

Mendon town-wide scarecrow contest is back

Public voting continues through Oct. 22

By Theresa Knapp

Scarecrows have started to crop up around town as part of the Mendon Cultural Council's second annual Scarecrow Contest.

Residents and businesses signed up in advance to have their "family-friendly" scarecrow location listed on a town map. The map can be found at <https://mendonma.gov/221/Cultural-Council> and on Facebook.

The public is invited to vote through Oct. 22 at <https://surveyplanet.com/rzinpjwn>. Winners will be announced on Oct. 27 at 5:30 p.m. at a reception at Mendon Town Hall. There will be a trophy for first, second, and third place.



One of this year's entrants is the Friends of Mendon Elders and COA members' fun display in front of the senior center. Theresa Knapp photo

The event is sponsored by the Mendon Cultural Council. The chair of the committee, Joanne Lamothe, says the event is a community effort.

"This event would not be possible without many people - from the town of-

SCARECROW

continued on page 7

Upton seniors celebrated summer with BBQ, ice cream, music



Jean-Robert and Ida Jette and Mary Bradford, of Upton, choosing their favorite ice cream from the Juniper Farms ice cream truck. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King

In August, the Upton Senior Center was filled with laughter, music, and the aroma of barbecue as 85 local seniors came together for a summer celebration. From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., the Senior BBQ & Ice Cream Truck social brought

community spirit to life through great food and live entertainment.

The event kicked off with a BBQ

SUMMER

continued on page 4

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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 NEWS - OCTOBER 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, Oct. 15 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

The Adult Book Club is led by Library Assistants Kris Heumann and Brenda Whitner.

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 Adult Book Club books can be picked up at the downstairs desk. For additional information on upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259.

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, Oct. 27 at 6 p.m.

Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

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. The discussion date for *Trust* is Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. Copies of the book 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 the following titles this year:

Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe by Laurence Bergreen. Discussion on Thursday, Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m. downstairs in the library.

An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us by Ed Yong. (Discussion date for this book and the ones listed below TBD)

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.

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.

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

TAFT LIBRARY

continued on page 8




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Nipmuc Regional High School welcomes Spanish exchange students from León, Spain

In September, Nipmuc Regional High School welcomed 21 students from La Divina Pastora School in León, Spain, as part of its annual Spanish Exchange Program. From Sept. 15 to Oct. 1, Mendon and Upton families opened their homes to host the visiting students, offering them a firsthand experience of life in the United States. In the spring, Nipmuc students will travel to Spain to continue the exchange.

Now in its fourth year, the program provides a powerful learning experience for students, fostering cultural understanding, global citizenship, and real-world opportunities to strengthen Spanish-language fluency.

“Hosting and participating in the exchange have taught me the importance of culture and allowed me to build lifelong friendships,” said senior Madelyn Weibe. “My favorite

part has been showing students from Spain what life is like in the United States, especially at Nipmuc.”

During their stay in Massachusetts, visiting students shadow their Nipmuc host students in classes, immersing themselves in the social life, participating in school events, and cheering on teams at athletic games. Beyond the classroom, the Spanish students will also explore New England culture through trips to Wojcik’s Farm, Pinz Bowling, Salem, and Gillette Stadium.

Ana Soto, Spanish teacher and coordinator of the exchange, has witnessed the program’s impact year after year.

“We often see how dramatically fluency improves after students host and, especially, after they return from Spain,” said Soto. “It’s incredible to see students who may have been hesitant to speak come back



Visiting students from Spain and their counterparts from Nipmuc Regional High School gathered for a welcome breakfast at the high school as part of the school's Spanish Exchange Program. Photo Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

confidently communicating in Spanish.”

World Language Department Chairperson Tricia Moloney agrees.

“I’ve seen firsthand how the Spanish Exchange Program transforms our students —

broadening their perspectives, strengthening their language skills, and fostering lifelong connections. This experience not only enriches their education but also deepens their appreciation for culture and community.”

The Spanish Exchange Program builds on the district’s long-standing Spanish Immersion Program, which began in

SPAIN

continued on page 13

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TOYOTA

SUMMER

continued from page 1

lunch catered by Firefly's, featuring pulled pork, grilled chicken, baked beans, cornbread, and coleslaw. Each guest also received a special treat of soft pretzels from Philly Pretzel Factory. Live music from Bill Reidy kept the atmosphere lively, with many guests clapping, singing along, and even dancing. After lunch, attendees headed outside to relive sweet childhood memories at the Juniper Farms ice cream truck, sponsored by Upton Fire and EMS Asso-

ciation, which served up frozen treats to top off the day.

"This event truly brought people together, which is exactly what this building was designed for," said Tania Paparazzo, Director of Elder and Social Services. "It was heartwarming to see so many of our seniors connecting, sharing stories, and enjoying a beautiful day. We're deeply grateful to our sponsors and volunteers who made it all possible."



Eighty-five seniors filled the Great Room at the Upton Community Center. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King



Many thanks to the Upton Fire and EMS Association for sponsoring the ice cream truck. From left to right: John O'Sullivan, Chief Michael Marchand, Natalie Crosier, Logan Paparazzo, Tania Paparazzo, Katie San Clemente, Cheryl Henderson, Blake Montequin, and Tim Wagner. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King



Eileen Rakitin and Sue Perry, of Upton, sharing a laugh with good friends. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King

The event was made possible through the generous sponsorships of Friends of Upton Seniors (FUSE) and the Upton Fire and EMS Association. Volunteers of all ages worked behind the scenes to ensure every guest felt welcomed and celebrated.

Steve Rakitin, President of FUSE, reflected on the afternoon: "We're thrilled to support events like this that bring joy to our senior community. It's more than just a meal — it's about fostering connection and celebrating the vibrancy of our older adults."

For many attendees, the ice cream truck was the highlight of the afternoon. "This was one of

the best afternoons I've had all summer," said Harvey Baler, a long time Upton resident. "The food was fantastic, the music was wonderful, and the ice cream truck brought me right back to being a kid again. I'm so grateful for everything the Senior Center does for us."

Located in the Upton Community Center, the Upton Senior Center continues to be a vital resource, offering exercise classes, games, special interest groups, and events year-round. Visitors are encouraged to stop by and pick up the latest newsletter to stay up-to-date on upcoming programs.

Submitted by Upton Senior Center



The event would not have been possible without the team of volunteers and Senior Center staff who set up the event and served the food. From left to right: Marge MacDonald, Cheryl Henderson, Charlotte Rivard, and Katie San Clemente. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King

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When investing, one of the best abilities is durability



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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You've probably heard about "genius" investors or those who got in on the "ground floor" of a company that grew to be a huge success. These stories may be interesting, but they are also rare — and sometimes not even true.

The truth is that successful investing isn't glamorous, and it isn't necessarily quick. Instead, a well-founded investing strategy

is a durable one — one that can withstand the test of time.

Here are some actions that can help you build durability.

Take your time: Most individual investors make their money over time, not overnight. Despite stories about fortunes made on one or two trades, you're more likely to be successful making money over time. You'll want to own a well-diversified portfolio of quality investments — and plan to own those investments for the long term.

A long-term perspective can help you ignore the constant noise in the markets and stay invested. When you hear about the latest "hot" investment tip, especially if it's already performed well, the best advice is this: Ignore it. Although it may be tempting to buy a popular investment, it may not fit with the rest of your portfolio, it may have already peaked and it may be riskier than you expect. If it sounds too good to

be true, it probably is.

Invest in quality: When building your investment portfolio, quality should be a top priority. For stocks, quality is frequently measured by the steadiness of earnings and dividend growth over time. For bonds, one measure of quality is an investment-grade credit rating, which indicates that the borrower has a good track record of making its promised interest and principal payments and the bond has a relatively low risk of default.

Quality investments are more likely to overcome temporary challenges, which is why a good track record can be an indication of quality. Don't reach for yield by looking for investments offering the highest dividend or interest rate without considering the risk. Remember, there is no perfect investment — a higher rate generally means higher risk.

Stick to your strategy: Building a long-term strategy can anchor your decisions and provide

a roadmap for your investment choices. Your strategy should consider your goals, tolerance for risk and the time needed to save toward each goal.

Within that strategy, you can be flexible. Buy and hold, for example, doesn't mean buy and forget. Over time, your goals may change, or you may choose to hold more conservative investments. But it's important to make changes for the right reasons, not simply because stocks or your other investments may have dropped in price.

Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes you can make is trying to time the markets, moving in and out in response to short-term declines or the latest prediction. This often results in getting into and out of the market at the wrong times, costing time and money — and resulting in lower returns over time.

Remember that investments don't all move up or down at the same time but portfolio diver-

sification can help smooth the ups and downs of the market. A long-term perspective can help you see past short-term fluctuations in some investments.

Successful investing isn't about making dramatic moves or chasing the latest trends. It's about developing a durable strategy personalized for your life, then sticking with it through market ups and downs. In investing, as in life, slow and steady could help win the race.

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

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Upton Senior Center news for October

Halloween Extravaganza
Wednesday, Oct. 29 at 12:30 p.m.
\$3 per person

Join us for a frightfully fun afternoon at the Upton Senior Center's Halloween Extravaganza! Enjoy a pasta bar provided by Tri-Valley, and spooky treats to satisfy your sweet tooth. Get creative with pumpkin painting, and enjoy extra Halloween surprises! Costumes encouraged, fun guaranteed. Don't miss this spooktacular event! Call or stop by to reserve your spot by Friday, Oct. 24!

Lunch Trip Thursday, Oct. 9 at 12:30 p.m.

Join us this month at Jimmy's Tavern & Grill in Shrewsbury where there is something for everyone from sandwiches, and salads, to tavern favorites! Sign up by Monday, Oct. 6.

Crafts with Betty is Back!
Friday, Oct. 10 at 10 a.m.

We're so excited to announce that Crafts with Betty is back — just in time for fall! Join us as we make a festive fall craft to celebrate the season. All materi-

als will be provided — just bring your creativity! RSVP by Oct. 7.

Your Vision—Implications for Aging Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 2 p.m.

How do your eyes "work" and what happens as we get older? Join retired Mobility Specialist, Michelle Antinarelli for an overview of the aging process of the eyes, and strategies for preserving functional independence. We'll review tools and tips to make your life easier today and tomorrow and help you prepare for your next eye exam to make the most of your eye care provider's expertise. Register at the Senior Center by Oct. 10.

Memory Café Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 2 p.m.

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.

Men's Club Supper Friday, Oct. 17 at 5 p.m.

Mark your calendar for October's Men's Supper! Enjoy a delicious meal of Chicken Marsala and great conversation. This event is free for Upton residents and just \$5 for non-residents. Don't miss this fun event. Sign up by Oct. 10 at the Senior Center! Need a ride? Transportation is available — call to schedule. Save the date for the event: Friday, Nov. 21 at 5 p.m.

Birthday Bash Friday, Oct. 24 at 12:30 p.m.

Join us for our monthly birthday celebration. \$5 fee includes pizza, cake and ice cream. Free for Upton seniors with birthdays in October! Spots are limited — sign up today!

Getting to Know Your 7 Energy Centers (Chakras) Thursday, Oct. 30 at 10 - 11:30 a.m.

As the days get shorter, how would you like to add some light and energy to your life? Join Patricia Luopa, PhD, as she leads a workshop introducing the 7 major chakras and mindful practices for balancing these natural energy centers. Sign up



by Monday, Oct. 27.

Flu Vaccine Clinic Thursday, Oct. 30 at 11:30 am - 1 p.m.

The Upton Board of Health will be offering the FLU ONLY vaccination at the Senior Center. We will have standard dose vaccine and high dose vaccine. A link will be created for sign up and you may call the Senior Center at 508-529-4558 or the Board of Health at 508-529-6813 for assistance.

Save the Date: Back Pain Presentation Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Back pain is a common issue as we age, but it doesn't have to limit you. Join Dr. Brad Brink, Doctor of Physical Therapy, for a discussion on preventing, managing, and understanding low back pain. Learn why it happens, how to reduce it with daily habits and simple exercises, and when to seek help. Walk away

with practical tips to ease pain and improve your quality of life. Register by Oct. 31.


Upton Food Pantry

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

Hours of operation are Wednesdays 12 - 2 p.m. and Fridays 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Are you unable to come at these days and times? Contact us for more information or to set up an appointment at 508-529-4558. The UCC Food Pantry is seeking donations: Hearty soups, pasta sauce, baked beans, ready/minute rice, Instant potatoes, cooking oils (olive, canola, vegetable oil), spices (salt & pepper, garlic/onion powder, cinnamon), dish soap, sponges, laundry detergent, tissues, cleaning supplies, gift cards and monetary donations also accepted.

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SCARECROW

continued from page 1

ficials who allow it to happen, to the people who come out and ride around to view and vote for the entries, but most of all to the many talented people who design and display their scarecrows," said Lamothe. "The Mendon Cultural Council thanks you all."

Last year was the first year of the contest. Lamothe says they had 22 entries and 224 votes. The overall winner was the "Sanderson Sisters" display on Carpenter Hill Road.

The MCC asks that all displays be family-friendly, and that all participants keep their scarecrows displayed for the entire month of October.

For more information, email culturalcouncil@mendonma.gov.



SCARECROW SIGHTINGS

There are 22 sites this year. The entries are:

1. Katydid Flowers – 23 Hastings St.
2. RIP Bob – 16 Washington St.
3. JDM Cannabis -103 Uxbridge Rd.
4. Mendon Senior Center – 62 Providence St.
5. Fellman Family – 62 North Ave.
6. Vandervalk Farm & Winery – 25 Lovell St.
7. Mendon Town Hall – 20 Main St.
8. Spring Willow Farm – 18 Blackstone St.
9. Rockland Trust – 14 Hastings St.
10. Bucchino Family – 11 Main St.
11. The Head Shed – 14 Hastings St.
12. Joint Operations – 47 Milford St.
13. Lucey Family – 19 Cadman Rd.
14. Peregrin - 1 Maple St.
15. Mucci/Dominguez Family – 1 Askin Dr.
16. Sereni Tea House – 4 Maple St.
17. McGann Family – 18 Bicknell Dr.
18. Thibodeau Family – 26 Carpenter Hill Rd.
19. A. Sendzik – 21 Vincent Rd.
20. Raydio – 17 Crestview Dr.
21. Taft Public Library – 29 North Ave.
22. Three Little Wrens Farm – 13 Leonard Rd.

For a full list, visit <https://mendonma.gov/221/Cultural-Council>



The 'Sanderson Sisters' scarecrows won first place in Mendon's first scarecrow contest last year. Photo courtesy Mendon Cultural Council.



'Raygun' was one of 22 entries in Mendon's first scarecrow contest in 2024. Photo courtesy Mendon Cultural Council



Mendon Daisy Troop 65437 had a clever scarecrow display on Mowry Street in 2024. Photo courtesy Mendon Cultural Council

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TAFT LIBRARY

continued from page 2

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 friendsoftaftlibrary@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. Meeting is Monday, Sept. 15 at 7 p.m.

Coming in November!
Sheryl Faye Presents Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Actress Sheryl Faye will visit the Taft Public Library on Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. to portray former justice of the Supreme Court Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Ginsburg served on the highest court in the land from 1993 until her death in September 2020. Those who saw Faye's portrayal of Queen Elizabeth the II at Taft in March know this is a performance not be missed. Visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org to register.

Medium Ellen Henry Returns

Medium Ellen Henry will return to Taft for *Connections with Spirit: Messages of Hope and Healing* on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 1:30 p.m. Come share in the experience as Ellen delivers messages from your loved ones in the spirit world. If you happen to have a small item from your loved one, Ellen may offer to connect with your loved one using that item. She also offers soul guidance to anyone with a question they wish to ask in front of the group. *Please note: Attendance at a demonstration does not guarantee that you will receive a reading* To register visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org.

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 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 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 & 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.

The Poop Museum

The Poop Museum is back on Nov. 4 at 4:30 p.m. Join us for Part 2 of No. 2 and even more poo! Come and learn about all things poo-related.

Book Clubs

6-9 Book Club: We will be reading: *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. The book club discussion will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 21 at 5 p.m.

8-12 Book Club: We will be reading: *The Wild Robot Escapes* by Peter Brown. The book club discussion will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 5 p.m.

Teen Events

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 & refreshments will be served. Registration is required. Please visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org to register.

Copies of the book are available for pickup at our downstairs circulation desk. is required. Please visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org to register. Copies of the book are available for pickup at our downstairs circulation desk.

CHILDREN & TEEN PROGRAMS - OCTOBER 2025

Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website: 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 at the Taft

Weds: 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.

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!

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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,

Business spotlight

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 backend 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 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 Milford, the Schadlers have been residents for over 20 years. Their four kids have gone to Milford schools. In addition to living in town, they are proud



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

investors in the community. They sponsor and coach several sports teams, volunteer at the schools, and own both commercial and residential properties.

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

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

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Top 10 myths in eye care debunked

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.

When it comes to eye health, misinformation can be more harmful than helpful. Many long-held beliefs about vision and eye care are based on outdated science or pure myth. Let's debunk 10 of the most common misconceptions to help you make smarter decisions about your eyes.

1. Carrots Will Fix Your Vision

Carrots contain vitamin A, which is essential for maintaining healthy vision—especially night vision. However, eating more carrots won't sharpen blurry eyesight or reverse vision problems like nearsightedness or farsightedness. A well-rounded diet with leafy greens, fruits, and fish is better for long-term eye health.

2. Reading in Dim Light Will Damage Your Eyes

Reading in low light may

cause eye fatigue or temporary discomfort, but it won't permanently harm your vision. Your eyes are working harder in dim lighting, which can lead to headaches or strain, but not lasting damage. A well-lit environment simply helps reduce fatigue.

3. Sitting Too Close to the TV Will Hurt Your Eyes

This myth has been around since the days of old box TVs. Sitting close to the television can lead to temporary eye strain, but it doesn't cause permanent eye damage. Children often sit closer because they can focus up close better than adults—but it's not a cause for alarm.

4. Wearing Glasses or Contacts Makes Your Eyes Dependent on Them

Glasses and contact lenses correct your vision; they don't change your eyes themselves. You may feel more dependent on them once you start seeing

clearly, but the prescription doesn't "weaken" your eyes. Vision can naturally change over time, but that's not due to corrective lenses.

5. Blue Light from Screens is Damaging Your Eyes

The concern around blue light has led to a surge in "blue light glasses." But current research doesn't support the idea that blue light from screens causes permanent eye damage. What people often experience is digital eye strain—caused by staring at screens too long, not blue light itself. The 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds) can help reduce eye fatigue.

6. Eye Exercises Can Cure Vision Problems

While exercises may improve focus or coordination in some rare eye conditions (like convergence insufficiency), they can't



correct structural issues like myopia, hyperopia, or astigmatism. No amount of eye rolling or focusing drills will replace the need for glasses, contacts, or surgery when needed.

7. You Don't Need an Eye Exam if You See Fine

Even if your vision is perfect, regular eye exams are crucial. Eye diseases like glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and macular degeneration can develop silently, without noticeable symptoms. Early detection through routine check-ups is often the key to preserving sight.

8. Only Older Adults Need to Worry About Eye Problems

Age increases the risk of certain eye conditions, but eye health matters at every age. Children, teens, and young adults are increasingly affected by screen-related strain and dry eyes. Preventative care—like UV protection, a healthy diet, and annual eye exams—should start early and continue for life.

9. Sunglasses Are Only for Sunny Days

UV rays can penetrate clouds, meaning your eyes are exposed even on overcast days. Prolonged UV exposure is linked to cataracts and other serious eye issues. Look for sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays—and wear them year-round whenever you're outdoors.

to Remove It

This outdated notion comes from older surgical methods. Today's advanced cataract surgeries allow removal whenever the cataract interferes with daily life—no need to wait for it to "mature." In fact, early intervention can often lead to quicker recovery and better visual outcomes.

Misinformation can lead to unnecessary worry—or worse, delayed treatment. The best way to protect your vision is by staying informed, getting regular eye exams, and speaking directly with a trusted eye care professional. Clear vision is about more than just 20/20 sight—it's about making smart, evidence-based decisions to preserve your eyesight for life.

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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

Spring Bulb Sale – Order by Oct. 15

Friends of the Upton Library are holding a spring bulb fundraiser. Order bulbs for colorful spring flowers and plant them this fall! Bulbs are shipped directly to your house. Orders end Oct. 15. Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit the Friends of the Upton Library. Get a flyer with a link at the library, or visit flowerpowerfundraising.com and search for Friends of Upton Library.

Pumpkin StoryWalk™ – Oct. 1 through Nov. 15

Stop by the VFW Memorial Playground to enjoy the library's Pumpkin StoryWalk, *From Seed to Pumpkin* by Wendy Pfeffer. A StoryWalk™ is a self-guided picture book activity with separate story page panels that families can enjoy one at a time with their children. No staff is involved with this event, so enjoy it any time that fits your schedule! Enter our QR code at the end of the story and enter for a chance to win a copy of the book. For ages 3+

Puzzle Swap Weds, Nov. 5, 3 - 7 p.m.

Ages 16-Adult
Need to swap an old puzzle out for a new one? Bring in a gently used puzzle with no missing pieces to participate in our puzzle swap (either 500 or 1,000 pieces). You will walk away with a new-to-you puzzle of your own! This is a casual drop-in event. For more details go to uptonlibrary.org.

ADULT EVENTS

Drum Circle with Dave Curry - Sat, Nov. 1, 7 - 9:30 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 – Thurs, Nov. 20, 5:15 - 7:30 p.m.

Join our tabletop game series

for adults! Meets every third Thursday of the month. Beginners and experienced players both welcome! Register at 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 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai: *Finding My Way* - Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 7 p.m.

Author Talk with Philippa Gregory: *Courtly Intrigue and Whispers as Weapons* - Wednesday, Oct. 29 at 2 p.m.

Author Talk with Award-Winning Journalist Joseph Lee: *Community, Power, and the Search for Indigenous Identity* - Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 2 p.m.

Author Talk with Amanda Peters: *The Search for Truth and the Persistence of Love Across Time* - Thursday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m.

CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS



Paper Strip Pumpkins - Oct. 11 at 11 a.m.

Drop in the Classroom anytime from 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. as we use scrapbook paper, glue, and pumpkin cutouts to make a colorful fall craft! For ages 3 to 12. Drop-in craft, no registration required.

Monthly Library Events – Register now!

All programs and events require pre-registration at 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-

registrations open the month prior to events.

UPTON LIBRARY

continued on page 14

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New Upton Senior Center van is symbol of independence, opportunity

The Upton Elder and Social Services (ESS) Department has a new senior center van. ESS held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 16 to celebrate the arrival of the van. The event, held at the Upton Senior Center, brought together board members, staff, volunteers, and

community members to mark this exciting addition to senior services. The van will provide safe and reliable transportation to medical appointments, shopping, and programs at the senior center, ensuring that older adults remain active and connected

within the community. ESS staff extended their gratitude to the COA Board, town officials and the dedicated van drivers whose input helped shape the choice of vehicle. Special recognition was also given to the Risteen family, whose generosity and legacy contributed to

making the new van a reality. The E.W. Risteen B Welfare Trust Fund funded the \$66,000 vehicle. "This van is more than just transportation—it's a symbol of independence and opportunity for our seniors, allowing them to stay connected and engaged in

the community. We are grateful for the support and resources that made this possible for our residents," said ESS Director Tania Paparazzo. For more information about Upton's senior transportation services, please contact the senior center at 508-529-4558.



Council on Aging (COA) staff. Courtesy photo



COA Board ribbon cutting. Courtesy photo



Driver's van ribbon cutting. Courtesy photo



Driver with Terry Coney. Courtesy photo

"This van is more than just transportation—it's a symbol of independence and opportunity for our seniors, allowing them to stay connected and engaged in the Community."
~Tania Paparazzo, Director Upton Elder and Social Services



Passenger Sue Perry. Courtesy photo



Passenger Laurie Fantini. Courtesy photo

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Mendon Senior Center offers assistance to general public for heating bills, Medicare

Medicare Open Enrollment is from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7

It's that time of year again! If you are enrolled in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO/PPO), you should be mailed an information packet from your plan by the end of September. It is important to understand and save this information because it explains the changes in your plan for 2026. Premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and the drugs covered by your plan can change significantly! Come meet with a SHINE counselor to go over any changes and make sure you're in the right plan for you! Trained SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone...on Medicare) volunteers offer free, confidential, and unbiased counseling on Medicare options. To schedule a SHINE appointment, call

the Senior Center at 508-478-6175.

Fuel Assistance begins Nov. 1

This program helps to defray the cost of winter heating bills with applications being accepted between Nov. 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026. The Mendon Senior Center will be processing applications for Mendon families, seniors and disabled individuals under the administration of SMOC (South Middlesex Opportunity Council). Applying early is advisable. If your gross household income falls within the updated limits shown in the following chart you may qualify for fuel assistance and discounts on electric and telephone bills. Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to request an instruction checklist and to make a free confidential appointment.

Janet is also available to provide home visits. Please note—anyone who is eligible for fuel assistance is automatically eligible to use the Mendon Food Pantry located at the center. Contact Janet at the senior center if your household size is larger than this chart.

Household Size	Max Income
1 person	\$51,777
2 People	\$67,709
3 People	\$83,641
4 People	\$99,573
5 People	\$115,504

The South Middlesex Opportunity Council consults this chart to determine eligibility for fuel assistance and discounts on electric and telephone bills. Source: Mendon Senior Center.

SPAIN

continued from page 3

1997. Starting in kindergarten, immersion students spend their day learning 100% in Spanish, transitioning to a 50% Spanish, 50% English model by fifth grade. Many continue their study of the Spanish language and culture through high school, where courses are also designed with immersion principles in mind.

“For our immersion students, the exchange provides a powerful opportunity to use their fluency in meaningful ways,” noted Moloney. “It’s an authentic experience that promotes cultural awareness and global citizenship.”

District leaders also celebrated the program and the community effort behind it.

“Our students, teachers, and host families have gone above and beyond to make our visiting students feel at home,” said Mary Anne Moran, co-principal at Nipmuc. “It’s inspiring to see the connections being made and


the friendships that grow out of this experience.”

“The exchange is a powerful learning experience for all of our students,” added John Clements, Nipmuc co-principal. “It provides real-world opportunities to build fluency, confidence, and global awareness — skills that will benefit our students long after high school.”

Mendon-Upon Regional School District Superintendent Dr. Maureen Cohen highlighted the broader impact of the district’s world language programs.

“We are proud of the Spanish Exchange and Immersion Programs and the unique opportunities they provide,” said Cohen. “The chance to study abroad and to host students from Spain is an experience that stays with our students, educators, and families for a lifetime. We are deeply appreciative of our partner school, La Divina Pastora, and the Nipmuc community for their dedication to this outstanding program.”

Submitted by Mendon-Upton Regional School District



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UPTON LIBRARY

continued from page 11

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 – Oct. 27 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 – Oct. 20 and Nov. 3 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 – Oct. 21 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. This month will feature picture books to help celebrate National Pasta Month! We will use all sorts of fun pasta shapes in our crafting. Pre-registration required. For ages 3 to 5.

LEGO Club – Oct. 15, Oct. 29 and Nov. 5 at 4 p.m.

This group meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 4 - 5 p.m. This group is led by Library Director, Matthew 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 – Oct. 23 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. For October, we will create beautiful fall-themed pumpkins using coffee filters, markers, water, and eyedroppers! For ages 3+. No registration required.

Tween Book Club – Oct. 16 at 6:30 p.m.

This club is especially for our middle grade patrons, ages 10 to 14. This group reads popu-

lar middle grade titles selected by our members. This month, we will be discussing the title *Dress Coded* by Carrie Firestone. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

Kids' Book Club – Nov. 5 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 *Life According to Og the Frog* by Betty G. Birney. This group is for ages 7 to 10. We welcome new members all year round! Pre-registration required.

Chess Club – 1st Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m.

Learn to play chess or just play with new players. Chess boards are provided. For ages 5 to 14. No registration required.

Crafting Club – 2nd Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m.

Feeling crafty? Join us as we create new projects each month. Beading, crochet, painting – the possibilities are endless! For ages 5 to 14. No registration required.

Gaming Club – 3rd Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m.

We've got a Play Station 5 and tons of board games! New games each session! For ages 5 to 14. No registration required.

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

Join us for an introduction to the popular card game, Magic the Gathering. We will be joined by local patron, Josef Vargas, as he shares his knowledge with those wanting to learn and play!



Try out both Commander and Standard formats. If you have a Commander deck, please bring it to play. Extra decks will be available to borrow if you've never played before, or don't have a deck ready. For ages 8-16. 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, Nov. 4 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, Nov. 6 at 6:45

p.m.: *Three Days in June* by Anne Tyler.

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.

Wednesday, Oct. 29 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Lioness of Boston* by Emily Franklin.

For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email mbachtol@cwmar.org



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Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
09/25/2025	9 Oak Hill Road	\$597,000
09/16/2025	50 Uxbridge Road	\$320,000
09/12/2025	5 Hartford Avenue W	\$1.07 mil
09/09/2025	9 Vincent Road	\$815,000
09/02/2025	72 Providence Street	\$774,000
08/29/2025	77 Park Street	\$819,900
08/28/2025	61 Northbridge Road	\$775,000
08/28/2025	6 Warfield Road	\$825,000

Date	Upton	Amount
09/25/2025	7 River Bend Road	\$1.05 mil
09/17/2025	1 Summers Circle	\$825,000
09/11/2025	177 South Street	\$918,000
09/05/2025	56 Shore Drive	\$472,800
08/29/2025	56 Grafton Road	\$929,000
08/29/2025	120 High Street	\$389,000
08/26/2025	12 Hartford Avenue N	\$479,500

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



The 2-bed, 1-bath, 868-square-foot home at 50 Uxbridge Road in Mendon recently sold for \$320,000. Photo source: www.zillow.com

Upton Trunk or Treat on Oct. 23

Upton's Memorial Elementary School PTO will host a Trunk or Treat on Thursday, Oct. 23, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Nipmuc High School, 90 Pleasant St.

The event is free and will benefit the Upton Food Pantry. Children are invited to come in costume and bring a bucket for treats. Families are required to bring one donation for the food pantry.

Source: Facebook @PtoUpton

Mendon Trunk or Treat on Oct. 26

The Mendon Parks Department will host a Trunk or Treat on Sunday, Oct. 26, from 12 to 1:30 p.m. in the Veterans Field parking lot.

The event is free. For more information, visit <https://forms.gle/tRFhzSf3tfGhpfoBA>.

Source: Facebook @MendonParks



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Mendon Scouts Food Drive on Nov. 8

The Scouts of Mendon will once again be conducting their annual food drive to help replenish the shelves of the Mendon Food Pantry. Please consider supporting this effort by dropping off donations at the Clough school parking lot on Saturday, Nov. 8, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

We are also grateful for nonfood items which cannot be purchased with food stamps such as, shampoo, conditioner, bath soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, antibacterial soaps, household cleaners, dish soap, laundry detergent and

dryer sheets.

Additional drop off locations include the Mendon Post Office or the Mendon Senior Center, drop off box is located in the gazebo during business hours.

The Mendon Food Pantry located at the Senior Center is currently open for Mendon residents one Friday per month by appointment. Upcoming dates include Oct. 31 (for November) and Dec. 5.

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

Submitted by Mendon Senior Center

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Upton's first film festival kicked off successfully

Organizers of the Upton Film Festival are still reeling with excitement over the successful turnout from their inaugural event. 140Arts Collaborative hosted Upton's first ever short film festival for 12 local filmmakers at the Upton Community Center on Friday, August 22nd and the audience was packed. 140Arts Vice President, Natalie Crosier, said she counted 71 guests.

The film festival was structured in two 1-hour blocks, one for students and the other for professional filmmakers with an intermission between the two blocks so people could meet each other. Organizers hoped this Film Festival could connect the local filmmakers and create friendships and networking opportunities for each other in the area.

Local filmmaker and published playwright, Robert Mattson, kicked off the professional block with his short titled, "Clunker" filmed at a local car dealership along route 140. The audience responded well to the comedy by laughing in all the right places. Over the course of the two-hour event, other genres were featured such as horror, comedy, experimental, documentary, docudrama, and mockumentary for a well-



Filmmakers Buffy Cautela of Hudson and Robert Mattson of Upton. Photo courtesy of Lauren Scheuer

rounded evening.

Organizers received supportive feedback from the audience following the event and look forward to making this an annual occurrence. If you would like to get on 140Arts email list to

learn of other events happening in the area or have a suggestion of what you would like to participate in, email 140Artsinfo@gmail.com.

Submitted by Erika McGowan

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Mendon Senior Center news for October

Come be our Guest at our Weekly Lunches

Thursday, Oct. 9: Chicken with BBQ Sauce
Tuesday, Oct. 14: Chicken Stir Fry & Steamed White Rice
Thursday, Oct. 16: Menu change ~ Caesar Chicken Salad and Soup
Tuesday, Oct. 21: Ziti with Meat Sauce
Thursday, Oct. 23: Vegetarian Chili
Tuesday, Oct. 28: Roast Pork with Cranberry Stuffing
Thursday, Oct. 30: Italian Buffet & Halloween Hat Party!

Friendly Reminders for our Tri-Valley Lunch Program!

Meals are served at 12 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, Oct. 15 – Three Seasons Restaurant at BVT High School, Upton.

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. Stop in Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m. 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!

Mendon Minstrels Chorus Returns! Music Lovers Invited!

The Senior Center Chorus meets on Mondays from 1 - 3 p.m. 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.

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 or call her at 508-473 3081. New Walkers are always welcome.

Crystal Bowl Sound Bath

Instructor Faith Kennedy will offer a 90-minute crystal bowl sound therapy session at the senior center on Friday, Oct. 17 at 2 p.m. Crystal bowl sound therapy is an ancient practice where different sound frequencies, produced by quartz crystal singing bowls, may help restore balance and harmony in the body. The cost is \$25 per person. Please call or stop by the senior center to register.

A Birthday Bash to Remember Featuring Tommy Rull and YOU!

Get ready to light the candles and raise your glasses—because we're throwing a birthday bash that promises fun, laughter, and unforgettable memories! Everyone is welcome, to this Friends sponsored event, whether you have a September Birthday or are just in the mood to celebrate someone who does. Join us Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 12 p.m. for complementary lunch of pizza, salad, birthday cupcakes. Immediately following lunch, we will be entertained by Tom Rull who will take us on "A Musical Journey Through the Years." Our November Birthday Bash is scheduled for Nov. 19. Please stop by the Senior Center or call 508-478-6175 to register.

Oktoberfest Raffle & Craft Fair

Join us for a festive fall tradition at the Annual Oktoberfest Fair—a community favorite filled with cheer, treats, and treasures!

To be held Saturday, Oct. 25 at the Mendon Senior Center. This event will feature Raffle

Baskets, Delicious baked goods and beautiful handmade crafts and knit goods. 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 tickets at the Mendon Lions Club Craft & Vendor Fair at Clough School on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025. Don't Miss it!

Mendon Farms: Past and Present - Not to be missed!

Former Mendon farmer Larry Pearson will offer us a fascinating look into Mendon Farm's past and present, through pictures and personal experience, on Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 10:30 a.m.

For starters, did you know that in the late 1800's there was a large cranberry operation in Mendon? Please stop by or call the Senior Center to register for this program. Consider joining us for lunch following the program featuring Roast Pork with gravy and cranberry stuffing. Please register for lunch separately.

Halloween Hat Party & Italian Buffet

Join us for a spooky good



time on Thursday, Oct. 30 at 12 noon

Come wearing your best Halloween Hat (or Costume.) You may even win a prize! Our Tri-Valley buffet features a Build Your Own Pasta Bowl with penne pasta and a choice of tomato or Alfredo sauce and the following toppings: meatballs, sweet Italian sausage, grilled chicken, roasted onions and peppers, broccoli and sauteed mushrooms. Also served with garlic bread, milk and dessert. Cost: \$3 donation. Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the center to register. Van transportation is available. Call Shawna Timperio to schedule a ride.

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






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The fruits (and veggies) of their labor

New energy-efficient equipment enhances student meals and hands-on learning at BVT

At Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), every new piece of equipment is more than just an upgrade—it's an opportunity to learn, innovate, and grow. Thanks to a Healthy Meals Incentives grant from Action for Healthy Kids, the Food Services program is now equipped with a state-of-the-art walk-in cooler and freezer tailored to its unique needs. This energy-efficient unit not only boosts safety and efficiency in their kitchen but also allows them to store fresh, local ingredients that support healthier meals for its students.

“With an increase in scratch cooking and the ability to store more fresh ingredients, we’re able to prepare restaurant-quality meals that are both nutritious and delicious,” said Chef Eric Carlson, Director of Food Services. “Offering students a wide variety of healthy options supports both learning and lifelong wellness.” Working alongside our dedicated Food Services team, Chef Carlson and Nutritionist Lisa Ciarametaro ensure that every school lunch includes detailed nutritional information to help students and staff make informed food choices.

The benefits of this grant go



Chef Eric Carlson, Director of Food Services at BVT, is standing in the walk-in cooler, holding a package of milk and a whole pineapple. Courtesy photo

beyond the cafeteria. Lincoln Shaw, a junior in the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) program, helped install the new system alongside instructor Matthew LaJoie. From setting up refrigeration units to installing ductwork and electrical components, Lincoln gained invaluable hands-on experience with commercial-grade equipment.

“HVAC&R technicians are often called on to work with

walk-in coolers and freezers in commercial environments,” said LaJoie. “This was a perfect opportunity for a student to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting—right here on our campus.”

As a Healthy Meals Incentives grantee, BVT is proud to partner with the USDA and Action for Healthy Kids to strengthen its school meal program. Thanks to grant funding, in-house expertise, and student involvement, the Food Services



Lincoln Shaw of Northbridge, a junior in the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) program at BVT, helped install the new system. Courtesy photo



Whether it's a freshly made blueberry crisp, salad, or wrap, our talented food services team creates the food that students enjoy. Courtesy photo

pounce on fall finds at

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program continues to deliver high-quality, nutritious, and cost-effective meals to its school community—one scratch-cooked dish at a time.

Submitted by Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

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, Millford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT 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. For more information about the school, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us.

Pet of the Month: Leo



Leo is a little unsure - unsure what to make of life in a shelter and unsure of who his friends are. While he looks very confident and a little dismissive, he's not fooling the other adult cats.

Leo is sure that he gets along better with younger cats who are a little unsure themselves and that he is really sure that he doesn't belong in a crate! Leo chirps happily when his crate is opened and will wind around your legs for attention. He really wants love but sometimes that uncertainty gets the best of him. When it's time for him to go back in his crate for the night, he won't go willingly.

Thankfully, in a home Leo will never need to be crated again. With patience and love, we're sure he will relax and learn to trust in his good fortune - and finally know who his friends are. Could you be the friend that Leo needs?

For information on meeting Leo, or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit <https://www.milfordhumane.org/>



To meet Leo, please visit the Milford Humane Society at [milfordhumane.org](https://www.milfordhumane.org) or call 508-473-7008 for more info.

Mendon Nov. 12 Special Town Meeting to include bylaw changes, additions

A Mendon Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. at Miscoe Hill School, 148 North Avenue.

For more information, including the warrant and supporting documents, visit <https://bit.ly/MendonTST-Moct2025>.



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Upton Special Town Meeting set for Nov. 4

The Town of Upton will hold a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. at Nipmuc Regional High School, 90 Pleasant Street. When prepared, the warrant will be posted at www.uptonma.gov.

The last day to register to vote is Oct. 25. For more information, contact the Town Clerk at 508-529-3565 or vote@uptonma.gov.

Source: Town of Upton



Upton Bloomer Girls Fall Vendor Fair on Nov. 1

The Upton Bloomer Girls are once again hosting their Fall Vendor Fair at BVT High School 65 Pleasant St. in Upton on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

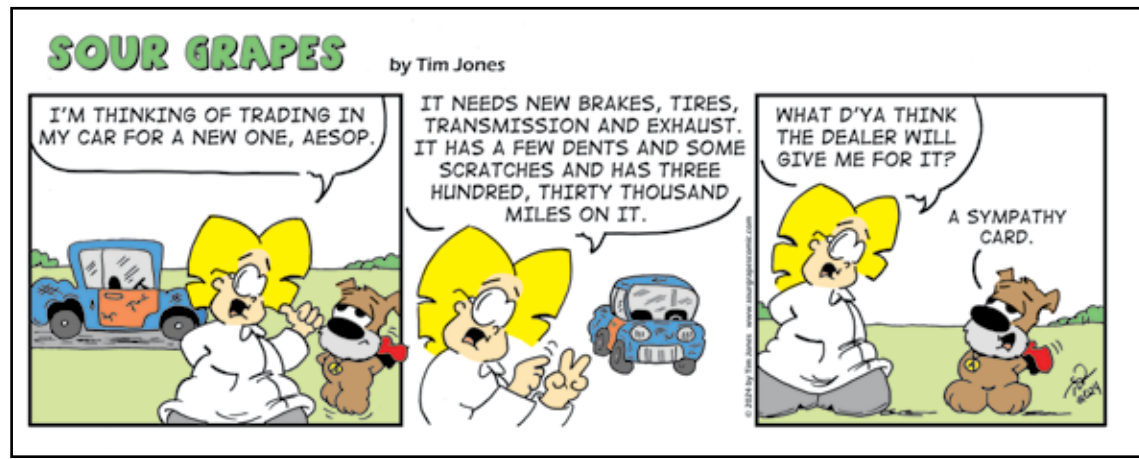
The fair will feature 50+ vendors, Country Kitchen, baked goods, raffles, and "Bloomer Girls' Treasures". This event is generously sponsored by the Upton Bloomer Girls, a 501(c)4 women's charity organization that offers resources, helping hands, or other assistance to current Upton residents who are in need of additional support.



Free parking, free admission, and opportunities to win great door prizes.

For more information, please go to [Facebook.com/ Upton-BloomerGirls1](https://Facebook.com/UptonBloomerGirls1).

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!



A HELPING HAND...

Community Supper on Oct. 16

Oct. 16: 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 crock-pot lasagna. Everyone is welcome. Please call the church office at 508-529-3192 by Oct. 10 to make your reservation. If you forget to reserve, please come anyway. We always make extra and would love to serve you.

Food Pantry at United Parish of Upton

Oct. 21 and Nov. 4 at 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

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Mendon veterans to host Appreciation Breakfast on Nov. 7

Mendon veterans of all ages and branches of the service are invited to attend a breakfast on Fri., Nov. 7, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Mendon Senior Center.

This event, hosted by the Mendon Council on Aging, is generously sponsored by the

Mendon Police Association and the Friends of Mendon Elders.

A patriotic musical tribute will be offered by the Mendon Minstrels chorus. To reserve your place, please stop by or call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175. Transportation is available.

November 'Sleepout' to benefit emergency shelter

The Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter will hold a Sleepout on Friday, Nov. 7 to Sunday, Nov. 9 to raise awareness and help neighbors facing domestic violence,

family violence, and homelessness around the Blackstone Valley.

For more information, visit www.bvemercencyshelter.org/event-details/bves-sleepout.

UMass Memorial – Milford Regional invests \$2.6 million in community benefits programming

For the second consecutive year, the Massachusetts Hospital Association announced that hospitals throughout the Commonwealth devoted more than \$1 billion in community-based programs in FY24, with Milford Regional contributing \$2.6 million of that number.

Throughout FY24, Milford Regional's community benefits contributions included mental health webinars, youth fitness programs, blood drives, interpreter services, substance use care, free sunscreen initiatives, childbirth education classes for teens and end-of-life comfort to assist families, just to name a few.

As local healthcare needs have grown throughout the state, hospitals' community benefits investments have increased by 33 percent over the past five years.

Community benefits address

specific healthcare issues, inequities and social needs through collaborations with local organizations and hospital staff. Programs are provided at no cost to residents and patients and are not reimbursed by government entities or insurance companies.

"Despite the financial strains that healthcare systems throughout the state are facing, hospitals continue to see the irrefutable value of investing in community benefits programming," said UMass Memorial - Milford Regional COO and Chair of the Community Benefits Committee's Leadership Team Bert Thurlo-Walsh, MM, RN, CPHQ.


"Milford Regional proudly and continually enhances its community benefits through strong partnerships between our staff and local organizations to help tackle disparities and health

outcomes throughout our service region."

Community benefits reports from Massachusetts hospitals are posted on the Attorney General's website. To view Milford Regional's FY24 community benefits report, visit www.milfordregional.org/about-us/community-benefits.

About UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center

UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center is a full-service, regional teaching hospital that serves patients from more than 20 communities in Central Massachusetts. The 148-bed hospital is a nonprofit, acute-care facility where more than 300 primary care and specialty clinicians are relentless in providing exceptional healthcare services to our community with dignity, compassion and respect. Visit www.milfordregional.org to learn more.



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SPORTS

Nipmuc Girls Soccer primed for title defense

Strong defense helped reigning D3 champs to unbeaten start

By Chris Villani

After rolling to a Division III state title and its third straight Central Mass. championship a season ago, the Nipmuc girls' soccer team picked right up where it left off and posted an undefeated record through the first seven games of the year.

With 11 seniors on the roster, the most head coach Steve Khoury has ever had, Nipmuc is well-positioned for a title defense, even if it isn't at the top of the coach's mind.

"I feel like we have a strong team, but we don't really talk about the tournament," Khoury said. "We just try to improve and worry about the game ahead of us."

Khoury noted that a lot of things go into a title run, including having luck and being able to weather the pressure of a single-elimination format. But

Nipmuc has numerous players in significant roles this year who experienced and succeeded in that gauntlet in 2024.

Senior midfielders Anya Montano and Ella Vanasse are captains this year, along with senior outside backs Emma Watts and Riley Restic.

Senior midfielder Kenzie Ellis, center back Lyla Hill, sophomore Cate Tengler, and freshman Finley Flynn are among the other key contributors for the team this fall.

Before the state tournament even rolls around, Nipmuc has another specific objective that it hopes to accomplish.

"Our main goal is to win the conference," Khoury said, referring to the brand-new Central Mass. Athletic Conference, which includes strong programs like Sutton, Douglas, Auburn, and Tantasqua. "It's a new con-



(L-R) Nipmuc Girls Soccer team: Julia Ferrandino Riley Restic Jess Casey Anya Montano Abby Mullins, Kenzie Ellis, Sam Crotty, Maddie Weibe, Ella Vanasse, Emma Watts, Lyla Hill, the deep Nipmuc senior class has been critical to the team's title defense. Courtesy photo

ference for us, and winning it would be great."

Team defense has been a

strength all season, Khoury said, and Nipmuc has been adept on the counterattack and at possessing the ball for lengthy periods. The coach said he is looking for his team to get a little bit sharper on offense, especially when it comes to finishing off possessions and finding the back of the net.

"Our finishing is a little bit off," he said. "But I know we will improve."

And having so many experienced players who are used to playing in this system makes fast improvement all the more likely.

"They know what I want," Khoury said. "I have been with them and most of the girls have been with me for three years. They work hard at practice, and the older girls help out with the younger girls on the team. They are definitely a big help."

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SPORTS

Fast start for Valley Tech Volleyball

Beavers in strong place for playoffs



BVT's senior leadership is helping to drive the Beavers' success this season. Photo credit: Sophia Iacovelli

By Chris Villani

The Blackstone Valley Tech girls' volleyball team is playing in a different conference this year with a more challenging schedule, and head coach Jacob Ramos would not have it any other way.

"It's been nice to have a schedule where the matches are competitive every single night," Ramos said. "We have gotten used to playing tight games and having to show up each and every day."

The Beavers raced out to a 7-2 start to the season, and Ramos said even some of the 3-0 wins that look like routs on paper have been anything but. This season, Valley Tech is competing in the Central Mass. Athletic Conference, which re-shaped competition in the area. The Beavers brought a veteran lineup back to face the new

league, with seven seniors back from last year putting the team in a good position to make a run this season.

Senior Nadia Shloul is one of the team's captains and a mainstay at outside hitter. She is joined by junior captain Franceska Malo, a setter, senior captain Madeline Flanagan, a middle hitter, and junior captain Manuela Bernardes, a libero. The lineup gives the Beavers experience all over the court.

"We did return a lot of core pieces who are now upperclassmen," Ramos said.

Valley Tech has a number of lofty goals, all of which are within reach. Ramos said the team wants to win the state vocational tournament, compete for the top spot in the CMAC, and earn the highest possible power ranking to make a solid run in the statewide tourna-

ment. He said he hopes he has the roster to meet the high bar they have all set.

"We have all the pieces and with the more challenging schedule, we are quickly learning the last piece, the mental piece, and what it takes to beat good teams," Ramos said. "I think that's what's going to push us to be the best team we can be."

BVT also no longer has the familiarity of opponents in the Colonial Athletic League, the team's former conference. Having to remain sharp and learn opponents' strengths and weaknesses on the fly adds some stress for the coach, but he said it is making his team better overall.

"Our schedule is giving me headaches, because it is very competitive," Ramos said. "That's what we wanted, and that's what we got."

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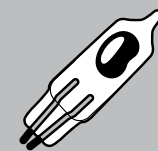
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