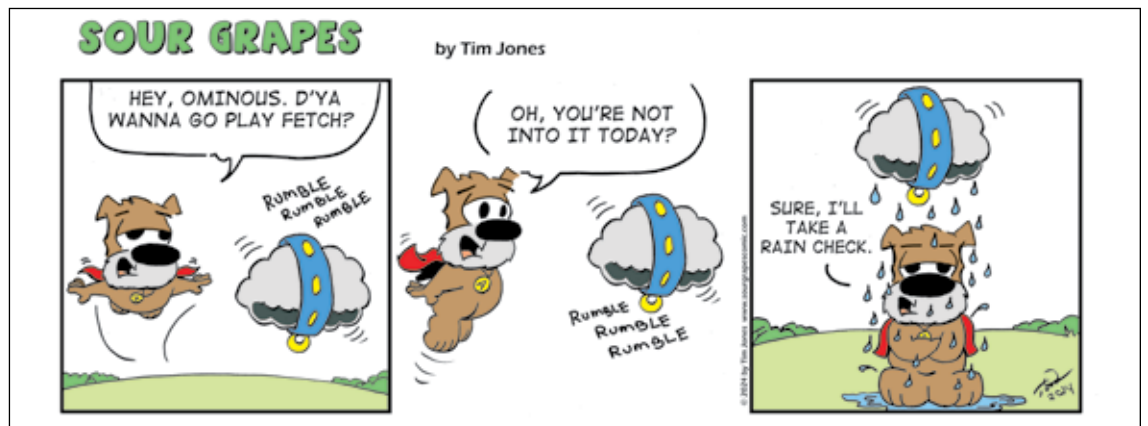
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**TAFT LIBRARY**

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Join us on Thursday, Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. for a visit from WCVB reporter and author Ted Reinstein when he discusses his book *Travels Through the Heart and Soul of New England: Stories of Struggle, Resilience, and Triumph*. Ted will highlight some of his most memorable travels and the compelling stories he gathered from the people he met along the way. From Rhode Island to Vermont, from Maine to Massachusetts these are the stories that resonate with Ted, all of them unique, inspiring, and unforgettable. Registration is required for this event. Visit [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org) to register.

**CHILDREN'S & TEEN PROGRAMS SEPTEMBER 2025**

*Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website: [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org) and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.*

**Children's News**

**Itty Bitty Story Time**

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

**Story & Craft Time**

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

**Alphabet Storytime**

It's all about the alphabet!

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

**Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins & Coffee and Conversations**

Dates: Wednesday: 9/24, 10/29, 11/19 & 12/17

Join Deb Hudgins at 9:15 a.m. for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants & preschool).

Coffee & Conversations is from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m., Location: Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave., Mendon

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

**Lego Club**

Back by popular demand! During this one-hour building session we will be led by the "Lego Lady" Kim Steadman! No need to bring any Legos! This program is great for all ages...as long as they don't eat the Legos! Tuesday: 10/14 & 12/19 at 4:30 p.m.

**Preschool Kidding Around Yoga**

We will learn yoga poses, dance, sing, and meditate. This class is all about fun. All abilities are welcome! Mats are available, or feel free to bring your

own. Wednesday 10/8, 11/12 & 12/10 at 9:30 a.m.

**Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins**

Join Deb Hudgins for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants & preschool). Join us on Tuesdays: 9/30, 10/28, 11/25 & 12/23. The program starts promptly at 10:30 a.m.

**Tutors with Tails**

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

**Book Clubs**

6-9 Book Club: We will be reading: *The Underdogs* by Tracey West. The book club discussion will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 5 p.m.

8-12 Book Club: We will be reading: *Ranger's Apprentice: The Ruins of Gorlan* by John Flanagan. The book club discussion will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 5 p.m.

Graphic Novel Book Club: We will be reading: *Crumble* by Meredith McClaren & Andrea Bell. Join us on Tuesday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m. to discuss this month's book pick!

All book clubs will take place downstairs in the library. Books are available for pickup at the upstairs circulation desk. The book club will include a discussion, pizza, and refreshments.

**Arrayscape Gaming**

Join us on Tuesday, Sept. 23

4:30 to 6 p.m. for an afternoon of Fall Adventure Minecraft gaming! There will be 5 activities to choose from:

Pumpkin Patch Hunt, Fall Harvest Frenzy, Scarecrow Building Contest, Acorn Archery & Haunted Mansion!

Participants need to bring their own devices. To ensure a smooth experience, it is essential for participants to install Minecraft on their personal devices before arriving. *Supported devices:* Laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, and Tablets. *Unsupported devices:* Nintendo Switch, School-issued Chromebooks, and Minecraft Education Edition (Minecraft Education Edition is incompatible due to its lack of multi-server play functionality, which is necessary for our program. School-issued Chromebooks often have restrictions that prevent the installation of the required Minecraft version). For Minecraft setup instructions go to <https://www.arrayscape.com/mcsetup>. Participants should also have their Gamertag or Java profile name ready for server whitelisting. They can borrow a Minecraft account if needed.

**Music at the Blissful**

Six-time Boston Parent Paper Family Favorite and National Touring Musician, Music at the Blissful (Evan Haller) from Boston, Massachusetts comes to Taft 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 Bliss-

ful. He will be playing songs featured on his new album, "This". It is sure to be an action-packed good time for all. Join us on Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 10:30 a.m.

**Dr. Junglestein's Halloween Spooktacular Balloon Madness Show**

Get ready for some Autumnal fun! Jungle Jim is excited to perform his "Dr. Junglestein's Halloween Spooktacular Balloon Madness Show" for the patrons of Taft Library on Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

This program combines festive entertainment with Jungle Jim's trademark high-energy, interactive engagement. Get ready for the Zombie Dance Challenge, Giant Spooky Creature Creation, and even Ghostbusters Training!

**Teen News**

Jeff Belanger and Dustin Pari team up for a Paranormal Double Feature at the Taft Public Library! This is a multi-media program, meet and greet, and book signing. Join us on Oct. 6 at 7 p.m. Registration is required and limited. Visit [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org) to register.

**Teen Book Club**

Join us for the return of our Teen Book Club! We will be reading *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins on Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 5 p.m. Pizza and refreshments will be served. Registration Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 5 p.m.

Registration is required. Please visit [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org) to register. Copies of the book are available for pickup at our downstairs circulation desk.

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SPORTS

# Senior class set to lead Nipmuc Football

## Experienced group takes field this fall

By Chris Villani

Nipmuc football comes into the 2025 season with a strong senior class that head coach James Royster said will take the lead as the team makes a push for the postseason.

“Our senior class is our biggest strength,” Royster said. “Some of these guys have played a lot of football. They have been together for a long time.”

Nipmuc has several seniors who are all expected to play a big role on both sides of the ball. Josh Giancola is back for this third season at quarterback.

“His leadership ability is so important,” Royster said. “Josh is that calm head who can get things back on track when they go south.”

Giancola will have several weapons to work with on offense. Johnny Desmond returns after finishing in the top five in Central Mass. in receiving last

fall. The co-captain is someone Royster said will help Nipmuc’s offense stretch the field. Jack Moshier is another talented wide receiver and a two-year returning starter at cornerback who his coach called a “seasoned athlete.”

Senior captain Eben Consigli will be Nipmuc’s featured back.

“He is an amazing athlete,” Royster said. “He is going to be the main ball carrier and we expect him to help us keep the sticks moving.”

Dash Correia, another senior captain, is back and will play on the offensive line.

“Dash works extremely hard in the weight room all the time, he is always motivating the other players around him,” Royster said. “He is the heartbeat of the team. He is a guy we need to keep us going and keep us motivated.”

Sean Burchard and Noah Garrant are two more experi-



Five of Nipmuc's senior leaders, (L to R) John Desmond, Sean Burchard, Mason Kirkpatrick, Coach James Royster, Eben Consigli, and Jack Moshier. Courtesy photo

enced linemen who will start alongside Correia. Royster said both players are solid, hard workers who will be key to the team’s success. Mason Kirkpatrick is another senior who

will contribute at fullback and middle linebacker.

Nipmuc will face a challenging schedule that includes three of the final four teams in last year’s Division VII playoffs. Royster said his team may have some bumps in the road, but all that matters is earning a spot in the postseason.

“All you have to do is get in,” he said. “It doesn’t matter what

seed you are or who you play. If you can get in and you are battle tested, you have a chance.”

Even facing a difficult schedule, Royster said his team should be well prepared for the coming season.

“We worked them pretty hard this offseason, and they have been pretty receptive,” he said. “They have definitely put the work in.”

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SPORTS

# Young BVT football hungry for wins in '25

## Beavers to lean on captains for leadership

By Chris Villani

The Blackstone Valley Tech football team comes into the 2025 season with only a handful of seniors on the roster. But head coach Anthony Landini said the leadership of his captains and solid team speed should help the Beavers battle for some victories and a spot in the postseason.

“I think we are a little bit faster than we have been in the past, which definitely helps,” Landini said. “And we are young, but we are a little deeper. We have a lot of guys who we are not afraid to put out there even though they are young.”

The Beavers will rely on their captains to show the way. Senior Lucas Greenstein returns at quarterback after taking some snaps last season. He will be aided on offense by Bryce Sheldon, who is expected to be a featured running back for Valley Tech.

“We are hoping they lead the way for us offensively,” Landini said.

The defense will be anchored by senior captain Isaque Santos, another returning senior captain. Up front, BVT co-captain Alex Lavallee is the starting center and someone Landini said is



Alex Lavallee (70) is a player to watch for Valley Tech this fall. Courtesy photo

a player to watch. Rounding out the quintet of captains is Troy Santos, a standout defensive back who can also play wide receiver.

“We have a lot of guys returning on defense, so I think that side of the ball should be better than last year,” Landini said.

BVT will play a challenging schedule right from the first game of the season, a trip to play Auburn, the team that knocked the Beavers out of the playoffs a year ago. Valley Tech will also be playing at Nantucket and has a pair of defending state champions on its schedule

in Uxbridge and West Boylston. With a younger team and a difficult schedule, Landini said it’s important not to look too far ahead.

“I am trying to take it week by week, because that’s how we approach the season,” he said. “Our overall goal is to make the playoffs. Even with a tough schedule, we know we can scheme and scrape together some wins.”

Experience has also taught Landini not to put too much



Troy Rudder (left) is a standout on both sides of the ball. Courtesy photo

stock in the early results.

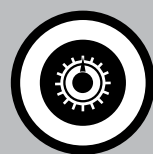
“We have started 0-3 before and ended up fighting back and even made it to the state finals one year,” he noted. “It’s just a

matter of staying in it, not getting down. We are going to face good competition, but we have to work hard and do the right things.”

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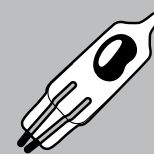
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<p><b>2024 CHEVY TRAX SUV</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$82/WK</b></p> <p>#47621A • ACTIVE TRIM, TURBO</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$28,565</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$22,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 TOYOTA TUNDRA 4x4</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$152/WK</b></p> <p>#TM25-623A • SR5, ALLOYS, V6</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$58,405</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$42,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 JEEP CHEROKEE 4x4</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$89/WK</b></p> <p>#25141A • LATITUDE LUX, SUNROOF</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$34,400</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$24,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 HYUNDAI TUCSON SEL</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$96/WK</b></p> <p>#TP5647 • AWD, HEATED SEATS</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$36,750</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$26,677</b></p>	<p><b>2022 TOYOTA COROLLA LE</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$74/WK</b></p> <p>#TP5790 • 30/38 MPG CITY/HWY</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$26,589</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$20,677</b></p>	<p><b>2022 HYUNDAI SANTA CRUZ</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$89/WK</b></p> <p>#47004C • SEL TRIM, ALLOYS</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$34,265</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$24,977</b></p>	<p><b>2024 TOYOTA RAV4 LE SUV</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$106/WK</b></p> <p>#TP5706 • 27/34 MPG CITY/HWY</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$34,960</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$29,977</b></p>
<p><b>2022 FORD EDGE SEL</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$92/WK</b></p> <p>#P18138 • 2.0L TURBO, SUNROOF</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$40,395</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$25,977</b></p>	<p><b>2023 VW JETTA 1.5T SE</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$68/WK</b></p> <p>#D14951L • HEATED LEATHER</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$29,550</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$18,977</b></p>	<p><b>2021 LINCOLN CORSAIR</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$96/WK</b></p> <p>#P18001 • SUNROOF, LEATHER</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$46,645</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$26,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 FORD BRONCO 4x4</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$170/WK</b></p> <p>#C18031 • TURBO, BIG BEND, NAV</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$54,995</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$47,977</b></p>	<p><b>2022 SUBARU OUTBACK</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$85/WK</b></p> <p>#D15211 • AWD, HEATED SEATS</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$34,695</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$23,977</b></p>	<p><b>2025 MERCEDES GLA 250 SUV</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$145/WK</b></p> <p>#TP5839 • 2.0L TURBO, LEATHER</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$50,800</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$40,977</b></p>	<p><b>2024 HYUNDAI SONATA</b></p> <p>AS LOW AS <b>\$85/WK</b></p> <p>#TP5397 • 25/36 MPG CITY/HWY</p> <p>NEW RETAIL PRICE: <del>\$28,680</del>   <b>WHOLESALE PRICE: \$23,977</b></p>
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