

Ashland

Vol. 14 No. 3

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

January 1, 2026

More Than Lights: Illuminate Downtown Ashland Highlights the Town's Everyday Heroes



Dancers from Annemarie's Dance Centre perform at Illuminate Downtown. Courtesy photo

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

Downtown Ashland is glowing once again, but this year, the lights hold a more sentimental meaning. Illu-

minate Downtown Ashland, the community art installation that has brightened winter nights since 2017, has returned with a new focus

on the people who make the town shine. For the first

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Holiday Stroll Recap

A Festive Weekend in Ashland!



Santa with his elves! Photo submitted by Beth Reynolds

The streets of Downtown Ashland came alive on December 6 during Ashland's Annual Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting. Every year seems bigger than the last, with nearly 1,000 people joining the festivities between the two events. With 13 participating

businesses and 33 pop-up vendors, the town was bustling with smiling faces, festive cheer, and plenty of shopping bags. Local businesses shared their gratitude for the eco-

HOLIDAY STROLL
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HOLIDAY STROLL

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conomic boost. Our restaurants also saw a surge, adding to the day's success. Thank you to everyone who chose to shop and dine locally; your support truly helps Ashland's small businesses flourish.

The Corner Spot was a hub of holiday magic from start to finish. Families gathered to write heartfelt letters to Santa with the help of Mrs. Claus, and later, the big man himself arrived for photos and chats with excited children. The fire pit with toasted marshmallows is always a favorite stop throughout the day. We were also delighted to welcome Ashland's Sha'arei Shalom, whose Hanukkah games, fairy light jars, and activities became a highlight for many families.

The Tree Lighting was nothing short of enchanting. The square and Main St. were filled wall-to-wall with residents eager to usher in the holiday spirit. Guests enjoyed hot chocolate from Connect Church, cook-

ies from the Ashland Lions and Holiday Lights, and lively Christmas music from the Garden Family Carolers, a true small-town holiday spectacle. The tree shone so brightly that Santa had no trouble finding his way into the square, escorted by Ashland Police and Fire. AFD's very own Sparky joined in the fun, posing for pictures atop the antique fire truck and adding to the festive delight.

None of this would have been possible without our incredible volunteers, whose generosity and energy kept everything running seamlessly. It's hard to believe the celebration has already come and gone, but we're already counting down the days until we can do it all again next year. Happy Holidays, Ashland!

Special kudos to our Police and Fire Departments for going the extra mile once again—driving Santa and his cheerful elf through town on Sunday, the 7th, waving and playing Christmas music. What began during the pandemic has become a beloved tradition and, we hope, a staple for years to come.



Members of the Ashland PD with Santa! Photo submitted by Beth Reynolds



Folks gathered around the tree to view the lights. Photo submitted by Beth Reynolds



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The streets of Ashland were filled with colorful lights, holiday cheer and plenty of smiles for their annual Holiday Stroll. Photos submitted by Beth Reynolds

Marathon Runners Spotlight – Running for Ashland

This year, we have nineteen runners representing Ashland in the 130th Boston Marathon on Monday, April 20, 2026. Each runner has committed to raising a minimum of \$3,000 each. The funds raised are the sole funding source for Ashland's BAA Grant Program. Last year's runners raised \$76,698.46.

BAA Grants are offered twice a year. Typically, grants are offered in the spring and in the fall. Qualifying 501(c) 3 organizations are eligible to apply for grants to fund specific projects, events, or support the Ashland community and its residents in some way. In 2025, the Select Board awarded \$100,529.77 in BAA Grants!

Our nineteen 2026 Boston Marathon runners are Thalita Abreu, Welder Inacio Abreu,

Tiffany Barry, Rudolph DeMeo, Ari Dinerman, Demetra Edwards, Ella Fong, Rachael Hopkins, Nick Kynoch, Wilson Lin, Kelly Lorence, Kaitlin Loughlin, Terry Rocke, Lawrence Rodkey, Morgan Sunderland, Tiffany Tessier, Sam Thurston, Patricia Vosikas, and Alysa White.

Please consider supporting the runners and know that the funds will go right back into the community! To make a donation, go to the City Hall Systems page via the town website, www.ashlandmass.com. Donations can also be made by check. Include the name of your runner in the memo area of the check. Mail check to: Town of Ashland Boston Marathon Fundraiser c/o Susan Robie, 101 Main Street, Ashland, MA 01721.

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ILLUMINATE

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time, residents were invited to nominate local “Bright Lights” — neighbors whose quiet dedication, compassion, and leadership help strengthen Ashland every day.

Seventy-two community members were nominated as 2025 Bright Lights, reflecting what organizers described as the heart and soul of the town. In total, a little more than 175 hand-colored lanterns were created by participants from the Ashland Senior Center, Ashland Girl Scouts, students, and families from Annmarie’s Dance Centre, Needham Bank, Ashland Is United, and the Ashland Extended Day Program.

Those lanterns are now on display in a glowing “light tunnel” at The Corner Spot, where

residents can walk through and read the names and stories behind the nominations.

Eleven downtown locations participated this year, including The Bagel Table, Ashland Historical Society at the Ocean House, Sub Zero Ice Cream Ashland, Nick’s Pizza, Blush Bouquets, Ashland Reiki & Wellness, Clover Road Brewery, and The Federated Church of Ashland.

Among the honorees is Makeda Keegan, recognized as a committed leader, visionary, and strong voice advocating for equity and inclusiveness. A member of Ashland Is United, Keegan was praised for her tireless work to ensure all residents feel seen and valued.

Another nominee, Isabel Harrison, was honored for founding Ashland’s food pantry and serving as the town’s first youth coordinator. Harrison also created a state-approved foster care program to help ensure vulnerable children could feel safe, supported, and loved.

The community also remembered Barbara Thoresen, who passed away in November. Thoresen was nominated for her remarkable 49 years of service as a crossing guard and her involvement with the Ashland Lions Club, where she received the Melvin Jones Fellow award. Organizers said she embodied

generosity, service, and deep community pride.

Ashland High School nurses were also recognized as “unsung heroes,” applauded for their daily care and support of students.

Event organizer Chrissy Reynolds said the most meaningful part of this year’s installation was the connection. “Connecting with the community and with locations that foster love and appreciation for the arts felt really good,” she said. “Everyone was incredibly supportive, and it was wonderful to see students involved as well.”

The Ashland community has never been without the people who ensure that everyone feels welcome. And now, as residents walk through the tunnel and see the names of those who dedicate their time to Ashland, it offers a moment to recognize how many individuals quietly contribute to keeping the town connected and supported.

The Bright Lights installation serves as a reminder that community strength is built through everyday acts of service, leadership, and care. For many, the display is more than an art installation; it’s a public thank-you to neighbors whose work often happens behind the scenes.



The light tunnel. Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

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AI in Personal Finance: The Promise and the Limits



Mark Freeman, CEPA

What AI can do for your wallet. From tracking every latte to forecasting next month's bills, AI-powered tools are making financial management more accessible than ever. Some apps categorize transactions automatically, while other platforms offer conversational financial advice through text messages. These tools can monitor your credit score, suggest budget adjustments and even negotiate lower bills on services like cable and internet.

AI doesn't know whether you value sustainable investing over maximum returns. It can't weigh the emotional complexity of saving for a child's education versus retiring early. When sudden illness strikes or a job change upends your plans, AI lacks the context and empathy to guide you through those human moments.

Technology can crunch numbers brilliantly, but it can't offer wisdom. It can't replace human judgment, experience or ethical reasoning. Robo-advisors' predetermined algorithms may not suit investors with complex financial needs like estate planning or comprehensive tax planning.

The human touch still matters. This is where human financial advisors remain indispensable. They provide what technology can't:

- **Long-term perspective:** Help you maintain focus when markets get volatile and emotions run high

- **Goal coordination:** Balance competing priorities, help partners merge their financial visions and remind you of goals you've tucked away and didn't know still mattered

- **Accountability:** Keep you on track with your financial strategy through life's inevitable changes

- **Emotional support:** Offer reassurance and wisdom during major financial decisions

Research validates it: Those who regularly work with a financial advisor and have a financial strategy are more likely to feel optimistic about their financial future than those who manage finances on their own, according to 2025 research from Edward Jones and Morning Consult.

Find the right balance. The future likely lies in a hybrid approach: combining data-driven AI insights with the human wisdom of a financial advisor who understands your values, priorities and life's inevitable curve-

balls. Think of AI as a powerful calculator and your financial advisor as the mathematician who knows which equations to use.

As these technologies evolve, the key is treating AI as a tool, not a guide.

Stay curious about what technology can do for your finances. Stay critical of its limitations. And remember: What matters most in your financial life is something only you can define.

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

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FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Provided by Edward Jones

Your smartphone buzzes with an alert: Your budgeting app has spotted an unusual spending pattern and suggests transferring \$50 from your savings account to your checking account. Later that day, a robo-advisor automatically rebalances your investment portfolio. Welcome to the age of artificial intelligence (AI) in personal finance, where technology is reshaping how we manage money.

The investing landscape has transformed as well. Robo-advisors use algorithms to build diversified portfolios, automatically rebalance holdings and apply strategies to minimize tax bills. Educational tools powered by AI can explain complex concepts through interactive games and simple question-and-answer formats, making financial literacy more accessible.

Where AI falls short. Here's what the algorithms can't do: understand what truly matters to you.



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Congratulations to Firefighter/Paramedic Zach Hays



Firefighter/Paramedic Zachary Hays officially received his shield after completing his one-year probationary period with the Ashland Fire Department.

During the probationary—or “probie”—year, a new firefighter is closely evaluated on their skills, knowledge, and ability to perform under the

many demands of the job. It’s a time of intense learning, training, and proving readiness to serve the community at the highest standard.

Receiving the shield is a proud and symbolic tradition in the fire service. It represents not just the completion of probation, but the moment a firefighter is fully accepted as

a permanent member of the department and entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the community alongside their brothers and sisters in the fire service.

Please join us in congratulating Firefighter/Paramedic Hays on this major career milestone as he will now proudly wear #64 on his helmet!

DPW Winter Message

DPW Prepares for Winter Challenges in Ashland

As winter approaches, the Department of Public Works (DPW) in Ashland is already in full snow and ice mode, gearing up for the season ahead. For an effective snow program and to support DPW in providing top-notch service, here are some important tips for our community:

Ensure any obstructions in public spaces are moved into your yard, such as basketball hoops or planters. Please avoid leaving them on or along the road or sidewalk, as they could be damaged and pose a risk to the town's equipment.

Boost visibility for plow operators by placing reflective markers at the bottom of your driveway and where the sidewalk intersects.

Take charge of a fire hydrant near your home—clear it of snow to guarantee quick access

in case of an emergency.

Remember, overnight parking is not allowed in Ashland during the winter. DPW may conduct salt or modified plow operations to keep our roads safe, so it's crucial not to block or obstruct roadways.

DPW's main goal is to ensure safe roadways. All road users should adjust their speed based on driving conditions.

For any inquiries about DPW's winter operations, don't hesitate to reach out at dpw@ashland-mass.com or call 508-881-0120. Residents can find more information on the DPW webpage of the town's site or at the following link: <https://www.ashlandmass.com/639/Snow-and-Ice>. Let's work together to stay safe and prepared for winter weather in Ashland!



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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

New-To-You Services to Love in 2026!

Hidden Gems at b.LUXE

BY GINA WOELFEL

Happy New Year, b.LUXE Beauties! As we step into 2026, we thought it was the perfect time to share some of our best-kept secrets! These four services are already on our menu but might have flown under your radar. Once our clients discover them, they can't stop raving about them, and we have a feeling you'll love them, too. So if one of your resolutions is to take better care of yourself or try something new this year, this is your sign to book one of these game-changers!

Scalp Spa: The Treatment Your Hair Has Been Begging For \$60

When's the last time you gave your scalp some real TLC? If you're like most people, you focus on your hair but forget about the foundation it grows from. Our Scalp Spa treatment is like hitting the reset button for your hair and scalp, and trust us, it's an experience you won't forget.

We start with a thorough consultation to understand your scalp's specific needs, whether you're dealing with dryness, oiliness, buildup, or sensitivity. Then we move into a deep cleanse and gentle exfoliation to remove all that product buildup, dead skin cells, and everyday grime that accumulates over time. This is especially important if you use a lot of styling products, dry shampoo, or wearing winter hats.

The best part is the relaxing scalp massage with nourishing treatments customized to your needs. We use premium products that boost circulation, balance oil production, and promote healthier hair growth from the roots up. The massage itself is incredibly relaxing (some clients even fall asleep!), but it's also therapeutic, helping to relieve the tension and stress we all carry in our heads and necks.

The results speak for themselves: your scalp feels refreshed

and revitalized, your hair looks shinier and fuller, and most clients are booking their next visit before they even sit up! It's one of those rare self-care treatments that feels incredible in the moment and leaves you looking noticeably better afterward.

Lash Lift & Tint: Your Morning Routine Just Got Easier \$90

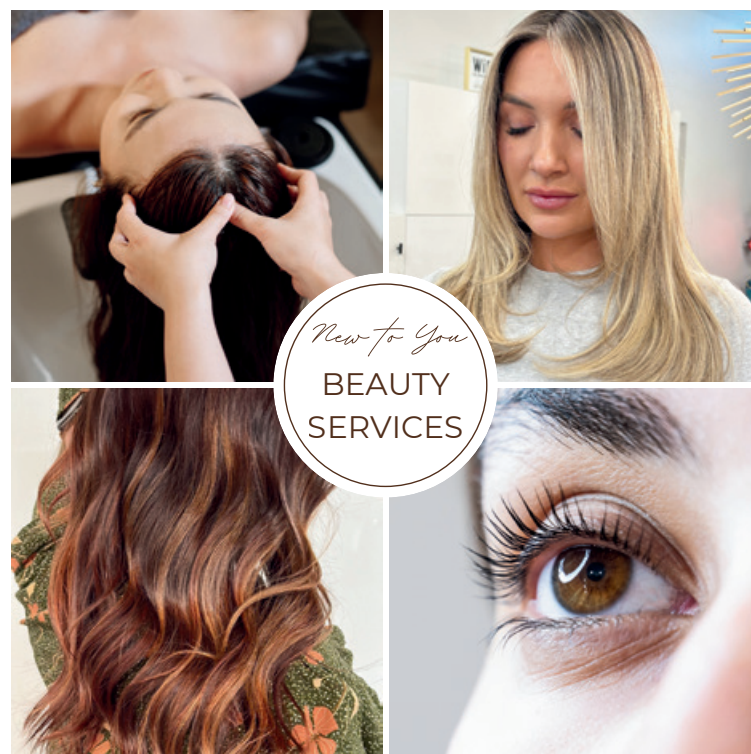
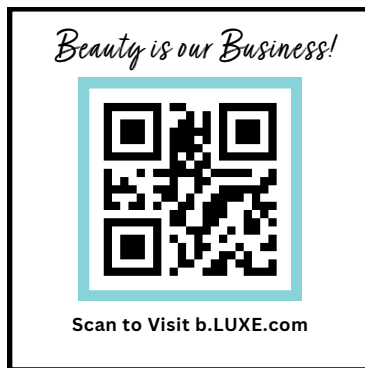
Imagine rolling out of bed with perfectly curled, defined lashes. No mascara wand, no lash curler, no worrying about smudges by noon or raccoon eyes after the gym. That's exactly what a lash lift and tint delivers. Our Lash Lift & Tint devotees are hooked!

Here's how it works: We lift and curl your natural lashes from the root using a gentle, safe process that enhances what you already have. Then we add a custom tint in the shade that works best for your coloring. That could be classic black, soft brown, or something in between. The results last 6-8 weeks, which means you're looking at two months of stress-free lashes.

It's one of those treatments where you don't realize how much you need it until you have it (then you wonder how you ever lived without it!) Perfect for vacations, busy mornings, anyone who wears contacts or glasses, or if you just want to simplify your beauty routine without sacrificing that polished look.

Color Balance Treatment: The Perfect In-Between Service \$60+

Not quite ready for full highlights or balayage, but your roots are starting to show and your color feels a bit flat? Is your hair craving high-shine and manageability? Our Color Balance Treatment is the sweet spot you've been looking for, and it's ideal for maintaining that salon-fresh color without the major time or financial commitment.



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Good for both natural and chemically treated hair, this service adds instant radiance and mirror-like shine. You can book it as a standalone treatment or use it between your balayage or highlight appointments at around the 6 to 8 week mark. It adds just the right amount of dimension while blending regrowth and keeping your color looking vibrant. Think of it as maintaining the beautiful color you already have without starting from scratch every time. Your hair looks intentional and polished, never grown out or neglected. It's the icing on the cake.

Face Frame Highlight: Maximum Impact, Minimal Commitment \$55 - \$80+

Sometimes all you need is a little brightness around your face

to feel like a whole new person. Our mini face frame highlight focuses strategically on the hair that frames your features (the pieces that catch the light and make the biggest visual impact when people look at you.)

It's perfect for extending the life of your full color service by refreshing just the most visible sections, testing out a lighter shade before committing to an all-over change, or just getting that fresh-from-the-salon feeling without blocking out half your day. Placement is key here, highlighting exactly where it counts to help brighten your face and add that lit-from-within glow. Quick, gorgeous, and totally transformative.

Let's simplify, streamline and

make 2026 your best beauty year yet! This is your moment to strip away the noise, focus on what truly works for you, and build a routine that feels less like a chore and more like an act of self care. You deserve a beauty regimen that energizes rather than overwhelms, one that celebrates your unique features and fits seamlessly into your real life.

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MFEC Decades of Service to the Community and a New Provider

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Roger Kaldawy, M.D.

Dr. Kaldawy is an eye physi-

cian, surgeon, and corneal specialist trained at the University of Rochester and the University of Iowa. A former Assistant Professor at Boston University, he has performed more than 32,000 surgeries, pioneering advanced techniques in corneal transplants, innovative glaucoma surgery, premium implants, and bladeless femtosecond cataract surgery. He has trained numerous physicians, has been featured in multiple news articles including Channel 5, and serves as Medical Director of the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford.

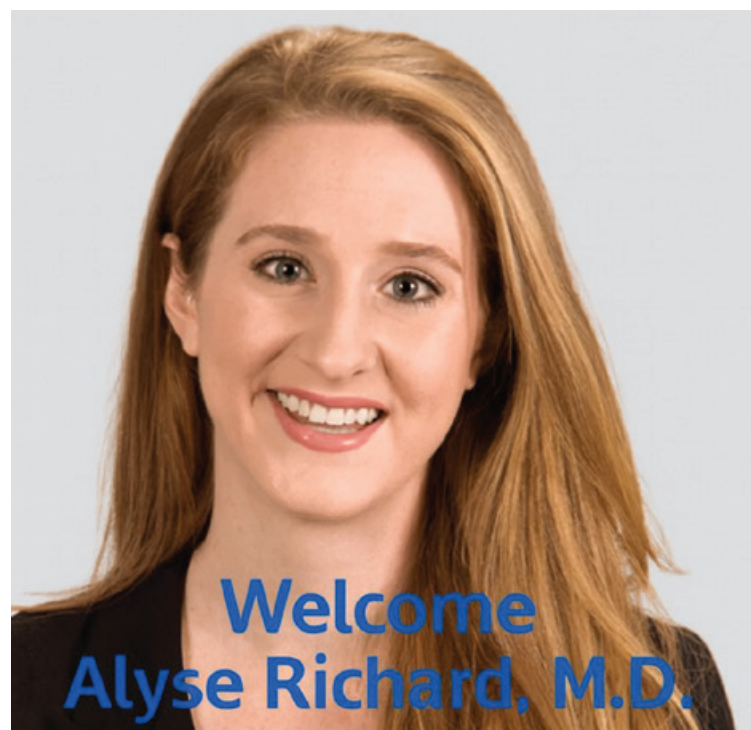
Alyse Richard, M.D.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Alyse Richard, who will join our team in January 2026. She is a well-regarded retina specialist with expertise in macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal tears, and retina-related

emergencies. Dr. Richard completed her medical degree at Albany Medical College, residency at the University of Rochester's Flaum Eye Institute, and a medical retina fellowship at New England Eye Center, Tufts Medical Center. She is known for her efficient, skilled approach to patient care and her commitment to maximizing diagnostic precision. She performs intraocular injections, laser procedures, and repairs of retinal tears and detachments.

Dan Liu, M.D.

Dr. Liu graduated from Northwestern University and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, where she was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. She completed residency at Albany Medical Center as Chief Resident and a fellowship in Cornea and Anterior Segment Surgery at Tufts.



Her expertise includes cataract surgery with ORA, DMEK/DSEK/PK corneal transplants, keratoconus treatment, MIGS glaucoma procedures, ocular surface tumors, and pterygia. She is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology.

Shalin Zia, O.D.

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

Michael Adams, O.D.

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

Donald L. Conn, O.D.

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

Purvi Patel, O.D.

Dr. Patel earned her Doctor of Optometry degree at SUNY and completed a residency in Ocular Disease. As a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, she

has held leadership roles at Boston community health centers. Her clinical focus includes diabetes, glaucoma, and community-based care.

New Offices: Expanding to Serve the Community

Boston Eyes in Hopkinton

Located at 66 Main Street, our new Hopkinton office provides comprehensive eye exams, contact lens services, surgical consultations, and a wide eyewear selection. With more than 24 years of connection to the Hopkinton community, we bring top-tier eye care directly to local residents.

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Glenn Brown, CFP

Did you make New Year’s resolutions to improve your financial wellness in 2026?

The start of a new year invites reflection on what went well, what didn’t, and what to change.

Think back to 2025. Was it supposed to be the year you’d pay off all debts, max out savings, run a marathon, learn a new language, and still book that dream vacation—all before February?

Lasting financial change is difficult to achieve. Understanding why resolutions fail can help turn intentions into sustainable strategies.

1. Unrealistic Expectations

The most common reason resolutions fail is that goals don’t match reality.

For example, someone might plan to save half their income while paying off long-standing loans, only to realize monthly expenses and unexpected bills make this unrealistic. Progress feels slow, leading to frustration and eventual abandonment.

Resolution: Break goals into smaller, achievable steps. For example, aim to reduce debt by 25% over six months. Celebrating incremental wins keeps motivation high, builds confidence, and reinforces the habit of financial discipline.

2. Lack of a Clear Plan

Vague goals such as “save more” or “get out of debt” offer little guidance. Goals like these are the financial equivalent of saying “eat healthier” without changing what’s in your fridge.

Rules and opportunities change yearly, so without a clear plan, it’s easy to miss important steps like evolving retirement contribution rules, tax planning opportunities, or other proactive financial strategies.

Resolution: Create a clear plan. Review monthly expenses, budget upcoming projects and

aspirations, set up automatic transfers, and monitor progress.

3. Failure to Track Progress

Goals fade without structured review, even when apps are used to track spending. Many avoid holistic review until problems become too great to ignore.

Even small oversights like pausing emergency savings transfers, frequent DoorDash-ing restaurants a mile away, or buying from social media ads can derail intentions. It’s also important to evaluate actual income, since “spenders” believe their pay will match their top year, overlooking factors like unique company performance or equity grants.

Resolution: Schedule quarterly check-ins that leverage technology and constructive feedback. Celebrating milestones helps maintain motivation and reinforces strong financial habits.

4. Emotional Spending and Instant Gratification

Many struggle with impulse spending or seek instant gratification, especially after a stressful day. Afraid to look at your Amazon spending history? This behavior derails the best-laid plans.

Resolution: Identify triggers and implement strategies to delay or review purchase decisions. Create a spending prioritization strategy by identifying where you want to spend your money; this helps shift focus from immediate desires to long-term financial goals and encourages thoughtful, deliberate financial choices.

5. Lack of Accountability

Some thrive independently; others struggle without support. It’s easier to justify financial decisions when no one else is watching. Couples, friends, or professional advisors who provide accountability often help keep each other honest and motivated.

Resolution: Accountability goes beyond “no.” Sharing progress and receiving guidance builds confidence, strengthens financial habits, and motivates continued long-term efforts.

Quick Hits To Start 2026

401(k) Catch-Up Rules: Workers over 50 making over \$150,000 must direct catch-up contributions to Roth accounts, reducing traditional tax benefits.

Roth Conversions: Converting pre-tax accounts to Roth can be strategic but may trigger higher

taxes if not timed carefully, so model in Q1.

Cash Reserves: With slower job growth in late 2025, increasing emergency savings can help avoid reliance on credit or early retirement withdrawals.

Final Thoughts

Financial resolutions can be powerful tools for long-term security but require more than wishful thinking.

Make 2026 the year to socialize your goals, set action steps, and partner with a Certified Financial Planner™ professional to turn intentions into lasting progress.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of Plan-Dynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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EYE

continued from page 8

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Senior Community Center Activities for January 2026

Details of programs and activities can be found in our monthly newsletter. Sign in to this link to receive the newsletter by email: <https://www.ashlandmass.com/390/Newsletter>

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Jan 1 and 2: Closed for New Years and Cleaning

Jan 5:

New Year's Celebration Lunch with a Mocktail Toast to the New Year and Massachusetts Senate President Karen E. Spilka's Listening Hour. For lunch reservation please use the payment box located outside the Main Office. Cost \$8 per person.

Jan 7. from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.:

Taming Your Noisy Mind with Laura Mutch, ALP. Learn strategies to create a more peaceful mind.

Jan. 7 & Jan. 21 from 9 - 11:30 a.m.:

Veterans Office Hours with Richard Sabounjian. Appointments recommended. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29 at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., & 12 p.m.:

SHINE In-Person Appointments with Lenore Tracey. Call to make an appointment at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 8 at 10:30 a.m.:

Ashland Council on Aging (COA)

Meeting. Open to the public.

Jan. 8 at 10:30 a.m.:

Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 4 Episode 4. Call to reserve your seat: 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 8 from 10:30 a.m. - 12 pm:

"The Rule of Law" – Understanding Our Federal and State Constitutions with Ret. Judge Michael Fabbri (Part 1 of a 3-part series). Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 8 at 12 p.m.:

Friends of the Ashland Council on Aging (FOACOA) Meeting. Open to the Public.

Jan. 9 from 10 - 11:30 a.m.:

Legal Phone Consultation with Arthur P. Bergeron. Call to schedule an appointment at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 9 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.:

Virtual Program: Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers – George Washington. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

Jan. 12 at 12 p.m.:

Lunch and Performance of Elvis Presley Impersonator Robert Black. Use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. Cost \$8 per person for Lunch and Entertainment.

ment. \$4 per person for entertainment (no lunch). Max limit 80 due by Jan. 8 at noon.

Jan. 12 from 7 - 8 p.m.:

Virtual Program: In Conversation with Author Heather B. Moore of "Julia" (biography of Julia Child) in collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

Jan. 13 at 9:30 a.m.:

Craft with Milly: Holiday Heart-Shaped Pine Cone Bird Feeder. Supplies will be provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 13 at 10:30 a.m.:

Digital Literacy (Computer) Class with Jonathon Baron: iPhone and Android Cell Phones. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 13 at 12 p.m.:

Lunch & Learn "New Tax Law". Lunch Prepared by Student Cooks from Keefe Tech. Entrée is Chicken Masala. For lunch reservation please use payment box located outside the Main Office. Cost \$8 per person. Reserve lunch by Jan. 8 at noon. Lunch includes a talk—maximum 50 lunches. Followed by at 12:15 p.m.: Tax Law Made Simple with Jeff Duncan. Attending the talk (no lunch: FREE). Reserve Talk Only seat by calling 508-881-0140 ext. 1 by Jan. 8 at 12 p.m.

Jan. 13 from 6 - 7 p.m.:

Virtual Program: Historical Fiction Book Recommendations with Author Jane Healey. In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

Jan. 14 at 11 a.m.:

Building Strong Bones with Anne Fitzgerald, RN. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 14 at 2 - 3 p.m.:

Virtual Program: "Superspy Science: Science, Death & Tech in the World of James Bond" with Dr. Kathryn Harkup. In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register



Ashland Senior Center. Photo by Wendy Watkins

for the program.

Jan. 15 at 9:30 a.m.:

Free breakfast sponsored by the Ashland Lions. Seating is limited. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 16 at 10 a.m.:

Craft with Elissa: Skiing Sock Snowman/Snowwoman. Supplies will be provided. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 19: CLOSED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Jan. 20 at 1 p.m.:

Popcorn & Documentary: Chris Hemsworth: *A Road Trip to Remember* (2025) To reserve your seat, call 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 21 at 10 a.m.:

Town Manager's Coffee Hour – All are welcome. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1. or drop in!

Jan. 22 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.:

Cook with Chef Lee: Shrimp Dim Sum: Tender shrimp wrapped in a delicate dough, often steamed or fried. Served with Soy Sauce or Chili Oil.

Class \$5 per person. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 23 at 10 a.m.:

Create a Carry-On Shoulder Bag at Pins and Needles Sewing Class with Tobi. All levels of skill welcome. Bring your own sewing machine. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Jan. 26 at 12 p.m.:

Lunch & Learn "Tax Exemptions" with the Town of Ashland Assessors' Office. Reservations for lunch please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$8 per person. Reservation due by Thursday, Jan. 22, at noon.

Jan. 26 from 5 - 6:30 p.m.:

Paint Night (all ages) with Recreation Department. Theme of Painting: Let It Snow. \$20 per person for Residents of Ashland and \$25 for Non-Residents. Instruction and paint supplies provided. Link to register will be provided in the January Newsletter.



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SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 10

Jan. 27 at 12 p.m.:

Lunch Prepared by Student Cooks from Keefe Tech Entrée is Chicken Picatta. Cost \$8 per person. Please use the payment box outside the Main Office to reserve your seat. Reserve Lunch by Jan. 22 at noon. Max. 50 lunches.

Jan. 27 from 1 - 2:30 p.m.:

Clocktown Memory Café with Musician Rick Ferreira. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Susan McNulty smcnulty@ashlandmass.com or 508-532-7945.

Jan. 28 from 10 - 11:00 a.m.:

Virtual Program: The Dudleys and the Howards with Authors and Historians Joanne Paul and Nicola Clark in collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Visit the Ashland Public Library website to register for the program.

NOTE: We do our best to provide accurate information. Programs and events frequently alter after we produce our schedule. We appreciate your patience!

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY:

The Community Center will follow the public school system for snow cancellations and delays. If schools are closed, the Center is closed and there will be no services – including transportation. If schools are delayed 2 hours, the Center will not open until 11 a.m. All morning programs starting before 11 a.m. will be canceled, including any transportation services.

Cancellation and delay announcements will be televised.

Please be safe and use your own judgment.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

NOTE: All classes are a suggested donation of \$4 per person unless otherwise noted.

Monday Lunches at 12 p.m. weekly, except holidays. Reservations must be made by Thursday before the scheduled lunch. Please use the payment slip and locked box located outside the main office to reserve your seat. Cost per person is \$7 unless otherwise noted.

Bowling – Tuesdays at Ryan's Amusement in Millis at 9 a.m.

Blood Pressure Check – Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Canasta – Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Chess – Mondays at 1 p.m.

Clocktown Memory Café – NEW Time and Date! 4th Tuesdays of the Month from 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Cribbage – Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

DROP-IN Knitting & Crocheting Group – Second and Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 a.m.

Advanced & Intermediate Watercolor Class – Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. (See instructor for details) Watercolor Class resuming on Jan. 5.

Dull Men's Club with Doc – Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. Coffee and Conversation.

Exercise with Joni – Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

Hearing Aid Cleaning – Will resume February 2026.

Knit Along with Nancy – Second and Fourth Thursdays from 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Line Dancing – Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

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

Mindful Coloring – First and Third Thursdays of the Month at 1:30 p.m.

Mindfulness & Meditation – Thursdays at 1 a.m. with Mary Green.

Parkinson's Boxing – First and Third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 p.m.

Pins & Needles Sewing Class – Fourth Friday of the Month at 10 a.m.

Ping Pong – Ping Pong on Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

Pitch Card Game – Mondays at 1 p.m.

Sound Meditation Journey with Sonia Stingo – Date/Time to be decided. Call to reserve your spot at 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Tai Chi – Tuesdays at 11:45 a.m. with Jon Woodward.

Veterans Office Hours – Every other Wednesday from 9 - 11:30 a.m. Check Calendar for dates.

Zumba Gold with Kelli – Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

Ashland Local Town Pages Welcomes New Editor, Brittany Amalfi

The *Ashland Local Town Pages* has welcomed a new editor, Brittany Amalfi. Brittany earned a Master's Degree in Creative Writing from Southern New Hampshire University, where she also obtained a professional writing certificate. She has always been passionate about writing in all mediums, but has a soft spot for local news. "Local communities always have the stories with the most heart because there are so many people who work to keep everything thriving," Brittany said.



she has honed her writing and editing skills. It was there when she truly saw how powerful a small community could be, so she is so excited to begin this next chapter in Ashland.

Brittany grew up in Millis, MA, not far from Ashland, and remembers coming to play volleyball at Ashland High School. She always felt that Ashland had that "small-town" feel, just like Millis did, and because of that, it felt like a safe place. Even though she is new to the *Ashland Local Town Pages*, she is no stranger to local news. For the past five years, Brittany has been the editor of *Newfound Lake Life* in Bristol, NH, where

Aside from writing, Brittany also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and works for the Medfield Public Schools. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, reading a good book, or going for a long walk. She's ready to learn more about the Ashland community and can't wait to write about the people and places that make this place thrive.

Happy New Year!




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Ashland Police Department Reinstates K9 Program



The Ashland Police Department is proud to announce the reinstatement of its K9 program with the return of K9 Jack, a six-year-old Black Labrador Retriever, and his handler, Officer Emanuele Toscano.

K9 Jack, originally rescued from a shelter in Wisconsin, has built an impressive record of service. He previously served alongside Officer Toscano at the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office, where the team worked together for approximately three and a half years. During that time, they assisted numerous police agencies in both narcotics detection and search-and-rescue operations. When Officer Toscano joined APD, we were fortunate enough that the Norfolk County Sheriff's allowed Jack to join APD, fully trained, saving Ashland thousands of dollars.

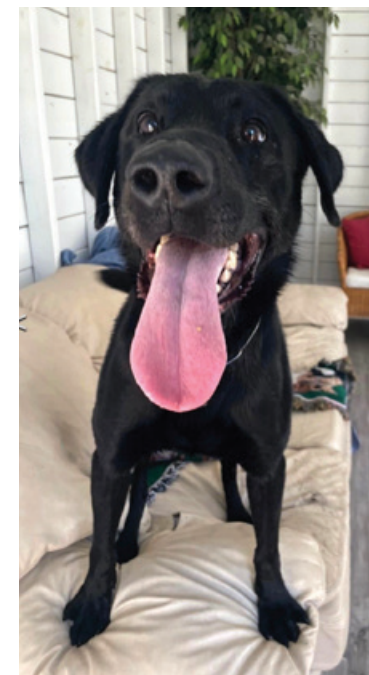
K9 Jack is certified in passive narcotics detection and friendly-find search and rescue, including locating missing children, elderly individuals, and other

vulnerable persons. Together, the team has helped remove significant quantities of narcotics from communities and has played a vital role in locating individuals in need of assistance.

Chief Rossi and the Ashland Police Department recognize the tremendous value a well-trained K9 team brings to public safety. The reinstatement of the K9 unit strengthens the department's ability to respond quickly and effectively to critical incidents within Ashland. It also enhances the town's contribution to mutual aid efforts, supporting surrounding departments and regional partners such as METRO-LEC.

"The addition of K9 Jack and Officer Toscano significantly enhances our capabilities," said Chief Rossi. "Their experience, professionalism, and proven success make them an invaluable asset to the residents of Ashland and to our law enforcement partners throughout the region."

The Ashland Police Department looks forward to the positive



impact this team will continue to have on public safety, community outreach, and regional collaboration.

Also, Jack is just really cute and loveable, and we're so excited to have him as part of the APD family.

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Greater Ashland Lions Club

Happy New Year - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

We will still be collecting gently used coats for children and adults until Jan. 10, 2026. Location of collection boxes are: Town Hall (Main St.), Ashland Nails (W. Union St.), Community Center (W. Union St.), Shear Perfection (Homer Ave.), and the Residence at Valley Farms (Pond St.). For further information, please contact Lion Debbi at 508-881-2117.

The club has been signing and sending holiday cards to those that are in nursing homes and assisted living. We fight senior

loneliness one letter at a time. Through handwritten messages of love, hope, and joy, our volunteer community brings seniors connection and improves their mental and physical health.

During this past holiday season, our club supported many groups and organizations, including the Ashland Christmas Gift Program (we purchased gift cards that were given to girls and boys), the Ashland Emergency Fund, and the Senior Monthly Meals, to name a few.

Do you have Pull Tabs? We

still collect them, and they get sent to the Shriners. Contact Lion Rosalie at 508-881-4743 for more info.

For those of you who may have any used eyeglasses or unneeded hearing aids, you may drop them off at the Police Station (located in the Public Safety Building at 12 Union St.), Market Basket (Pond St. / Rte.126), the VFW (at 311 Pleasant St.), or the Town Hall (Main St.).

Wanting to get involved in the community? We're a low-pressure group of service-oriented folks always looking for new members. If you'd like to learn more about the Lions and our club, please contact Lion Alexis at cvarnic@hotmail.com.

For more club information, please check us out on Facebook: Greater Ashland Lions Club. #weserve #kindnessmatters.

We are the Lions in Purple. We Serve!

Submitted by Lion Rosalie Porter, 2nd VP



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December 2025 at the Ashland Library

JANUARY 2026 at the ASHLAND LIBRARY

The Library will be closed on Monday, Jan. 19, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Visit our Website Calendar for additional Info & Registration links: <https://tinyurl.com/apl-calendars>

FEATURED FOR ADULTS: Online - Adult Winter Reading Challenge 2026

Jan. 1 - Jan. 31, 2026
Read whatever you want during the month and count up the minutes. Submit up to 1800 minutes (30 hours) worth of reading time. Each hour that you read gives you a raffle ticket to win fabulous prizes.

Submit how many minutes you read from Jan. 1 - Jan. 31, 2026. We're on Beanstack, so you can register anytime for the challenge and start adding your reading time from Wednesday, Jan. 1, through Saturday, Feb. 1.

ADULT IN PERSON Front Street Readers Book Club

Tuesday, Jan. 6 at 11 - 12:30 p.m.
Read *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon.

Mah Jongg

Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6 p.m.
Knowledge of the American version of Mah Jongg rules and your own National Mah Jongg League card is necessary.

Women's Wisdom Circle: Skip the Resolutions

Thursday, Jan. 8 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.
Paula Topliffe leads a discussion on Skip the resolutions, Envision 2026.

Mystery Book Club

Friday, Jan. 9 at 12 p.m.
Read *The Life We Bury* by Allen Eskens.

Card Making with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m.
Card making with Jan.

Historical Fiction Book Club

Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 11 a.m.
Read *The Woman with the Cure* by Lynn Cullen.

A Book Birthday with Romance Author Caroline Linden

Saturday, Jan. 17 from 1 - 3 p.m.
A book birthday bash with Caroline Linden. *How to Get Away with Scandal*.

Cook Book Club

Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 5 p.m.
Cook from *The New England Soup Factory Cookbook* by Marjorie Druker.

Hot Chocolate Bar and Winter Reading Discussion

Thursday, Jan. 29, from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
An evening of relaxing, discussion, and hot cocoa! For adults 18+, and does require registration

New England Lore with Horror Authors Christa Carmen and JW Ocker

Saturday, Jan. 31, from 1 - 3 p.m.
Christa Carmen and JW Ocker to the library for a fascinating conversation.

ADULT VIRTUAL:

Virtual - The Two Nerdy History Girls Ride Again!



Monday, Jan. 5 at 7 p.m.
Two Nerdy History Girls - Authors Loretta Chase and Susan Holloway Scott.

Virtual - Jack London with Bill Thierfelder
Tuesday, Jan. 6 from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Virtual - Environmental Book Club
Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m.
Read *The New Tourist: Waking Up to the Power and Perils of Travel* by Paige McClanahan.

Virtual - In Conversation with Author Julie Dobrow
Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 7 p.m.
Author Julie Dobrow will discuss her new book, *Love and Loss After Wounded Knee: A Biography of an Extraordinary Interracial Marriage*.

Virtual - Declutter series with Jamie Novak: Fresh Start: how to have a clutter-free new year
Thursday, Jan. 8 from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

For more events go to ashlandmass.com/184/Ashland-Public-Library

Virtual - Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers: George Washington
Friday, Jan. 9 at 10:30 a.m.

Virtual - In Conversation with Author Heather B. Moore
Monday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m.
Discussion with author Heather B. Moore about her recent release, *Julia*, the untold story of Julia Child, before she became a worldwide cooking sensation!

Virtual - Romance Book Club
Thursday, Jan. 8 at 6:30 p.m.
Read a *High Seas or Pirates Romance*.

Virtual - Historical Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Jane Healey
Tuesday, Jan. 13 from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

Join bestselling author Jane Healey monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations.

Virtual - Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer@redreadreviews
Tuesday, Jan. 13 from 7:30 - 8 p.m.
Join Jody Blanchette (aka @redreadreviews), monthly, for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations.

Virtual - "Superspy Science: Science, Death & Tech in the World of James Bond" with Dr. Kathryn Harkup
Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 2 p.m.

Dr. Kathryn Harkup, writer, science communicator, and vampirologist, will be discussing her book *Superspy Science: Science, Death and Tech in the World of James Bond*.

Virtual - In Conversation with Author Sharon Udasin
Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m.
Author Sharon Udasin will discuss her new book, *Poisoning The Well: How Forever Chemicals Contaminated America*.

Virtual - Women's Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Kristan Higgins
Thursday, Jan. 15 from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

Join bestselling author, Kristan Higgins (and Ashland fave!), quarterly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations.

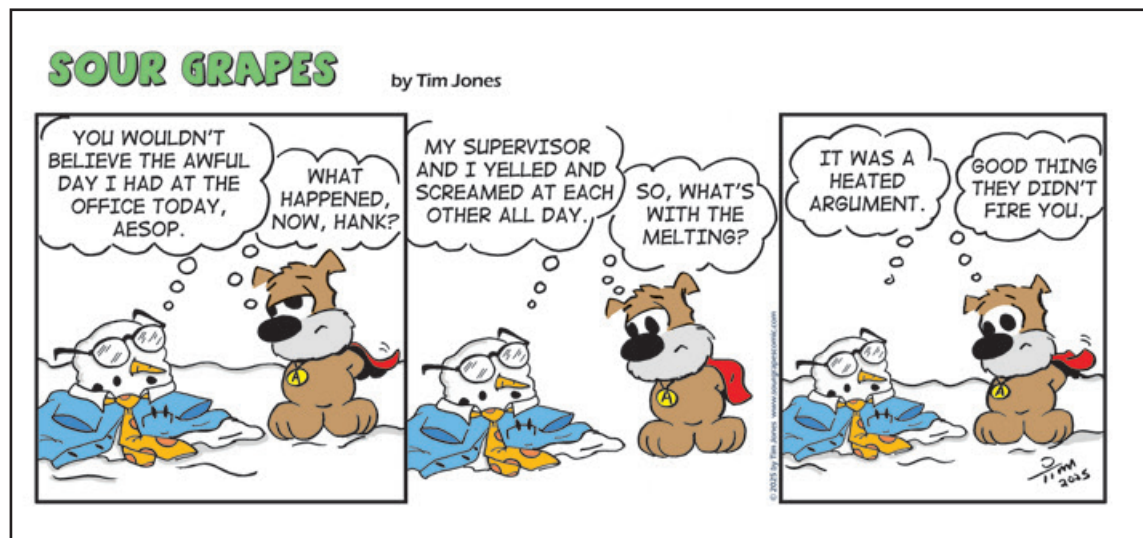
Virtual - Chasing John Brown: A photographic journey
Thursday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m.

This presentation follows the abolitionist John Brown's path across America.

Virtual - Inclusive and Diverse Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @sometimestyleelynnreads
Thursday, Jan. 15 from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

Join bookstagrammer, Leelynn Brady (aka @sometimestyleelynnreads), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations.

LIBRARY
continued on page 14



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LIBRARY

continued from page 13

Virtual - Classical Masterworks: Johann Strauss II with Clint Edwards

Tuesday, Jan. 20 from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Exploring the life and works of the 19th-century master of the waltz.

Virtual - In Conversation with Author Elyse Graham

Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m.

Author Elyse Graham will discuss her new book, *Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II*.

Virtual - Creating a Modern Homestead with Home-steader and Blogger, Victoria Pruett

Monday, Jan. 26 from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

A conversation with modern-day homesteader, blogger, and author Victoria Pruett about her book *Creating a Modern Homestead: Traditional Skills for Real, Everyday Life*.

Virtual - Self-Regulation for Parents with Parent Coach Kerri Smith

Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m.

Virtual - In Conversation with Author Christina Hillsberg

Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.

Author Christina Hillsberg will discuss her new book, *Agents of Change: The Women Who Transformed the CIA*.

Virtual - The Dudleys and the Howards with Authors and Historians Joanne Paul and Nicola Clark

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 10 a.m.

Join authors and historians Joanne Paul and Nicola Clark as they discuss their books, *The House of Dudley* and *The Waiting Game: The Untold Story of the Women Who Served the Tudor Queens*.

Virtual - Art on Thursdays- January - American Art at 250: Masterworks of a Nation

Thursday, Jan. 29 from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

ADULT WEEKLY: Knit and Crochet Club
Mondays at 6 p.m.
Walk-In

Gentle Yoga
Tuesdays at 6 p.m.
Registration Required

CHILDREN: Special Programs: Stay tuned on our website calendar for our upcoming programs as our new Children's Librarian starts planning!

LEGO Club!
Monday, Jan. 12 at 4:30 p.m.
For kids in grades K-3. Registration is required, and space is limited.

Juntos en la Biblioteca: Actividades en Español en Familia for families/ para familias
Monday, Jan. 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Little Crafters
Thursday, Jan. 29 at 10:30 a.m.
For families with children ages 0-5. No registration required.

WEEKLY STORYTIMES: Tuesday Clocktown Rockers!
For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Tuesdays at 10:30 - 11 a.m.
Designed for ages 2-5 with a caregiver. No registration



Ashland Library. Photo by Wendy Watkins

needed—just drop in and dance it out!

Friday Clocktown Rockers!
For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Fridays at 10:30 - 11 a.m.
No registration needed—just drop in and dance it out!

Mother Goose on the Loose
For ages 0-3 with a caregiver
Wednesdays from 10:30 - 11 a.m.
No registration needed—just drop in and join the fun!

Saturday Stories
For ages 2-5 with a caregiver
Saturdays from 10:30 - 11 a.m.
For families with children ages 2-5. No registration required.

RECURRING WEEKLY PROGRAMS: Project ABC: Play, Learn & Grow
For ages 0-5
Mondays from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Join the Metrowest YMCA

in partnership with the Early Childhood Alliance of Ashland & Framingham for a fun and interactive experience designed just for little ones aged 5 and under. Registration is required, and is found on their website: <https://www.projectabc.org/>

Friends of the Ashland Public Library Monthly Book Sale & Donation Day!
Saturday, Jan. 3 from 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Monthly Book Sales and Donation Days are held on the 1st Saturday of every month from 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Exceptions are the Big 2-Day Sale weekends in March, June, and December. To keep the shelves stocked with fresh selections, the Friends accept donations in the library parking lot of gently used books, audiobooks, and DVDs. Friends volunteers will be available to assist donors during this time. There is also a cart in the mez-

zanine lobby for donations at any time during library hours. Proceeds from monthly book sales fund library programs for children, teens, and adults, Museum Passes, and so much more!

Customers for all our sales will find thousands of titles on the permanent sales shelves, including hard and soft cover fiction (all alphabetized by author for ease of shopping), a wide selection of history and politics titles, health and family living books, plus memoirs, biographies, and loads of additional titles, all arranged by genre.

An entire section of the Book Sale Room is arranged for children to browse and select from a huge collection of board books, picture books, easy readers, and chapter books.

If you can't make it to the sales, the Friends have a book sale corner on the 1st floor of the library (in the beautiful original part of the building). There, you can find great books for yourself and your family any time the library is open.

Proceeds from these monthly book sales and all fundraising efforts made by the Friends fund 100% of children, teen, and adult programs, our wonderful Museum Passes, and so much more!

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Ashland Lions Club January 2026 Updates



Ashland Lions enjoy a visit from Santa at the Lions Tree Lot. *Courtesy photo*

Christmas Trees at the Farmers Market were a huge success!

The Ashland Lions had another fantastic year selling Christmas trees and wreaths at our location at the Ashland Farmers Market. The lot opened the day after Thanksgiving and sold out in just 11 days on Monday, Dec. 8!

We would like to thank the people of Ashland and surrounding towns who purchased their tree or wreath from the Ashland Lions tree lot. Your support helps a great cause, as 100% of the proceeds go directly to our local community, Lions Club International Fund, and the Mass Lions Eye Research Fund.

We are grateful to the Ashland High football team and Coach McKay for helping unload hundreds of trees, and to Boy Scouts Troop 232 and the Leos Club members who volunteered every weekend. A special thank you goes to Town Manager Michael Herbert and Assistant Town Manager Beth Reynolds for continuing to make our location possible.

Most importantly, we thank our Lions members for preparing the lot, covering every shift, and cleaning up when everything wrapped up. We hope to see you again next year!

Congrats to our Youth Speech Contest winners!

The Ashland Lions held their annual club-level Youth Speech Competition on Dec. 3. The con-

test was open to all Ashland students in grades 9–12 who were sponsored by a Massachusetts Lions Club or Leos Club. Judges not familiar with the contestants were selected to score speeches on delivery, effectiveness, and content.

This year's topic was "What can past America teach future America?" and each contestant delivered a 5–8 minute speech. All of them did an excellent job.

Our first-place winner was senior Meara Donald, and first runner-up was junior Prisha Bhola. Meara will advance to the next level of competition. All contestants should be very proud of their accomplishments.

Special thanks to Leo's Advisor Erika Thomson, AHS Principal Kelley St. Coeur, our judges, timekeeper, scorekeepers, text reader, and all volunteers who made the event possible.

Ashland Lions Meat Raffles

Ashland Lions is in full swing with another great year of meat raffles! Our next event will be held on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026. Raffles are normally on the first Saturday of each month at 12 p.m. at TJ's Food and Spirits in Ashland and run throughout the winter.

There will be great food, friendly people, and plenty of meat to choose from. See you there!

Senior Breakfasts

Seniors are invited to join

us and community members for a monthly breakfast on the first Thursday of each month (weather permitting) at the Ashland Senior Center, 162 West Union Street.

This event runs through May. Please contact the Senior Center to sign up no later than the Monday before each event.

Coats for Kids and Families

The Ashland Lions Club is partnering again with Anton's Cleaners for the Coats for Kids and Families Drive. We are collecting warm winter coats for adults and children. All coats should be gently used, good quality, and free of rips, tears, broken zippers, or permanent stains.

Anton's Cleaners will clean all donated coats and distribute them to local nonprofits, social service agencies, and schools so they reach those in need at no cost.

- Collection locations include:
- Ashland Public Safety Building (12 Union Street)
 - Focus on Fitness (290 Eliot Street)
 - Cleaner's Choice and Tailor (193 Main Street)

Happy New Year Ashland!

The Ashland Lions Club would like to thank the Ashland community for its support this past year. With your help, we had

LIONS CLUB

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Lion Dan Mitchell with Speech Contest winner Meara Donald and first runner-up Prisha Bhola. *Courtesy photo*

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Sports

A Legacy in the Making

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Ashland's Hugo Rossi began playing football with his friends when they were in second grade. Football was in his blood: not only did his father, John Rossi, play football for Ashland High School, but his grandfather, Hugo Augustus Rossi, played at Boston College and coached youth football. However, the younger Rossi soon found out that he was not enjoying playing on the gridiron as much as his father did, and he decided to step away so he could play basketball, a sport he truly loved.

"My father wanted me to follow in his footsteps and play football. He wasn't upset when I stepped away," Rossi said. "He just wanted me to be happy and enjoy myself, although he really wanted me to experience football."

The eldest Rossi was beloved

in Ashland, where he not only coached youth football, but was a town selectman. Over the years, HA Rossi had literally coached hundreds of young athletes and lived for them. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 42 when he was in a car accident; John Rossi was only nine years old when his father passed away on November 9th.

Although not living in Ashland at the time, John and Christine Rossi had a son born on the anniversary of Hugo Augustus' fatal car accident 18 years later. Originally, the Rossis were not going to name their son Hugo, but when Christine almost died during that childbirth, having a near-death experience, she came out of it knowing she had to name their son Hugo.

When Hugo was eight years old, the Rossi Family moved to Ashland, and John would eventually begin coaching football,

and although it was for only one season, 90% of the boys he coached are now playing for the Ashland High School team. Hugo decided to try football one more time and give it another shot, as all his friends were still playing the sport; this time, he stayed with it. By his freshman year, he had lost some weight, grown, and found himself to be much more athletic.

Following his sophomore campaign for the Clockers junior varsity team, Rossi started to really put in the work to become a better player on the field as well as on the court, and by his junior year, he was starting on both sides of the football (receiver and corner) for Ashland. That year, he received an honorable All-Star mention.

When uniform numbers were

LEGACY

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Dad (John Rossi) and Hugo Rossi holding the trophy after the Thanksgiving Day win. Photo submitted by Christine Rossi

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Sports



Ashland High School Football Team. Photo submitted by Christine Rossi

LEGACY

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handed out, Rossi grabbed the number four. He had no idea what that number would come to represent. According to his mother, Hugo was the fourth Hugo in their family tree, and here now he was wearing the number four.

“It was just a random pick,” he said. “I had no idea... it was just crazy!”

By playing football for Ashland, the young Rossi has walked in his predecessors' footsteps. Hugo would not only play on the same field that his dad played on, but also the same field that his grandfather coached on.

“Walking onto that field is an amazing feeling each time that I do so,” he said, “Having my father play there and my grandfather coach, I had to work hard to live up to the name on the back of my jersey.”

Coming into his senior season, his final one with Ashland, Rossi not only wanted to become a Tri-Valley League All-Star, win the TVL Championship, and go deep into the State Tournament. He was able to accomplish all three goals he set before the season began. In addition to being named to the TVL All-Star team, the Clockers became TVL champions on November 9. After finishing 7-1 on the season, they advanced into the Division 4 State Tour-

namment, where they defeated Danvers and then lost to Tewksbury Memorial in the Elite 8, who would eventually lose in the finals to Scituate. Ashland would also go on to defeat Hopkinton on Thanksgiving Day, 48-0, being the last time all the seniors would take to the field together.

“Winning the TVL on that date was an awesome moment, he (his grandfather) was really pushing and rooting for us,” Rossi said. “The Tournament was an amazing run. Sadly, we lost to a really good team that went to the Super Bowl. Overall, it was a great experience to finally get into a playoff game; it would have been really special if we could have won the Super Bowl.”

Having begun this miraculous journey ten plus years ago with all his friends by his side on the football field, Rossi never in his

wildest dreams believed that everything would end this way.

“It was amazing that we are all here together this year, I couldn't have ever imagined that as seniors we would be a group of guys that became a family,” Rossi said. “Playing football gave me a sense of pride, especially playing for my dad as well as my grandfather, who I believe was watching me every moment I was on the field.”

Having her son play the sport her husband and his father enjoyed so much gave Christine Rossi the firm belief that it was all meant to be.

“Seeing Hugo do something that he loves, his grandfather would have been proud,” she said. “The way the season turned out, it was like the Ashland team with Hugo had an angel on the field as they finished out their career. Ashland

is all about family, football, and a small town with a legacy.”

With his football career gone by the wayside at Ashland, Rossi will now suit up for the Clockers basketball team this winter before turning his thoughts to college. The senior will definitely be heading off to college once he departs from high school, but at this time, he is unsure of where he will go and if he will play football.

“I have been offered a chance

to go to Worcester State, but I am also still talking to other schools. With my body aching and the injuries, I am not sure if I want to continue to play football in college,” Rossi said. “If I don't get to play football and my career is over, it wouldn't bother me. This year was the exclamation point on my football journey, and I will always remember this year playing with my brothers and what we were able to accomplish on the field.”

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LIONS CLUB

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a successful coat drive, a great golf tournament, fun and lively meat raffles, a strong golf ball drop, and an amazing Christmas tree season.

We hope to see you soon at our upcoming events!

Become a Lion and Give Back

If you enjoy giving back to your community while meeting new people and having fun, consider joining the Ashland Lions!

For more information, contact Membership Chairperson IPP Betsy Andersson at membership@ashlandlions.org, or message us on Facebook.

You can also find several Lions members at Honeydew on West Main Street most weekday mornings.

Eyeglasses and Cellphone Collection

Our eyeglasses and cellphone collection runs year-round. We collect used

prescription and non-prescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, hearing aids, and cell phones.

Since September, we have collected over 300 pairs of glasses. Thank you, Lion Warren Wales, for your tireless work on this project!

Collection boxes are located at:

- Ashland Post Office
- Ashland Senior Center
- Old train station – Ashland
- Moody Optical – Ashland
- Middlesex Bank – Ashland
- Fayville Post Office
- Studio Optics – Framingham
- Southborough Senior Center
- Southborough Post Office (Route 85)
- TJ's Food and Spirits
- The Residence at Valley Farm

Stay up-to-date on Lions happenings

To get the latest updates on our events, visit our Ashland Lions Facebook page and click "Like" to receive notifications of any changes. While you're there, be sure to follow Ashland Town News as well!

Preserve and Protect your Vision

Most adults experience some changes in vision as they get older, and some may have risk factors for more serious eye disease. Protecting your vision throughout your life is an important task, as visual impairment affects every aspect of life. Risk factors for eye disease are varied and some are familial, but many are lifestyle-related.

Eye injuries can occur in a variety of sports and household activities, so wearing eye protection in those circumstances can help prevent serious injuries. All sports involving a projectile can cause eye injuries—think tennis, pickleball, baseball, and even basketball. Goggles protect your eyes from impact from the ball or from an opponent's racquet or fingers. Working with power tools or doing woodworking can create dust and debris that can injure the eye, as can working with chemicals that could splash back. Biking & skiing leave us open to injury from airborne particles and low-hanging branches. Eye damage can also occur from Shingles infection, so being vaccinated protects your vision.

Contact lens wearers need to be

meticulous in caring for their contacts and follow all instructions for their use. Folks who wear contact lenses should see an eye doctor annually. For others, the frequency of exams depends on your age, family history, personal vision history, and other risk factors like diabetes, high blood pressure, or smoking. Most adults should get their vision checked every 1-2 years. Any changes in vision, eye pain, eye discharge, or eye injury should be reported right away to your provider.

Sun protection is just as crucial for your eyes as it is for your skin. Protecting your eyes is very important as UV damage can contribute to cataracts, macular degeneration, and even the development of cancer in the eye.

- Wear sunglasses: Choose sunglasses that block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays. Ensure that they are impact-resistant and fit close to your eyes to prevent light from entering through the sides.
- Wear a hat: A wide-brimmed or baseball cap provides additional shade.
- Be mindful of reflections: Remember that UV rays are re-


flected off surfaces like water, snow, sand, and pavement.

Avoid smoking—it harms your eyes in multiple ways: reduces blood flow, increases risk of cataracts, Glaucoma, and Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

Nutritional deficiencies can contribute to vision problems, including night blindness and cataracts. An optimal diet for protecting vision includes foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, lutein, and vitamins A & C.

- leafy greens like kale and spinach
- fish like salmon
- fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins A and C, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and citrus fruits
- Eggs, nuts, and seeds high in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, and zinc


Maintaining a heart-healthy lifestyle helps protect vision, as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are all associated with vision problems when left untreated. Taking these steps helps you to maintain optimal vision as you age. Please feel free to reach out to the Ashland Board of Health at 508-532-7922 if you have any questions or concerns.




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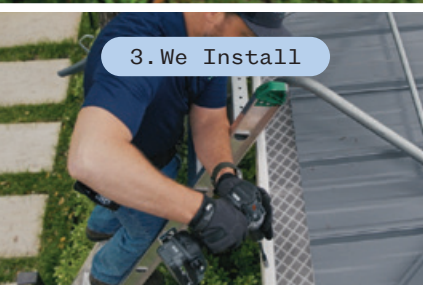
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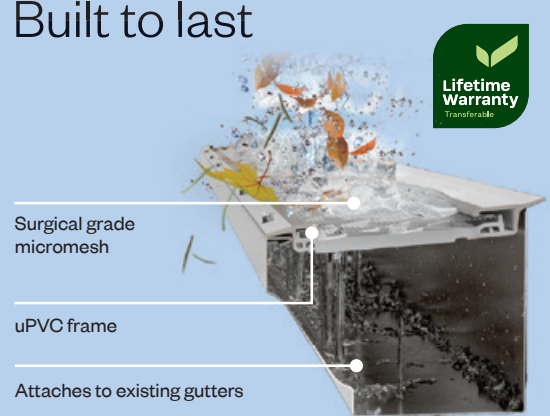


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Real Estate Corner

Your Right to Home Inspection



Kim Foemmel
Real Estate Broker

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest financial decisions most people ever make. And a new law in Massachusetts will make the process fairer, safer and more transparent. As of fall 2025, every home buyer has the right to inspect their new home before they buy it and know exactly what they're buying.

A home inspection is conducted by a state-licensed home inspector who looks at the major systems of the house — things like the roof, structure, electrical, plumbing, heating, cooling and insulation. It's a professional evaluation that the buyer can rely on for making an informed decision.

Over the past few years, when the market was competitive, many buyers felt pressured to waive their home inspection just to have a chance at getting that house. That created risk: People were buying homes without really knowing what they were getting into. The new law, which states that sellers and agents can't ask for nor accept an offer that waives a buyer's right to an inspection, is designed to fix that.

As a buyer, you're not required to do a home inspection — it's your choice. But the in-

spection can be waived only if you choose to do so after your offer has been accepted. Before that, no buyer or agent can suggest or indicate that skipping the inspection will sweeten an offer.

You and the seller will agree on a reasonable amount of time to schedule and complete the inspection and review the results. After the inspection, you decide if you want to move forward, renegotiate repairs, or whatever the case. Some contracts include a clause that will have repair estimates capped at a dollar amount, often referred to as a "threshold," at which point the buyer can choose to back out. Those are options for the buyer to include in their offer.

For sellers, this doesn't mean you're required to fix anything nor lower your price. You can sell your home as is, but you will have to provide a new state-issued disclosure form before the

buyer signs a contract confirming that the buyer has the right to have a home inspection. This form needs to be signed by the buyer, the seller and the listing agent. If it isn't, this could be a violation of Massachusetts Consumer Protection Law 93A, so it's critical that your listing agent handles that properly.

This law is officially in effect for any contracts signed in Massachusetts and applies to residential properties (single-family homes, condominiums and multi-family homes up to four units). There are a few exceptions: It doesn't apply to sales at auctions, some transfers to family members or certain estate planning transfers. It's also exempt from new construction, but only if the purchase contract was signed before the home was substantially completed and it comes with at least a one-year written warranty.

Everyone should have a chance to fully understand the condition of a home before they buy. It's about consumer protection and making sure every transaction is open and fair. It's intended to give buyers the confidence to go out and buy a home and to help level the playing field, especially in competitive situations. For the sellers, it adds clarity; everyone knows what to expect — and that can lead to a smoother, more professional transaction for all parties.

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Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
12/15/2025	76 Algonquin Trl	\$530,000
12/05/2025	8 Roberts Rd.	\$604,000
12/04/2025	6 New Castle Rd.	\$915,000
12/03/2025	17 Stagecoach Dr.	\$770,000
12/01/2025	3 Johnson St.	\$555,000
12/01/2025	291 Captain Eames Cir.	\$571,900
11/25/2025	12 Braeburn Ln.	\$747,000
11/25/2025	17 Sewell St.	\$643,000
11/21/2025	181 E Union St.	\$450,000
11/21/2025	43 Haven Way	\$640,000
11/21/2025	8 Cedar St.	\$661,000
11/19/2025	56 Woodland Rd.	\$610,000
11/17/2025	65 Braeburn Ln.	\$750,000

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



The 4-bed, 3-bath, 2,888-square-foot home at 6 New Castle Road in Ashland recently sold for \$915,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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In the heart of Franklin, Dean College has been shaping futures for more than 160 years. Stroll across its compact, tree-lined campus and you'll see students headed to class, rehearsing in the theatre, or on their way to internships that put their classroom learning into action. For many, this is where raw potential is transformed into confidence, skill, and purpose.

"Every student walks onto Dean's campus with unique strengths and aspirations," says Dr. Scott Sibley, Provost. "Our role is to meet them where they are, challenge them, and guide them toward becoming confident, capable professionals."

That philosophy is woven into every aspect of the Dean experience. With just 1,200 full-time undergraduates, small class sizes make it easy for faculty to know students by name. Advisors tailor an academic plan to each individual's goals, while required internships ensure every graduate has a meaning-

ful real-world experience. Partnerships with organizations like Kraft Sports + Entertainment and the Franklin Performing Arts Company connect students directly to industry networks.

The results speak for themselves, with 96 percent of graduates employed or in graduate school within one year of earning their degree.

For recent graduate, Bree Gazeille '24, that attention made all the difference. "Thanks to the incredible support from Dean, I've surpassed my academic expectations and achieved more than I thought possible," she says. "Their guidance paved the way for two incredible internships, a job in my desired field post-graduation, and acceptance into grad school."

In a higher education landscape often defined by large lecture halls and anonymous crowds, Dean offers something refreshingly different with a close-knit community dedicated to helping students achieve their

full potential. That kind of outcome is no accident. Alongside academic expertise, Dean students leave with the skills employers value most, including communication, collaboration, leadership, global awareness, and problem-solving. These abilities are practiced and refined through both coursework and campus life.

Performing Arts alumna, Gabrielle Fernandes credits Dean with giving her more than technical training. "Dean has been an integral part of my professional success," she says. "Through Dean, I have been able to grow my network by meeting and connecting with other alumni, which has led to jobs and bookings. Dean's tight-knit community really is a family."

For a growing number of students, Dean offers something rare in higher education: a place where talent is nurtured, ambition is matched with opportunity, and futures are built one experience at a time.

Meet Harriet!

Harriet is a 13-year-old beauty who spent most of her life outdoors before coming to the shelter, and is now enjoying the safety and comfort of a foster home. She's completely deaf and in the early stages of kidney disease, but that doesn't stop her from living life exactly as she pleases.

Harriet has no interest in sharing her space with other animals. She'll graciously tolerate humans — mostly because they make excellent food servants and providers of a comfy bed. She's not aggressive, and she's easy to care for when needed, but she prefers relationships to unfold slowly. Yet with patience and a gentle approach, she may surprise you with small steps forward.

Her favorite time is nighttime, when the house is quiet and hers alone. That's when she'll explore, patrol from a window perch, and enjoy a spirited game with a catnip toy. Daytime is for luxurious naps in sunny, low-traffic spots.



Harriet is looking for a calm, patient, cat-savvy home that will respect her boundaries while still giving her the chance to build confidence and enjoy the quiet companionship of "her" human. She may never be a lap cat, but she's the kind of roommate who knows what she likes — and when she's content, her slow blinks are her way of saying thanks.

Adoptions are by appointment only. If you have an interest in meeting Harriet, please fill out our online adoption application (<https://www.shelterluv.com/matchme/adopt/MWHS/Cat>).

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