

Two 1776 Declarations reunited at Nipmuc Regional High School, first time since American Revolution



The Nipmuc Regional High School Social Studies Department welcomed the Mendon and Upton Town Clerks on Nov. 17 to show students the towns' handwritten copies of the Declaration of Independence. Photo Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

The last time Mendon and Upton's handwritten copies of the Declaration of Independence sat side by side, the American Revolution had barely begun.

In November, they were

placed together on a library table at Nipmuc Regional High School, where students leaned in closely to study the pieces of local history created on July 17, 1776.

On July 4, 1776, the Con-

tinental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. A local printer produced about 200 copies,

DECLARATIONS

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Nipmuc Drama Guild celebrates 'PUFFS' success



The Nipmuc Drama Guilds production of 'PUFFS' took place in November. (L to R) Felix Schepis, Kamp Simpson, and Maya Williamson. Photo credit: Nipmuc Photography Club

By Amalea Lefort and Kaitlyn Allington
Nipmuc Writing Center

The Nipmuc Drama Guild has concluded a remarkable fall season, marked by a highly successful and energetic production of "PUFFS." This comedic spin-off, offering a humorous look at seven years within the Hufflepuff house, was a small glimpse into the

guild's dedication and talent.

Despite encountering stressful and overwhelming moments during staging and the week leading up to the show, the guild united and demonstrated its impressive perseverance. Their collabora-

PUFFS

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Warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season!

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Mendon Senior Center December/January updates

Weekly Programs:

Call Shawna Timperio for more information, availability, and transportation

Shopping Van – Monday or Tuesday 9 a.m.

Chorus Rehearsal – Returning Mondays 12:30 p.m. for the spring program

SHINE Counseling – Monday 12:30 p.m.

Chair Exercise – Tues./Thurs. 9 a.m.

Lunch – Tues./Thurs. 12 p.m.

Hand, Knee & Foot – Tuesday 1 p.m.

Panera Bread – Wednesday 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Qigong – Wednesday 10 p.m.

Cribbage – Wednesday 9:45 a.m.

Tai Chi – Wednesday 11 a.m.

Mah Jong – Wed./Thurs. 1 p.m.

Knitting Group – Thursday 1 p.m.

December Birthday Celebration Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 11:30 a.m.

Calling All Birthday Buffs and Boogie Enthusiasts! Join us for our monthly celebration filled with music, laughter, and good company.

Who's Invited?

- Anyone who loves singing "Happy Birthday" (in any key!)
- Fans of live music and feel-good fun.
- Friends who enjoy a delicious lunch together.
- And of course—December birthdays get the spotlight!

A delicious lunch will be served, along with plenty of cheer and celebration. Let's make it a birthday bash to remember—music, laughter, and plenty of sparkle. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the senior center to register. Space is limited.

Western Themed New Years Eve Celebration Dec. 31, 11 - 2 p.m.

Let's celebrate the incoming New Year together! Join us at the center for a festive Western Themed New Years Ever Party. Enjoy an assortment of tasty appetizers and delicious desserts with friends and toast the New Year. Please stop in or call to register at the Senior Center. Space is limited. Many thanks to Diane Howell for coordinating this wonderful program.

Home Energy Assistance HEAP

Help is Just a Call Away. If you or someone you know is having trouble making ends meet, please consider contacting the Mendon Senior Center. Our helpful staff including Jenn Talamini, our new Outreach Coordinator, are here to offer confidential assistance with fuel assistance applications and nutritional support to Mendon residents of all ages. The SMOC Fuel assistance program helps defray heating costs

incurred between Nov. 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026 for eligible households (see household size/income guide.) Please call for guidelines for larger households. Call Jenn at the senior center at 508-478-6175 ext. 123. Help is just a phone call away. Household size Income Limit:

- 1 - \$51,777
- 2 - \$67,709
- 3 - \$83,641
- 4 - \$99,573

Outreach Assistance

Our new Senior Center Outreach Coordinator, Jenn Talamini is available to offer free confidential counseling, caregiver support, and information and referral services on aging issues for seniors and caregivers. This position is grant funded in part under a state grant. Home visits are available, please contact Jenn at 508-478-6175 ext. 123.

Meditation for Seniors Friday Jan. 9, 2 p.m.

Join us at the Mendon Senior Center for a special 90-minute wellness program with certified instructor Faith Kennedy on Friday, Jan. 9 at 2 p.m. This relaxing and restorative session features: One hour of guided meditation, offering benefits such as improved memory

and attention, reduced stress and anxiety, better sleep quality, lower blood pressure, and enhanced immune function. Crystal bowl sound therapy, an ancient practice using quartz crystal singing bowls to promote balance and harmony within the body. This program is subsidized with a state grant. The cost is \$25 per person. Call or stop by the senior center to register. Space is limited, so call 508-478-6175 or stop by the senior center to reserve your space early.

Real Estate Tax Exemptions

While taxes cannot be avoided, some taxpayers may be entitled to partial relief via a "real estate tax exemption." A tax exemption is a discharge from the obligation to pay all or a portion of a tax. There are several types of exemptions each with its own requirements; one that is age related (65 years or older detailed below), others given due to blindness, surviving spouse or veteran's status. Mendon's Principal Assessor, Sherrie Bates will be at the Mendon Senior Center on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 1 p.m. (with a snow date of Feb. 11 at 1 p.m.) at the Mendon Senior Center, 62 Providence St. Mendon to review the requirements and to answer any

questions. Please stop by or call the senior center at 508-478-6175 to register.

Applications for all of these exemptions are due no later than April 1, 2026.

Sherrie Bates will also discuss the Senior Means Tested Exemption (Circuit Breaker.) While the deadline for submitting this application is Sept. 30, 2026, a taxpayer must have applied for and received the Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit when they filed their calendar year 2025 State Income Tax return. This does not replace any existing senior exemptions, but will be given as an additional exemption. If you are unable to come to our presentation on the 21st, please contact the Assessor's office 508-473-2738 for confidential assistance.

Chorus Rehearsals Resumes! New Members Welcome!

On Monday, Jan. 26 at 12:30 p.m., the Mendon Minstrels singers and musicians will return to begin rehearsals for their spring program featuring show tunes. Come enjoy the joy of making music together! New members are always welcome. Call the senior center at 508-478-6175 if you have any questions or to let us know of your interest.

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Upton Senior Center hosts Veteran's Day Breakfast to honor local heroes

The Upton Community Center was filled with gratitude and community spirit on Thursday, Nov. 13, at 10 a.m., as nearly 70 veterans, spouses, Upton residents and town officials gathered in the Great Room for the annual Veteran's Day Breakfast. The event celebrated Upton's veterans and members of the local VFW representing all branches of the United States military.

The event began with the national anthem sung by Joe McMahon, followed by remarks from Director of Elder and Social Services Tania Paparazzo, Senator Ryan Fattman, and Select Board Chairwoman Laura Hebb, each expressing heartfelt appreciation for the service and sacrifices of the community's veterans. A special moment of recognition was given to Freddy Shaffert, who was honored

later that evening at the Upton Grange as Upton's Veteran of the Year.

"This was a wonderful experience. The program was thoughtful, the speakers were spot on, and the breakfast was excellent. It means a great deal to see every branch recognized and honored," noted Specialist 5 Ted Gorman, U.S. Army Veteran. "For my first time attending the Veteran's Day Breakfast, it was truly meaningful and very enjoyable." Gorman served three years active duty, including one year in Vietnam, and three years inactive duty.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious breakfast of pastries, bacon, eggs, and French toast generously prepared by Cote's Kitchen of Upton. A highlight for many attendees was the surprise visit from Koda, the police comfort dog who attended



Senator Fattman honoring Upton and VFW veterans and spouses for their service and sacrifice. Courtesy of Upton Senior Center



Select Board Chairwoman, Laura Hebb, shares her appreciation to local veterans representing all branches of the military. Courtesy of Upton Senior Center

with School Resource Officer O'Conner.

The Town extends sincere thanks to the Senior Center staff and volunteers who helped or-

ganize and host the event, with

HEROES

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Hanging out with Koda the black lab on Black Friday

A post by the Upton Police Department on Friday, Nov. 26



Cold weather couldn't stop today's awesome young riders! Koda got to meet these paw-some kids as they enjoyed the day off from school and rode their bikes around town this afternoon. We love seeing

kids out and about practicing proper bike safety! Helmets on, staying alert, and riding smart!

Koda is the Upton Police Department's new comfort dog. Source: Facebook @uptonpolice

Upton History Museum open house on Dec. 13

The Upton History Museum will hold an open house on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Guests are invited to tour the museum, hear about Upton's history, view artwork, vintage clothing, genealogy research, and more.

Admission is free, refreshments will be served, and the gift shop will be open. The museum is located at 2 Main Street in Upton.

For more information, visit www.uptonmahistory.org.



Upton History Museum and Historical Society at 2 Main Street. Photo source: Facebook @UptonHistoricalSociety

Upton winter parking ban now in effect



The Town of Upton's winter parking ban is now in effect.

The ban prohibits on street parking between the hours of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. from Nov. 1 through April 1.

The Town of Upton prohibits its parking of any vehicle on a

town road from the start of a snow or ice storm until 12 hours after the storm ends.

The Town of Upton is authorized to have any car towed that is obstructing snow removal operations.

Source: Facebook @uptonpolice

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The real meaning of diversification in investing



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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In the world of investing, we've all heard the phrase, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." It's solid advice that emphasizes the importance of diversifying your investments. Unfortunately, some people misinterpret this wisdom to mean they should avoid consolidating their investment accounts and keep their money spread across multiple financial institutions, often working with several different financial advisors.

However, when financial

professionals talk about diversification, they're referring to diversifying your investment assets, not your accounts. There's a big difference between the two, and confusing them could hurt your financial future.

Scattered accounts may affect costs, paperwork and advice.

When your assets are spread among multiple financial institutions, you could face several drawbacks. First, you're likely paying more in fees than necessary. Multiple providers often mean multiple account fees, transaction costs and mutual fund expenses that can add up quickly. Generally, the more assets you have with one financial provider, the more opportunities you have for reducing or eliminating these costs.

Managing scattered accounts also could create a paperwork nightmare. You'll receive multiple monthly statements and numerous tax forms, making it much harder to see the big picture of your financial health. This complexity can lead to missed opportunities and poor decision-making.

Perhaps most important, working with multiple financial advisors may result in conflicting advice and duplicated investment strategies. Without a comprehensive view of your entire portfolio, each financial advisor may recommend investments that don't work well together, potentially delaying your progress toward reaching financial goals.

There's strength in consolidation. Consolidating your accounts with a single financial advisor offers numerous benefits. You'll have opportunities to develop a closer, more comprehensive relationship with someone who understands your complete financial picture. This financial advisor can provide informed guidance and help eliminate the conflicting advice that may come from working with multiple professionals.

Consolidation also makes it easier to implement a well-diversified portfolio that fits your level of risk tolerance. When all your investments are in one place, you can see exactly how your assets are allocated and make strategic adjustments as needed.

It becomes simpler to gauge aggregate investment returns, assess your portfolio assets and rebalance when necessary.

For retirement planning, consolidation can be especially valuable. IRAs at different providers can be consolidated at any time without tax consequences when assets are transferred directly between providers. When you retire, your 401(k) can typically be rolled over into an IRA, streamlining your retirement income strategy.

True diversification still matters. While consolidating accounts makes sense, diversifying your actual investments remains crucial. A good financial advisor will help you carefully build a balanced mix of stocks and bonds appropriate for your age and goals. As you approach retirement, this typically means shifting toward a more balanced portfolio that still provides growth to combat inflation while offering stability and income.

Diversification goes beyond just stocks and bonds. Take bonds, for instance: You can diversify by bond type (mu-

nicipal, corporate and government), bond maturity (through a strategy called "laddering") and bond sector to spread risk across different parts of the economy.


How to get started. If your retirement savings and investment accounts are scattered among various financial institutions, consider consolidating everything with one trusted financial advisor. The streamlined record-keeping, potential for reduced fees and comprehensive financial guidance can help improve your wealth-building potential while making your financial life simpler to manage.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Hopkinton, MA 508-293-4017
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PUFFS

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tive spirit showed in a fantastic production that resonated with audiences.

Looking ahead, the Nipmuc Drama Guild is already busy preparing for their next adventure: the beloved musical “Bye Bye Birdie.” This classic show is a hilarious satire of American pop culture in the 1950s, centering on a rock and roll superstar, Conrad Birdie, who is drafted into the army, and the chaos that arises when he publicly says goodbye to one lucky fan. The production is scheduled to open in February, promising to continue the guilds tradition of delivering engaging and memorable theatrical performances!

The Nipmuc Writing Center is a group of 12 students who meet during school hours. In this new class, students provide skills and pointers to other students to help them improve and grow in their writing, while also growing their own teaching skills.

Upton Police celebrate 135 years



In November, the Upton Police Department celebrated its 135th anniversary. The cake was donated by Ellen and Russ Arnold and made by the bakery at Blackstone Valley Tech. The cake reads, “Happy 135th Anniversary Upton P.D.!” Source: Facebook @UptonHistoricalSociety

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DECLARATIONS

continued from page 1

which were sent to the states with instructions to read the document aloud and to copy it by hand into town record books. Both Mendon and Upton created handwritten copies of the document that still survive today.

On Mon., Nov. 17, the Nipmuc Social Studies Department welcomed Mendon Town Clerk Ellen Agro and Upton Town Clerk Denise Smith, who each brought their town's original handwritten copy for students to examine. It was the first time the two documents had been in the same room in 249 years.

The program is part of the Social Studies Department's "Revolution In Our Back Yard" unit and supports the national America250 effort [learn more at america250.org]. Teachers designed the lesson to link national milestones to local places so that students understand how major events impacted their own communities.

"Looking at the Declaration of Independence made me feel

that the history was right there and very immediate, more real than just reading about it in class," said sophomore Cate Tengler. "Looking at the actual document made me realize and understand that the people who wrote it were real individuals making serious decisions that shaped our country. I think it's important to see documents like this because it gives us a sense of how close and real history is."

Social Studies teacher Darcy Daniels said the goal is to connect national history to more familiar surroundings near home.

"As a department, we have been working on linking national history like the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence to local, place-based history so that students feel connected to their communities," Daniels said. "This creates a more authentic learning experience because, if students can drive by a place or see a local document, they are more likely to retain the information about the national event. We are so lucky to have fantastic community partners like our two Town Clerks Ellen Agro and Denise

Smith who helped to facilitate this intentional pairing of national and local history."

Agro, the Mendon Town Clerk, said she was encouraged by the students' interest in the documents during the event.

"As we approach our country's 250th birthday and the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, I was struck by the enthusiasm shown by the Nipmuc students who took the time to inspect Mendon's Resolves and the transcribed copies of the Declaration of Independence," Agro said. "Seeing them engaged in actively trying to read the old script was entertaining. Our future is bright in the hands of these future voters."

Nipmuc Library Media Specialist Paige Rouse helped host the visit in the Nipmuc Media Center.

"This was an incredibly powerful experience to have right here in our school, not only to absorb the significance of this

historical document, but also to explore the impact of everyday people on the course of momentous events and to reflect on the power we each have to shape our shared future," Rouse said. "I am honored to have been a part of this opportunity."

"Our students had a chance to see how national history lives in their own towns," said Mendon-Upton Regional School District Superintendent Dr. Maureen Cohen. "Experiences like this help them understand that the events they study in classes were shaped by real people in real places. I am grateful to our town clerks and our staff for giving students such meaningful access to these documents."

This learning experience is representative of the work undertaken by Ms. Daniels and the Nipmuc Social Studies Department to create connections between the curriculum and the world beyond the school campus. Ms. Daniels was honored for her work when she was named

At Congress' direction in 1776, the Towns of Mendon and Upton each created a handwritten copy of the Declaration of Independence, and each still survives today.

"Seeing them engaged in actively trying to read the old script was entertaining. Our future is bright in the hands of these future voters."

*~ Ilen Agro,
Mendon Town Clerk*

the Massachusetts 2024 History Teacher of the Year. Additionally, in May 2025, Nipmuc's Social Studies Department received the 'Recognition of Department Excellence in Teaching Social Studies Award' from the Massachusetts Council for Social Studies, honoring their ongoing work to bring the curriculum to life through authentic learning.

Submitted by Mendon-Upton Regional School District



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EVO ICL: Is this the New Lasik?

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, LASIK became the crown jewel of refractive surgery. Patients rushed to correct their vision, thrilled by the idea of being free from glasses and contacts. Over time, however, some of LASIK's limitations became clearer: cutting and thinning of the cornea, potential for worsened dry-eye symptoms, night-vision issues, and concerns about corneal stability — especially in thinner corneas — as well as challenges in achieving precise intraocular lens calculations if cataract surgery is needed later in life.

A new technology has since emerged in the United States — the EVO Visian ICL (often simply called “EVO ICL”) — and its adoption has grown rapidly since FDA approval in 2022. Designed for adults with moderate to high myopia, with or without astigmatism, EVO ICL offers a compelling alternative to LASIK.

What makes EVO ICL differ-

ent — and increasingly preferable?

Unlike LASIK, EVO ICL does not remove or thin the cornea. The lens is placed behind the iris and in front of the natural crystalline lens, leaving the corneal architecture untouched. There is no flap creation, no tissue removal, and no weakening of the cornea.

Because the cornea remains intact, the risk of corneal ectasia — a rare but serious complication associated with LASIK — is virtually eliminated in properly screened patients. EVO ICL also tends to minimize dry-eye symptoms, since the corneal nerves are not disrupted as they are during laser-based procedures.

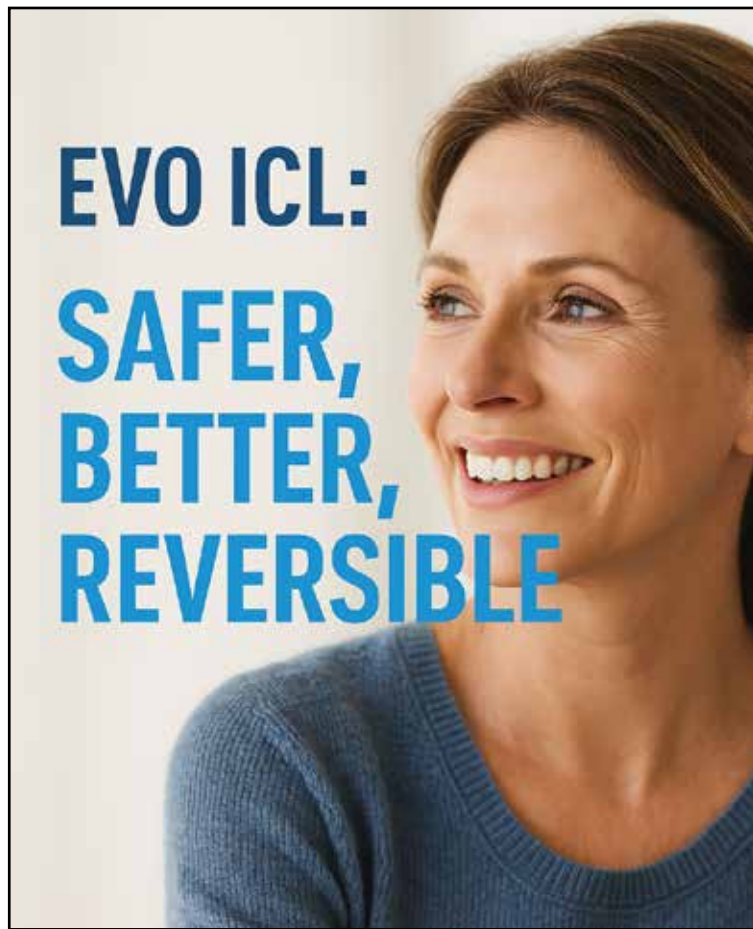
Night-vision problems such as glare or halos, often reported after LASIK, are less common with EVO ICL. Because the eye's optical system remains more natural and unaltered, patients frequently report crisp, high-quality vision even in dim light.

Another major advantage is

that EVO ICL is reversible and additive rather than subtractive. The lens can be removed or replaced if needed, preserving the eye's natural anatomy. This feature becomes especially important later in life when cataract surgery may be needed. Since the cornea is untouched, calculations for premium intraocular lenses — such as multifocal implants that restore both distance and near vision — remain highly accurate.

Across the country, surgeons are reporting rapid growth in EVO ICL procedures since its approval. More patients are asking for it, more practices are offering it, and the procedure has quickly become a mainstream choice for vision correction.

Clinically, LASIK remains an excellent option for patients with mild to moderate myopia, healthy corneal thickness, and no significant dry-eye history. But for patients with thinner corneas, higher prescriptions, greater astigmatism, or those thinking ahead to future cataract



surgery, EVO ICL is quickly becoming the preferred option. Many surgeons are now offering it even for mild myopia because of its safety, comfort, and strong outcomes.

In short, LASIK may now represent the past for many patients and practices, while EVO ICL stands as the future of refractive correction. Both have their place, but the shift is unmistakable: more people are choosing EVO ICL for its safety, reversibility, comfort, and compatibility with future vision care.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we are proud to be at the forefront of this evolution. Dr. Roger Kaldawy is among the first surgeons in the region to offer EVO ICL technology in our state-of-the-art surgery center. With over 30,000 intra-

ocular procedures — and an even higher number of laser cases — Dr. Kaldawy brings unparalleled experience to this advanced form of refractive surgery. He and his colleagues are committed to helping you achieve your vision goals: reducing your dependence on glasses and contacts while protecting your long-term eye health.

If you're ready to explore true refractive freedom — and considering a meaningful gift of sight this holiday season — contact us for a consultation and discover why EVO ICL may be the procedure of tomorrow, available today.

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It's the most wonderful time of the year to use Affordable Junk Removal

By Linda Chuss

With so much to do around the holidays, give yourself the gift of space by using Affordable Junk Removal to help prepare your home for the season. "Life is hectic, we are all so busy in our daily lives that we don't notice how quickly we are being overrun with junk" said Jason Schadler, who founded the business in this area 20 years ago. "It's nice to park your car in the garage during the cold months, but maybe you need to make room there first, and we can help with that."

With Affordable Junk Removal, you can rent a dumpster or have their Junk Removal Professionals come to haul away items that have been gathering dust and taking up precious space. Setting an end-of-year or New Year's resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. You can even put a dumpster rental on your gift list. Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing where to begin, and that is where Affordable comes in.

"You can load your own dumpster or have our truck guys do all of the work for you,"

Business spotlight

Schadler explained. "And rest assured, we don't just take everything to the landfill. We try and recycle as much as possible. Clothing and household items are donated to local organizations that help our friends and neighbors. That keeps them out of landfills, gives them a new life, and helps us keep our prices down. We're always looking for ways to be more cost effective because customers appreciate our reasonable prices."

Changes in legislation have made it increasingly more difficult to dispose of certain items, like mattresses, for example. It is now state law that most textiles and mattresses must be recycled. "Finding places to take mattresses is a challenge and the fees for disposal have gone through the roof," said Schadler. Items like these carry a separate recycling fee that the commercial transfer stations charge because of how labor intensive



that recycling is. "People are usually shocked at the cost, and we find ourselves educating the customer as to why these fees exist. Here at Affordable, we view ourselves as an avenue our clients can turn to when they have these items and want them disposed of legally, safely and properly."

Affordable has many repeat

customers. "When people call, they reach me, not some automated corporate call center," he said. "They know me and the crew and trust us. We do a good job, are fast, efficient, and reliable. We come when we say we will and if anything unexpected comes up, we communicate. We live here too, we are your friends and neighbors, we sponsor your

little league teams and run into you at the grocery store. We are your local guys." A quick look at the many years of positive online reviews attests to this.

For more information, visit AffordableJunkRemoval.com. For an estimate or appointment, call or text 774-287-1133.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Seeking local 'senior' seniors for WWII youth project

MURSD students to interview seniors who were children during WWII

The Mendon Senior Center and the Mendon-Upton Regional School system are proposing to capture the memories of those who were children during WWII era. The plan is to have a selection of students interview this special group of seniors and capture as many of their childhood memories as possible and share them with the other students.

This project is concentrating on WWII as it directly impacted the day-to-day actions of this civilian population significantly, unlike any recent wars. All wars create concern about the family members and friends serving their country, but WWII had additional impact on those at the

home front.

If you are a "senior" senior interested in participating in this project, please sign up on the list at the Mendon Senior Center or call Amy Wilson Kent at the Center. Participants do not need to be a member of the Mendon Senior Center or a resident of Mendon. A good number of participants are necessary to allow this project to be successful.

This project is tentatively planned to begin after the holidays, in the latter half of January which also coincides with the school history lesson cycle. Many thanks to volunteer Barbara Lawson for her coordination of this project with the Mendon-Upton Regional School system.

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HEROS

continued from page 3

special appreciation to volunteer Cheryl Henderson for her thoughtful dedication to making this a memorable event.

“This breakfast is a small but meaningful way for our community to express our deep gratitude to the veterans who have served

our country,” said Papparazzo. “We are honored to celebrate them today and every day.”

For more information about future community events, please contact the Upton Department of Elder and Social Services.

Submitted by Upton Senior Center



Koda, the police comfort dog, was a surprise guest at the event.
Courtesy of Upton Senior Center



The Fallen Soldiers table, a memorial honoring and remembering military service members who are fallen, missing in action (MIA), or prisoners of war (POW).
Courtesy of Upton Senior Center



Joe McMahon singing the National Anthem,
Courtesy of Upton Senior Center

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Mendon-Upton Regional School District awarded hate crime prevention grant

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District has been awarded \$30,000 through the Massachusetts FY26 Hate Crime Prevention Grant Program.

The state funding will support the district's efforts to prevent hate crimes and reduce incidences of bias, helping students and staff implement programs and policies that foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive educational environment. The funding supports educator training, student engagement and community outreach, contributing to a safe, inclusive environment.

MURSD Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Kirkpatrick applied for the grant on behalf of the school district, and wrote it in collaboration with Anne Corron, Principal of Miscoe Hill Middle School, and Nick Cuomo, Assistant Principal. The Mendon Police Department also supported the grant application.

"Our middle school students are at an age where they are learning the importance of being respectful, responsible, and safe community members," Principal Corron said. "We are grateful that this grant will support us in helping them create the kind of community at Miscoe Hill where all students feel a sense of belonging."

"This grant will also allow us to provide meaningful programming and resources to help our staff work with students to ensure school is a respectful, welcoming place for everyone," Assistant Superintendent Kirkpatrick said. "We are committed to ensuring that

every student feels safe, valued, and respected in our schools throughout the Mendon-Upton Regional School District."

The \$30,000 awarded to the Mendon-Upton Regional School District is part of an overall \$1.01 million in state grants awarded to a total of 38 school districts across Massachusetts to prevent hate crimes and reduce incidents of bias.

The grant funding can be used to support evidence-based curriculum, professional development for educators and staff, and collaboration with local organizations experienced in preventing hate and bias. It can also help improve policies and procedures for reporting and responding to incidents, strengthening both student and staff awareness and preparedness.

"We want to make sure that

students know that in Massachusetts they are all welcome at school and supported by our incredible educators and staff," said Gov. Maura Healey. "The Hate Crimes Prevention Grants provide our local schools with the resources and tools to prevent hate and create safe environments for students and their families."

MURSD Superintendent Dr. Cohen expressed thanks to the state for its support on this crucial matter.

"This funding is an investment in the well-being and growth of our students," Superintendent Cohen said. "It allows us to take proactive steps to prevent bias and hate, strengthen our school community, and ensure that every student in Mendon-Upton has the opportunity to learn in a safe and inclusive environment."

Gratitude for supporting our neighbors in need

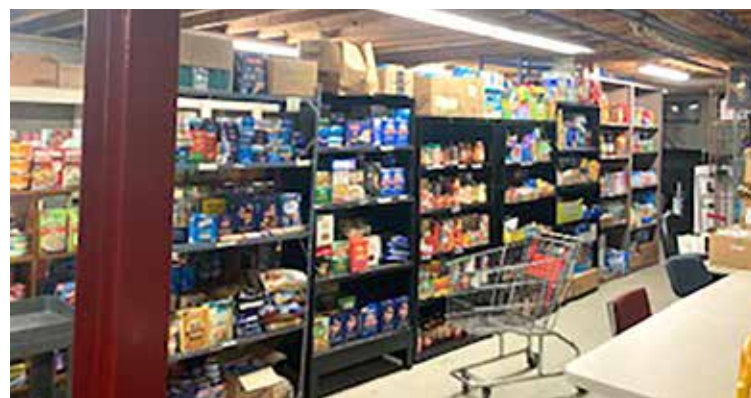
Letter to the Editor:

The Mendon Council on Aging and Senior Center staff extend our heartfelt gratitude to the residents and businesses of Mendon, as well as to the Scouts, for partnering with us to support our neighbors in need. Thanks to your generosity, our food pantry has been replenished as we head into the winter season, and we are truly grateful for your kindness and community spirit.

We offer special recognition to the Upton Bloomer Girls of St. Gabriel's Church for their recent food drive, and to the students and staff of Henry P. Clough Elementary School, who surpassed their goal by collecting and donating an impressive 517 items.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the dedicated volunteers who make our work possible. Their commitment—sorting donations, checking dates, organizing shelves, shopping for necessities, filling orders, and assisting clients—is essential to serving our community with care and dignity.

Any Mendon resident experiencing food insecurity is encouraged to contact Jenn Talamini, Outreach Coordinator, at 508-478-6175 ext. 123 for confidential assistance.



Mendon Food Pantry. Courtesy photo



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Swandale Cemetery in Mendon in October.
Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

Upton Police receive Blessing of the Fleet



On Nov. 23, members of the Upton Police Department attended Sunday Mass. On Facebook, the UPD extended its "sincere thanks St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish and members of our community for honoring us during the Mass. The annual 'Blessing of the Fleet' by Father Steven took place at the conclusion of Mass. Source: Facebook @uptonpolice

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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 & TEEN PROGRAMS DECEMBER 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, Dec. 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.

Slow Flow Yoga for Adults & Teens

Join Katie Aissis from Sprouting Tree Yoga for Slow Flow Yoga. This Vinyasa style yoga class links breath to movement in a dynamic sequence of postures. Participants will build strength while also finding moments throughout the practice to quiet the mind and rest the body. This class is appropriate for all levels, and no previous yoga experience is necessary. Please bring your own yoga mat. Join us on Jan. 6, Feb. 3, March 24, April 14 and May 12 at 7 p.m. Registration required.

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club is led by Library Assistant Kris Heumann.

Upcoming book club discussions are as follows:

Discussion of *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir on Monday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m.

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.

The Magic Behind the Holidays with Greg Dwyer

Greg Dwyer returns with an enchanting mind reading experience for the holiday season! The Magic Behind the Holidays is a captivating theatrical experience where illusion, mentalism, and the spirit of the season come together in a truly magical way. Presented by former illusionist and communication expert Greg Dwyer, this one-of-a-kind show blends interactive mind reading, storytelling, and seasonal charm to leave audiences amazed, entertained, and filled with holiday cheer. Join us on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. Registration is required as space is limited. Visit www.taftpubliclibrary.org to register.

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 Virginia Evans' *The Correspondent*, a top 5 Amazon Book of the Year pick. Discussion of *The Correspondent* will be in February date TBD. 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 upcoming books this year:

An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us by Ed Yong (in March 2026 date 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.

Dates of discussion for some 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. Contact the library at 508-473-3259 for additional details. 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 friendsoftaflibrary@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 website.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS DECEMBER 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. Please note that there will be no storytimes during the last week of December.



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. and Wednesday afternoons at 1 p.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.

TAFT LIBRARY

continued on page 15

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Wishing you a happy Holiday Season and a wonderful New Year.

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<p>Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24th 8:30 AM to Noon</p> <p>Christmas Day Thursday, December 25th Closed</p>	<p>New Year's Eve Wednesday, December 31st 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM</p> <p>New Year's Day Thursday, January 1st Closed</p>
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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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By Upton Library Staff

December Holiday Hours

Upton Town Library will have the following holiday hours:

Wednesday, Dec. 24 – 9 a.m. -

2:30 p.m. ***Early Closing**

Thursday, Dec. 25 – **Closed**

Friday, Dec. 26 – **Closed**

Saturday, Dec. 27 – 9 a.m. -

4 p.m. ***Regular Hours**

Wednesday, Dec. 31 – 9 a.m. -

2:30 p.m. ***Early Closing**

Thursday, Jan. 1 – **Closed**

Wowbrary Weekly Email

Each week on Wednesday morning, Wowbrary sends an email newsletter with our weekly roundup of upcoming events, along with the latest new additions to our collection and special event announcements. Sign up at Wowbrary.org, enter your zipcode and email address.

CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

Winter Trees Craft – Dec. 13,

11 a.m., ages 3+

Drop in anytime from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. as we use construction paper, scissors, and paint to create a winter tree picture!

Winter Seed Sowing - Dec. 29,

1 p.m., ages 8 to adult

Join Danette Rutledge as she shares information about cultivating native New England plants for your yard! PLEASE NOTE: Participants must bring

their own empty, clean milk gallon for planting their seeds. No registration required. *Sponsored by the Upton Mosquito Tick & Control Board.*

Movie Event - Dec. 30, 5:30 - 7 p.m.

See library website for movie details and suggested ages.

ADULT EVENTS

Vision Boarding for Your Goals with Local Expert Dominique Ross - Sat. Jan. 3, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Ages 13 – Adult

Plan for the new year with vision boarding! This program will begin with meditation and then proceed into a hands-on crafting workshop. In this workshop, you will contemplate your goals for the year, month, or week ahead and create a visual poster to keep you focused! Join us in this fun craft to visualize your goals. Materials are provided. Register online at uptontownlibrary.org.

Drum Circle with Dave Curry - Saturday, Jan. 3, 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 – Thursday, Dec. 18, 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!

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 David Brooks: The Creative and Compassionate Art of Seeing Others - Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 2 p.m.

BOOK GROUPS

Monthly book groups are facilitated by Upton Library staff. We also reserve book copies for local private book groups, contact us for more information!

Upton Reads Book Group

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



Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, Jan. 15 at 6:45 p.m.: *James* by Percival Everett.

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. No Meeting in December. Next Meeting will be on Jan. 28.

Tween Book Club – Dec. 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. For our December meeting, we will be discussing the title *The Secret Battle of Evan Pao* by Wendy Wan Long Shang.

Kids' Book Club – Jan. 7 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. For our January meeting, we

will be discussing the title *Weird but True! USA* by National Geographic Kids. This group is for ages 7 to 10.

MONTHLY LIBRARY EVENTS – REGISTER NOW!

Most programs and events require pre-registration at uptontownlibrary.org or call 508-529-6272. Program details can be found on our website on our Event Calendar. Registrations open the month prior to events.

Baby Storytime – Fridays at 9:30 & 10:30 a.m., ages birth to 3

Preschool Storytime – Thursdays at 9:30 & 10:30 a.m., ages 3 to 5

Chess Club – 1st Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m., ages 5 to 14

Crafting Club – 2nd Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m., ages 5 to 14

Gaming Club – 3rd Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m., ages 5 to 14

Magic the Gathering: Commander – 4th Tuesday each month, 4 - 6 p.m., ages 8 to 16

Free Drum Circle – 1st Saturday each month, 7 - 9:30 p.m., ages 8+

Tabletop Game Night for Adults – 3rd Thursday each month, ages 16+

Upton Reads Book Group – 2nd Tuesday and 3rd Thursday each month

Fic or No Fic Book Group – last Wednesday each month

Virtual Author Talks – varies, see our website

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

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Mendon residents to perform in The Nutcracker

Performances in Milford on Dec. 13-14

The Greater Milford Ballet's will hold its production of "The Nutcracker" on Dec. 13 and Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. at the Milford High School.

Mendon residents Kendall Negron and Evren Hodge will play the leading roles of, respectively, Clara and the Mouse King.

Other roles featuring Mendon residents include Jaclyn Bianchi as Aunt Cornelia and dancing in Snow and Waltz Corps; Annaliese Burke as Child with Bear; Tessa Citro Party Child, Soldier and Chinese Corps; Belinda Dunner Party Child, Angel Corps, Gingerbread Man; Juliet Hodge Party Child, Mouse, Chines Corps, Candy Cane; Lizzy Hodge as Maid, Lady in Waiting, Angel and Marzipan Corps.

The remainder rest of the cast are from Hopedale, Blackstone, Bellingham, Grafton, Hopedale, Milford, Millville, Webster, Wrentham, Uxbridge, and Cumberland, RI.

The performance will feature an exciting 47-member cast of characters, colorful costumes and dazzling choreography. This production is local, easily accessible, and affordable.

Available at intermission: refreshments, holiday raffle items including gift certificates from



Evren Hodge of Mendon will play the Mouse King in The Nutcracker. Photo courtesy of Greater Milford Ballet



Kendall Negron of Mendon will play Clara in the Dec. 13-14 production of The Nutcracker. Photo courtesy of Greater Milford Ballet

local restaurants, retailers, and themed gift baskets.

For more information, call 508-473-2105.



The Nutcracker party scene. Photo courtesy of Greater Milford Ballet

Important News from the North Pole

State's Energy Regulations (Advanced Clean Sleigh Act) ALMOST Forced Santa to an Electric Sleigh This Year

Medway Oil & Propane Still Guarantees Christmas Delivery of Lehigh Anthracite Coal to All Who Deserve It!



Santa

North Pole— As he does each year at this time, Santa Claus announced today that he has chosen Medway Oil & Propane as the exclusive resource for high quality Lehigh Anthracite coal for eastern and central Massachusetts residents.

chose us again this year," said Jeffrey Mushnick, owner of Medway Oil & Propane. "We have coal that is quite suitable for keeping people warm this winter—and also for filling stockings and decorating snowmen! We offer the best quality anthracite coal in the region. Those who deserve a lump of coal in their stocking should get the very best."

Even the Naughty Will Get Something Nice!

In a telephone interview this week Santa Claus elaborated further on his decision. "We know that Medway Oil & Propane has been offering great coal and wonderful service to their customers since 1954," said Santa. "It was super easy for me to select the region's best coal supplier to handle all requests for coal." Santa's happiness with Medway Oil & Propane means the "naughty and nice" will get great coal, fuel oil or propane service.

FREE 100 Pounds of Coal and One Pound for Stockings!

Homeowners who heat with coal are invited to receive a FREE 100-pound bag of coal with any coal delivery before January 31, 2026. Call (508)533-6561 or 1-800-649-5949. Anyone in the region wanting a few free lumps of coal for stocking stuffers should call for details. Lumps of coal for all who deserve it!

According to one of Santa's senior elves, it was very important that Santa find a company he could count on this winter. It was especially important that Santa choose a coal company that found a way to deliver—despite Governor Maura Healey's attempts to ruin Christmas by over-regulating the home heating industry, with absurd state requirements for electric vehicles that were in place from January 1 through April 14, 2025.

This created chaos in the industry! Massachusetts was left without the ability to purchase a non-electric vehicle. Consequently, Santa's sleigh had to be electric, since Governor Healey banned the Kringle 3000 Jet Turbine engine as well!

"We were filled with Christmas cheer when we learned that Santa

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TAFT LIBRARY

continued from page 13

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins & Coffee and Conversations at the Taft

Join Deb Hudgins on Wednesday, Dec. 17 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 play-time 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!

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 Tuesday, Dec. 23. The program starts promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Cookies with Santa

Join us on Monday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. Zoom for our yearly cookie decorating storytime with Santa. Santa will join us live from the North Pole. Cookie kits to decorate will need to be picked up during normal library hours. Kits will be available on Dec. 11. Registration is required and will close on Dec. 11.

Pet of the month: Meet Daisy

Winter is just around the corner but you could bring a little bit of spring home by adopting Daisy(2)! Like a breath of fresh air, Daisy is ready to greet you each day with her sunny disposition.

Daisy is a pleasingly plump grey tabby with mischievous green eyes. As soon as you enter the room, Daisy rubs against your legs and rolls over for a belly rub. She really hopes you are there to see her, but she totally understands if you have other things to do and will go in search of some exciting toys to entertain herself.

Daisy doesn't seem interested in interacting with other cats, so she might do best as the only pet in her new home. But don't worry, this ray of sunshine will fill your home with all the warmth of a spring day!

For information on meeting Daisy(2), or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit www.milfordhumane.org



Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
11/17/2025	8 Kelley Rd. #B	\$460,000
11/12/2025	23 Forest Park Dr.	\$825,000
11/05/2025	24 Bates St.	\$770,000
10/31/2025	165 Blackstone St.	\$870,000
10/31/2025	10 Applewood Ln.	\$905,000
10/29/2025	55 Hartford Ave. W	\$485,000
10/28/2025	32 Neck Hill Rd.	\$707,000

Date	Upton	Amount
11/24/2025	47 Fiske Mill Rd.	\$1.16 mil
11/24/2025	4 Farrar Rd.	\$795,000
11/21/2025	3 Knowlton Cir.	\$512,700
11/14/2025	41 Shannon Wy	\$689,500
11/13/2025	95 Crockett Rd.	\$875,000
10/31/2025	17 Old Grafton Rd.	\$952,500
10/30/2025	77 Prospect St.	\$410,000
10/30/2025	53 Cider Mill Ln.	\$1.25 mil
10/29/2025	23 Westboro Rd.	\$685,000
10/29/2025	23 Rockwood Ln.	\$1.05 mil
10/28/2025	26 Fowler St.	\$525,000

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



The 4-bed, 3-bath, 2,585 square-foot home at 10 Applewood Lane in Mendon recently sold for \$905,000. Photo source: www.zillow.com

Free Christmas Brass Concert Dec. 19

The Birch Alley Brass Ensemble will present a concert at Valley Chapel in Uxbridge on Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. The brass ensemble, directed by William Moffett, is made up of 35 student and professional musicians from area towns including Uxbridge, Upton, Hopedale,

Mendon, Northbridge and Milford. This concert will feature Christmas music from around the world and is free and open to the public. This will be the 14th annual performance. The concert is funded in part by the Milford, Hopedale, and Uxbridge Cultural Councils.



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BVT inducts 57 students into National and Technical Honor Societies

On Thursday, Nov. 6, a group of 57 students from Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) were inducted into the James S. Mullaney Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) and/or the Paul Sullivan Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) during an induction ceremony.

"The induction is a significant and commendable recognition of our students' hard work, dedication, academic excellence, and technical expertise," said NHS Advisor Jessica MacKenzie.

"The evening ceremony is a proud moment for our students, staff, and families as we celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of our Career Technical Education (CTE) students who have been invited to join the National and Technical Honor Societies," said NTHS Advisor Jeremy Pandolfo.

"It is always a pleasure to celebrate our modern-day career technical students. They can readily demonstrate high-level technical training and simultaneously validate high achievement in academics that serve as a foundation for their technical aptitude," said Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele II. "It is with immense pride that I congratulate our new inductees, who exemplify the values of our school and these organizations."

While the NHS and the NTHS are two distinct organizations with different focuses and criteria, at BVT students can be members of one or both chapters. NHS membership honors those who have met rigorous academic standards and who exemplify scholarship, leadership, service, and character. NTHS membership recognizes students who demonstrate academic and technical excellence



New members of the NHS and NTHS were honored during an induction ceremony at BVT on Nov. 6. Photo courtesy of Blackstone Valley Tech

in their CTE program, as well as character, skills, and work ethic.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT): 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, 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 and the honor societies, visit www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/nhsnths.

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*New applicants only; restrictions apply

SPORTS

Thanksgiving win caps strong BVT football finish

Beavers won four of their last five

By Chris Villani,
Sports Writer

The Blackstone Valley Tech football team was young and relatively inexperienced this fall, but the Beavers turned around a slow start to win four of their last five games and get back to .500 on the season. BVT capped off its campaign with a 28-0 win over rival Nipmuc on Thanksgiving.

Head coach Anthony Landini said he saw signs of his team's potential early on.

"We weren't intimidated, we were just making mistakes," he said of the start of the year. "Even when we were getting beat, they played all four quarters. We were playing complete games."

Valley Tech had numerous players step up as the year progressed. Junior Xavier Salois caught two touchdown passes against Westboro, including the game winner in the final minute. The victory over the Division II program represented the highest division for the Beavers had ever beaten. In addition to the win over the Rangers, Nipmuc picked up late season victories over Assabet and Bay Path. Landini said it was hard to believe that his



Valley Tech's captains line up with Nipmuc ahead of the annual Thanksgiving Day game, a 28-0 BVT win. Photo from Head Coach Anthony Landini

team had once been 2-5.

Several players put together stellar campaigns. Nathan Harris was a standout on both sides of the ball. Brothers Lucas and Jay Greenstein turned up big on Thanksgiving. Lucas earned

defensive MVP honors for the game, and his 4th down stop was a huge turning point in the game. Jay had two sacks and forced a fumble in the win over Nipmuc.

Sophomore quarterback

Dylan Dean threw three touchdown passes in the win and senior captain Bryce Sheldon continued to be a workhorse in the backfield, a role he played throughout the year.

"We started off hot," Landini

"We got the early jump and were up 28-0 by halftime and then our defense stepped up."

*~ Anthony Landini
BVT head coach*

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said. "We got the early jump and were up 28-0 by halftime and then our defense stepped up. We got some big stops."

The teams played in front of a sizable crowd on a pleasant Thanksgiving morning. BVT's program is barely two decades old, young in an area where some rivalries stretch back a century or more, but Landini said he was pleased to see so many alumni at the game.

"Our program is still young, and with our bench so close to where the fans are, I was turning around and seeing a lot of former players," Landini said. "We are starting to build up that network of former players coming back, and it's really nice to see."

SPORTS

Nipmuc Girls Soccer reaches another State Final

Title Defense ends with loss to Medfield

By Chris Villani,
Sports Writer

The Nipmuc girls' soccer team put together a string of 41 games without a loss before falling in the state championship game last month, a 1-0 loss to Medfield in a rematch of the 2024 final.

"It was another fantastic season," said head coach Steve Khoury. "We had 11 seniors this year, and they bought the program a long way."

Nipmuc knocked off Medfield last year to capture the state championship and its last loss in its second game of the 2024 campaign. Khoury said his group was focused all season on getting back to the title game, even as they battled through a challenging schedule.

"They knew they had a chance to do it again," he said. "The focus every day, they worked their butts off and approached every game like it was one they didn't want to lose. They just wanted to keep it going."

Defense was a huge part of the team's success this fall. Nipmuc allowed just five goals in free play during the team's 23 games. The group of Lyla Hill, Maddie Weibe, Riley Restic, Emma Watts, and Jess Casey were stout in front of goaltender Caylee Smith.

On offense, Cate Tengler, Abby Mullins, and Kenzie Ellis shared the scoring. Anya Montano led the way and earned all-New England honors.

The championship game was a clash of powerhouses. Nipmuc came into the game ranked 23rd

in the nation, going head-to-head against the number four team.

"Their front three was very good, they played very well together and they did not give us a lot of opportunities," Khoury said. "We did have our chances in the second half, but we didn't capitalize."

Khoury said his team was disappointed after the final whistle, but he told them that this one result was not going to define their season or their last few years of success.

The message seemed to resonate as the group was singing songs and celebrating during the bus ride home after the championship, Khoury said.

The members of the senior class finished their careers 76-8-5. Their impact stretched well beyond the field of play.

"They were definitely good role models for the other girls and they were always welcoming, they took them in like family," Khoury said. "They did a great job."



Senior Anya Montano. Photo courtesy of Michael Owen Murdock



The Nipmuc girls soccer team following a late season practice. The team went 41 straight games without a loss. Photo from Coach Steve Khoury



Sophomore Cate Tengler heads the ball. Photo courtesy of Evan Hill



Senior Kenzie Ellis after the last whistle. Photo courtesy of Michael Owen Murdock



Nipmuc Varsity Girls Soccer team before the game. Photo courtesy of Bryce Kenney



Sophomore Caylee Smith makes a great save. Photo courtesy of Joshua Paul King



Three seniors - (L to R) Kenzie Ellis (#10), Emma Watts (#4), and Ella Vanesse (#14). Photo Courtesy of Bryce Kenney

Murdock, Hill, and Kenney are members of the Nipmuc Photo Club

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<p>2024 CHEVY COLORADO AS LOW AS \$138/WK #47843 • LT TRIM, 4X4, ALLOYS NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$44,290 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$38,977</p>	<p>2024 HONDA CIVIC SPORT AS LOW AS \$96/WK #D15237 • 30/37 MPG CITY/HWY NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$34,190 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$26,377</p>	<p>2022 BUICK ENCORE AWD AS LOW AS \$81/WK #P18035A • GX PREFERRED, 1.3L NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$32,225 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$22,977</p>	<p>2022 MAZDA CX-5 2.5 S AS LOW AS \$81/WK #P17904 • AWD, ALLOYS, SPOILER NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$29,899 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$22,977</p>	<p>2024 BMW X1 xDrive28i AS LOW AS \$124/WK #TP5673 • AWD, TWIN TURBO, NAV NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$51,595 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$34,977</p>	<p>2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN AS LOW AS \$127/WK #TP6030 • 4X4, 3.6L V6, ALLOYS NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$45,710 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$35,977</p>	<p>2022 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER AS LOW AS \$124/WK #TP5646 • XLE TRIM, ALLOYS, CPO NEW RETAIL PRICE: \$45,775 WHOLESALE PRICE: \$34,977</p>

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