

Ashland

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

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Ashland Then and Now: A Century of Change Along Main Street

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

In 1926, Ashland was a small but growing mill town of just 2,521 residents. That year, 592 passenger cars and 88 commercial vehicles were registered—numbers that hint at a community beginning to embrace modern life while still firmly rooted in its 18th- and 19th-century past.

About a century later, Ashland has grown to an estimated 19,391 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 1, 2024 population estimate. While the town's size and pace have changed dramatically, many of its most familiar landmarks continue to anchor Ashland's identity.

A Changing Streetscape

Walking down Main Street



G. TOWN HALL, ASHLAND, MASS.

Town Hall. Courtesy photo from Ashland Historical Society website

in 1926, the town would have looked exponentially different. Between Myrtle Street and Homer Avenue, only a handful of buildings still stand today:

- The mill buildings
- The house at 100 Main Street
- The Federated Church

MAIN STREET

continued on page 4

Ashland Native Earns Commission as U.S. Marine Corps Officer

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

Ashland is celebrating one of its own: Michael J. Stefanini, a 2017 graduate of Ashland High School and a BC graduate, was recently sworn in as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps—an achievement attained by only a small fraction of those who aspire to serve as Marine officers.

Becoming a Marine officer is widely regarded as one of the most challenging paths in the U.S. military. Only about 2 percent of all applicants are selected to attend Marine Corps Officer Candidate School (OCS). From that already



MARINE Michael J. Stefanini. Photo supplied by Jane Q Stefanini
continued on page 2

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Foreign Policy Discussion Group

The Ashland Public Library is once again offering the Great Decisions Discussion Group. This Discussion Group is open to people of all ages and will meet on the third Thursday of every month, beginning Thursday, March 19. The meetings will be held on the third Thursday of each month, from March through October, from 6 - 7:45 p.m. in the small meeting room at the Library.

Great Decisions is the longest-running and largest grassroots world affairs educational program of its kind and is sponsored by The Foreign Policy Association. The Foreign Policy Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring Americans to learn more about the world. Its mission is to serve as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding, and informed opinion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues. The Great Decision program is sponsored by various organizations in towns and cities across the country and is often offered as a high school or college-level course, or as part of a life-long learning series.

Each year, the Foreign Policy

Association selects critical topics related to major issues in US foreign policy and international affairs. They publish the Great Decisions briefing book, with chapters on the selected topics written by diplomats, policy experts, academics, and foreign-service professionals. These articles provide background information, current data, and policy opinions and serve as the focus for each Great Decisions group meeting.

The format for the discussion group meeting is much like that of a book club, where everyone reads the article in the Great Decisions briefing book in advance, comes together to watch a video, and then one member of the group volunteers to facilitate the discussion. The topics for 2026 are: *America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy; Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy; U.S. and China Relations; Ruptured Alliances And The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation; Ukraine And The Future of European Security; Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order; U.S. Engagement in Africa;*

DISCUSSION

continued on page 9

MARINE

continued from page 1

elite group, success is far from guaranteed. Of the 543 candidates from across the country who reported to the 10-week OCS program at Quantico, Virginia, as part of the 250th class, only 403 completed the course and graduated.

For Michael, the journey began with a desire to serve his country and to test his limits.

“Pursuing my goal of becoming an officer in the United States Marine Corps was derived from a desire to serve my country,” he said. “The drive to challenge myself by pushing through perceived physical, mental, and emotional limits was also a major factor in what drew me to the military.”

After researching all branches of the armed forces, Michael said the Marine Corps stood out for its demanding physical standards and its low OCS selection rate. Rather than being discouraged, he was motivated by the challenge.

Officer Candidate School is known for its intensity and high attrition rate, particularly during the early weeks. Michael described the end of the first phase—known as the transition phase—as the most difficult mo-

ment of the entire experience.

“This is when the instructors effectively transition candidates from a civilian mindset to a military one,” he explained. “Nothing can effectively prepare you for the mental games the instructors play. They are very proficient at making every candidate feel as though they are the weakest link.”

Despite the pressure, Michael persevered. He credits determination and resilience rather than natural advantage for his success.

“There were plenty of candidates that were in better physical shape, and more intelligent than myself that dropped on request,” he said. “You just need to keep going.”

Michael also points to his upbringing in Ashland as a key factor in preparing him for OCS. As a student-athlete at Ashland High School, he learned discipline and accountability both in the classroom and on the football field.

“During my time playing under Coach Mackay, excuses were not tolerated, and the expectation was that you were to give 100 percent regardless of how you felt,” he said. “The parallels between the coaching staff’s leadership and the expectations of candidates at OCS are identical—no excuses, just performance and results.”

Now commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Michael emphasizes that his work is just beginning. Before assuming formal command, he will undergo additional training. When it comes to leadership, he sums up his philosophy in one word: ownership.

“Taking individual ownership of shortcomings and challenges allows me to have a clear understanding of places in need of improvement,” he said. “We also learn the importance of taking ownership of peers’ and subordinates’ actions, because we are all responsible for the outcome.”

For the Ashland community, Michael’s accomplishment serves as a powerful reminder of what can grow from strong local roots. His journey from the classrooms and athletic fields of Ashland High School to earning a commission in the United States Marine Corps reflects the perseverance, discipline, and sense of service instilled by family, coaches, teachers, and the broader community. As he begins his career as a Marine officer, Michael’s success is an example to younger students and residents that dedication, hard work, and a commitment to something greater than oneself can lead to extraordinary achievements.



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Ten Things I Learned in Ten Years as Town Manager in the Same Town

BY MICHAEL HERBERT

Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, marked ten years as Ashland's Town Manager. Most managers move on after three to five years. I stayed.

Not because I couldn't leave. Because staying taught me things leaving never would.

Ten years gives you a vantage point. You see patterns you couldn't see in year two. You watch projects that felt urgent become memories. You realize how much you didn't know when you thought you knew everything.

Here's what a decade in one place actually taught me - and most of it isn't about municipal management at all.

1. I grossly overestimated what I could do in one year and underestimated what I could do in ten.

Early on, I had plans. Big ones. I thought I could transform things quickly if I just worked hard enough and smart enough and hired people that had the same kind of ethos.

I was wrong.

The projects that matter most - the ones that actually transform a community - take years. It also takes belief. Underground utilities downtown. The Arboretum. A comprehensive plan shaped by hundreds of conversations. You can't rush a decade. You can't transform inertia into action overnight. And you can't see what's possible in year one.

But if you stay? If you're patient? You look up one day and realize we've built something together that I couldn't have imagined when I started. My role was to hold the vision and create the conditions. The building happened because of the people who showed up.



Michael Herbert, Town Manager, Town of Ashland 2016. Courtesy Photo

Any leader who stays long enough in one seat learns this: the long game is the only game.

2. The dumber I got, the wiser I became.

In year one, I had answers. Lots of them. I was smart, capable, ready to prove it.

Somewhere along the way, I stopped knowing so much. I started asking more questions. I got comfortable saying "I don't know" and "tell me more" and "what do you think?"

A department head told me recently that they feel more support now. Not because I'm solving more problems - because I'm not rushing to solve them at all. And yet I'm somehow more present.

The less I knew, the more I learned. The less I spoke, the more I heard.

Leaders across every sector eventually face this: your expertise can become a wall. Getting "dumber" - letting go of the need to be the smartest person in the room - is what actually makes you wise.

3. I started understanding



Michael Herbert, Town Manager, Town of Ashland 2026. Courtesy Photo

that two people could be right at the same time.

This might sound simple. It isn't.

Year one: someone's right, someone's wrong. My job is to figure out which.

Year ten: Two people can both be right. The resident AND the department head AND the Select Board member can all have legitimate perspectives that are true from where they stand.

That shift changed everything. How I listen. How I decide. How I hold conflict. I stopped being an arbiter of truth and started being a container for complexity.

Maybe this is more maturity than leadership. But the ability to hold different perspectives at once - without rushing to resolve the tension - has been a game changer.

4. Trying NOT to run in and fix things is harder than running in and fixing them.

ning in and fixing them.

As mentioned before, I don't run in to fix things as much anymore. But it's hard. My instinct is to help. Someone has a problem, I want to solve it. That's what leaders do, right?

Wrong.

The hardest discipline I've learned is staying out of it while still being present. Letting people struggle. Letting them figure it out. Trusting that they don't need me to rescue them. We had a meeting recently where a couple of member of a department started sharing some old grievances. As opposed to jumping in and shutting it down, I sat there silent, letting it play out. Eventu-

ally, they worked it out on their own and had the gratification of figuring out how to resolve their differences on their own.

Almost always, their breakthrough happens right when they're about to give up. They just needed space to find their own answer.

It allows me to get things done a lot more elegantly now. Not because I do more - because I know more of what doesn't need my hands on it.

5. Doing the job "right" means working all the time. Doing the job "well" means

TOWN MANAGER

continued on page 9

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MAIN STREET

continued from page 1

- (expanded over time)
- Town Hall (modified)
- James Jackson’s house (now part of Ashland House)
- Lunker’s (formerly the Ashland News Store)
- Stone’s Public House (formerly the Ashland Hotel)

On Front Street, between Main Street and the library, just three original structures remain: the Ray Building (48 Front Street), the Greenwood Building (52 Front Street), and the library, though all have seen changes over the decades.

At the town’s center, Gordon A. Green Square continues to honor Ashland’s war veterans, just as it did in 1926—though the square itself has expanded to reflect the town’s growth.

A Family Business That Spans Generations



Ashland Hotel. Courtesy photo from Ashland Historical Society website



Central Fire Station. Courtesy photo from Ashland Historical Society website



Carnegie Library. Courtesy photo from Ashland Historical Society website



Ashland Square. Courtesy photo from Ashland Historical Society website

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Not many businesses depict Ashland’s continuity better than Main Street Wine & Spirits, which has remained family-owned for more than a century.

The story began around 1917, when John Goldberg lent his brother-in-law, Sam, money to purchase a small neighborhood market near today’s location. The store sold everyday necessities such as meat, produce, and baking goods—and by 1919, John became a full partner. Together, they ran the business for 32 years.

After a devastating fire in 1949 destroyed the neighboring building, John purchased the current property and constructed a larger, modern store, opening in 1951. At the time, it was the largest market in Ash-

land and featured the town’s first self-service, pre-cut packaged meat department.

In the early 1960s, John’s twin sons, Allan and Marvin, took over, eventually shifting focus as supermarkets replaced small grocery stores. Despite big-box competition, the store remains rooted in community support and customer service.

The Ocean House: From Colonial Home to Historical Anchor

A staple in Ashland’s Main Street stands the Ocean House, a building whose history predates Ashland itself. It was built in 1748 by Colonel John Jones and is the house that sits on land originally owned by Savil Simpson, widely regarded as Ashland’s first settler. Jones married Simpson’s daughter and later

inherited the property, which included mills and dams near today’s Mill Pond on Myrtle Street.

An addition built around 1763, recognizable by its distinctive Beverly jog, expanded the home for Jones’ growing family. For 170 years, the Ocean House remained in the Jones family or their descendants before being sold in 1918.

After passing through several owners during the 20th century, the Ocean House found its permanent role in 1991, when it became the home of the Ashland Historical Society. A barn was carefully relocated and reconstructed, and modern additions, including a library and meeting room, were designed to tie in with the original structure.

Today, the Ocean House preserves Ashland’s story. As one

might wonder, if Colonel Jones could walk through its doors now, what would he think of the town that grew up around his home?

Some say he never left.

A Town That Remembers

In 1926, runners gathered for the 30th Boston Marathon, while Ashland residents went about their daily lives in a town that felt worlds away from today’s busy community. Yet even as Ashland has grown nearly eightfold, the buildings, businesses, and institutions that remain remind us that the past is never far away.

A century later, Ashland stands as a town that has grown substantially while maintaining clear ties to its past.

Sources: Ashland Historical Society (Cliff Wilson), Main Street Wine and Spirits website

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Model Twice, Execute Once: Roth Conversion Analysis Done Right



Glenn Brown, CFP

One of the most underutilized and often misunderstood strategies in retirement and tax planning is the Roth IRA, particularly Roth conversions. Evolving tax laws, funding options, and legacy planning have made understanding how and when to use this strategy more important than ever.

A Roth IRA provides tax-free growth and distributions with no lifetime RMDs, unlike Traditional IRAs that require taxable withdrawals regardless of need. Despite these benefits, many high earners say, “I make too much money to do a Roth.” While this may limit direct contributions, es-

pecially outside workplace retirement plans, it does not eliminate the ability to build Roth assets through other planning strategies.

Contribution vs. Conversion

A Roth conversion moves assets from a Traditional IRA into a Roth IRA, triggering income tax on pre-tax contributions and earnings in the year of conversion. Once converted, those assets grow and can be distributed tax-free, providing long-term flexibility. This is where Roth conversions become a form of tax-rate arbitrage: paying taxes today at known rates to avoid higher or uncertain taxes in retirement.

Understanding the Pro-Rata Rule

When converting, the IRS looks at all Traditional, SEP and SIMPLE IRAs combined to determine the taxable portion. You cannot cherry-pick only after-tax contributions; the taxable amount is proportional to the ratio of pre-tax to after-tax funds across all balances. Ignoring this rule can lead to unexpected tax consequences.

Model Twice, Execute Once

Effective Roth conversions are rarely last-minute decisions. Early in the year, potential conversions should be modeled to estimate taxable income, marginal brackets, and downstream effects such as Medicare premiums or state taxes. Establishing guardrails early provides a framework for decision-making.

Execution should wait until later in the year, after income, bonuses, capital gains, and deductions are clearer. Re-running the model allows adjustment of conversion amount, or skipping a year, to reduce the risk of over-paying taxes.

Use Market Downturns to Your Advantage

Market declines can improve the tax efficiency of Roth conversions. If stocks or ETFs fall significantly, converting at lower values reduces the taxable amount while allowing future growth to occur tax-free. If this situation doesn't occur, conversions must still be completed by December 31. Spreading conversions over multiple years can help manage marginal tax rates and plan for cash flow to pay taxes with non-retirement assets.

Today's Tax Rates Will Change

It's dangerous to assume federal or state taxes will remain fixed. Even “permanent” laws can change with new Congressional majorities or administrations. Rising deficits, shifting fiscal priorities, and evolving state policies make future tax rates, deductions, and exemptions uncertain. Roth conversions create income insulated from these changes, offering greater tax diversification, flexibility and certainty in retirement planning.

Legacy Benefits Always Overlooked

Many analyses of Roth conversions stop at the death of the second spouse, overlooking benefits for children and grandchildren. Inherited Roth IRA distributions are tax-free, unlike inherited Traditional IRAs, where withdrawals are taxed at the beneficiary's income rate.

If the original owner was taking RMDs from a Traditional IRA, those taxable withdrawals continue under the SECURE Act's 10-year rule. With an inherited Roth, heirs face the same 10-year rule but no annual RMDs,

allowing assets to compound tax-free and be withdrawn at the end of the period without generating taxable income or increasing the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of mid-career beneficiaries.

Take Ownership

By modeling conversions early, executing with updated knowledge, and taking advantage of market dips, you can reduce future tax uncertainty and preserve flexibility. Consult your Certified Financial Planner to see how Roth IRAs and Roth conversions fit into your holistic financial plan.

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

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

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Low-Maintenance Beauty Is the New Luxury

Luxury used to mean more. More steps, more products, more time in front of the mirror. But lately, something has shifted. Today's most sought-after beauty trend isn't about excess. It's about ease. Low-maintenance beauty has officially become the new luxury, and it's one busy women are happily embracing.

Low-maintenance beauty is about creating a fuss-free baseline that works effortlessly for you, a look that falls into place each morning. A great haircut that grows out beautifully. Hair color that looks polished weeks later. Skin that glows without layers of makeup. These aren't shortcuts—they're smart investments. When your routine becomes as simple as a quick hair fluff, face wash, moisturizer, and five-minute makeup, you suddenly have an extra 45 minutes in your day for what truly makes you feel beautiful: family moments, a good book, a workout, or whatever brings you balance.

The shift is everywhere: skincare focused on barrier repair and hydration rather than aggressive routines, makeup designed to enhance rather than mask, haircuts and color that allow more grace between appointments. Even wigs and toppers are being embraced in mainstream beauty for convenience and confidence. The goal isn't to do less because beauty doesn't matter—it's to do less because life is full, and beauty

should support it, not complicate it.

Ready to get your time back? Here are our favorite low-maintenance services and products that make it happen.

Power of 3 Facial

The Power of 3 Facial combines dermaplaning, extractions, and a customized peel to transform your skin in one appointment. By eliminating facial hair and creating a smooth canvas, your skincare products absorb better and makeup glides on flawlessly, giving you a more even, polished look that lasts throughout the month. This treatment helps new skin rise to the surface without harsh chemicals, excessive downtime, or pain. Using a specialized surgical blade, the top layer of dry, dead skin cells and fine vellus hair (peach fuzz) are carefully removed, freeing your face of debris. A light steam, T-Zone extractions, a customized brightening peel, and a soothing mask complete this anti-aging game-changer. The result? Smoother, more radiant skin, better product absorption and easier makeup application.

Product Recommendation: GM. COLLIN PEEL TONER EXFOLIANT - Gently eliminate dead skin cells and reveal a radiant, even complexion with this daily leave-on liquid exfoliant. Sweeps away dead skin cells and impurities, regulates excess sebum, smooths skin texture, reveals a

brighter, more even complexion, and tightens the appearance of pores while hydrating and softening the skin.

Low-Maintenance Hair Color

Low-maintenance hair color is all about creating beautiful results that grow out gracefully, giving you more time between salon visits. These techniques use softer color placement to eliminate harsh regrowth lines and keep your look fresh for months.

Lived-In Color Techniques

Balayage, root smudging, and shadow roots create a natural, sun-kissed look that can extend 10-12 weeks between appointments instead of the typical 6-8 weeks. Root smudging and shadow roots involve applying a darker tone at the base to create a seamless transition and softer grow-out. Between full services, a color balance appointment refreshes your color by blending retouched roots from mid-length to ends, adding shine and moisture without requiring a complete highlight or balayage.

Grey-Blending Grey-blending is a game-changer for embracing natural silver while maintaining depth and softness. Instead of covering grey completely, this technique uses strategically placed highlights and lowlights to blend grey hair with your natural or desired tone. The multi-tonal result creates a forgiving grow-out that eliminates harsh root lines and gives you months between



touch-ups while keeping your hair looking dimensional and refined.

Product Recommendation: Kerasilk Hydrating Essence Brightening Shampoo - This lightweight, rinse-out treatment delivers instant, deep hydration while locking in shine for a healthy, polished finish.

Soft Layers and Styles That Hold Their Shape

Modern haircuts emphasize soft, textured layers that create natural movement and volume without requiring extensive styling. These cuts are designed to air-dry beautifully or need just a quick blow-dry to fall into place. Styles like long layers, textured bobs, and shaggy cuts work with your hair's natural texture rather than against it, reducing your reliance on flat irons, curling wands, and round brushes. The key is precision cutting that considers your hair's growth pattern, density, and natural wave, creating a shape that looks intentional and polished as it grows.

Product Recommendation: Goldwell Air Dry BB Cream - The Goldwell StyleSign Smooth Air-Dry BB Cream is a nourishing hair cream that helps to combat frizz while providing the hair with light hold and a soft shine, no matter what texture your hair is! This styling cream is ideal for air-drying your style, but can also be used for blow-drying to help

you create a stunning blow-out every time.

Professional Beauty Products Extend the Life of Your Service

The right beauty products can double the life of your salon and spa services. For hair, color-safe sulfate-free shampoos preserve vibrancy and prevent fading, while dry shampoo extends blowouts by absorbing oil and refreshing volume between washes. Heat protectants shield hair from styling damage, and leave-in treatments maintain moisture and shine. For skincare, professional-grade cleansers, serums, and moisturizers work deeper than drugstore options to maintain the clarity and glow you get from treatments like the Power of 3 Facial. Daily SPF is essential for protecting your skin investment and preventing sun damage. Strategic product use means fewer salon visits, less heat styling, healthier hair, and skin that stays glowing longer.

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Local Business Owners: Don't Overlook Retirement Plans



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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If you're a local business owner, you're juggling many priorities: growing revenue, managing expenses, supporting your team and planning for your own future. What if one tool could help with all these goals?

A workplace retirement plan might be that solution and can, directly or indirectly, offer benefits that extend beyond simple savings.

Double the tax advantages. Starting a retirement plan can deliver immediate tax advantages. For the business, employer contributions are tax-deductible. And as a participant in your company plan, your pretax salary deferrals are excluded from income taxes; your investments within the plan are tax-deferred until distributed. Many plans now offer Roth options that allow tax-free withdrawals in retirement.

Local businesses may also qualify for federal tax credits that help offset startup costs, employee education expenses and plan administration fees. Additional credits may be available for auto-enrollment features and employer contributions made during the plan's first five years.

A competitive edge in hiring. In today's labor market, offering a retirement plan can differentiate your business from competitors and help improve employee retention.

Many plans also provide access to financial education tools and resources, helping your employees make informed decisions about saving, investing and planning for retirement. This support can lead to greater employee satisfaction and productivity, contributing to a positive work environment for your business.

More flexible than state-sponsored options. If you live in a state requiring an employee retirement program, you might be considering a state-sponsored plan. While these programs can provide a starting point, they typically offer fewer investment options, lower contribution limits and limited design flexibility.

Establishing your own workplace retirement plan lets you customize features for your business needs to control administrative costs, set contribution limits and offer employees a wide range of investment options. This added control in plan design can lead to better outcomes for your business and your employees.

Reducing a hidden risk in your own retirement planning. Business owners often have as much as 80% of their net worth tied up in their businesses, according to the Exit Planning Institute. While that demonstrates commitment to success, it also creates significant financial risk to the owner.

Relying solely on a future business sale to fund your retirement can be precarious. Market shifts, timing challenges or limited buyer interest could derail those plans. By building personal assets through your employer-sponsored retirement plan, you can gain financial flexibility and reduce the risk of having your retirement lifestyle depend entirely on one event.

Getting started. With various retirement plan options available, determining which one fits your business best can feel overwhelming.

A qualified financial advisor can help you navigate these decisions, explaining the trade-offs

between different plan types and identifying which option best suits your unique situation. They can also help you understand eligibility requirements and ensure the plan you choose aligns with your business goals and personal financial objectives.

Starting a workplace retirement plan represents an investment in your future, your employees and the long-term success of your business.

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

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Living Healthy

World-Class Eye Surgery Closer to Home:

Why the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford Is Special

BY: ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.

For patients facing cataract surgery, choosing where to have the procedure can feel overwhelming. Many assume the best care requires traveling to a major academic hospital in Boston. In reality, some of the most advanced, safest, and most patient-centered cataract surgery in Massachusetts is happening right here at the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, operated by Milford Franklin Eye Center.

Milford Franklin Eye Center has served the community for more than four decades, earning a reputation for comprehensive care grounded in continuity, accessibility, and physician involvement. Unlike practices that rely on rotating or visiting surgeons, the ophthalmologists here most of them live and they all work in the community, provide emer-

gency coverage, and care for patients before, during, and after surgery. That continuity is a key reason patients trust them.

A major distinction of the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford is that surgery is performed in a fully licensed, Medicare-certified, and QUAD A-accredited ambulatory surgery center—not a standard office. This distinction has important safety and financial benefits.

Office-based cataract surgery often requires patients to pay out-of-pocket office use fees. This is because many insurance companies decline coverage for office-based surgery because of safety concerns for surgeries performed outside accredited centers. At the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, this is not a concern: these charges are covered by insurance. The



center meets strict standards for sterility, anesthesia, staffing, infection control, and emergency preparedness—comparable to hospitals—ensuring patient safety and avoiding unexpected costs.

Patients are encouraged to ask

questions when referred for cataract surgery. They should ask their optometrists whether the ophthalmologist performs surgery in an accredited center or an office, and whether any commercial relationships may influence the referral. Transparency helps patients make informed decisions about safety and cost.

The center is also a regional leader in innovation. It was among the first in Massachusetts to adopt laser-assisted cataract surgery and advanced premium intraocular lenses, helping many patients reduce or eliminate dependence on glasses. More recently, it became the first in the state to implant the Clareon PanOptix Pro trifocal lens, a next-generation implant providing sharp vision at near, intermediate, and distance ranges.

The center also leads in glaucoma care as well. It was the first in the region to offer Direct Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (DSLT), which delivers laser energy without touching the eye, making treatment faster, more comfortable, and precise while maintaining a strong safety profile. With this laser, patients often reduce or eliminate daily eye drops. The center was also the first in New England to use iDose TR, an advanced treatment that delivers sustained-release medication for cataract patients, a milestone covered in a Channel 5 news story.

The center was also the first to install the Unity Cataract System, a fully integrated surgical

platform that combines imaging, fluidics, and phacoemulsification in one system. This allows surgeons greater control, consistency, and efficiency, improving safety and outcomes.

The center remains deeply patient-centered. Cataract surgery is typically performed using topical anesthesia—eye drops rather than injections—combined with gentle IV sedation. Patients are awake but comfortable, and follow-up care is provided by the same surgeons who performed the procedure, reinforcing continuity. Compare this to the sad and scary situation of office-based surgery, where only a pill is given and additional sedation cannot be administered due to the lack of IV access and no anesthesiologist present.

The Cataract Surgery Center of Milford offers a rare combination: hospital-level safety standards, cutting-edge technology, transparent insurance coverage approved by all insurers, and local care. Patients do not need to travel far, go outside their insurance network, or pay out-of-pocket fees to receive exceptional cataract and glaucoma treatment. For many in Milford and surrounding communities, world-class eye care is not only accessible—it is right here at home.

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TOWN MANAGER

continued from page 3

taking time to rest.

This one is a big work in progress. But here's a secret...there's a difference between "right" and "well".

"Right" is being responsive. Never dropping a ball. Always available. Working nights and weekends because the work is never done.

"Well" is showing up whole. Being present, not just productive. Protecting your capacity so you can sustain this for the long haul.

You can do the job "right" and burn out in five years. You can only do it "well" if you learn sustainability.

That took me longer to learn than I'd like to admit.

6. I used to care about being seen as a leader. Now I'm more concerned with others being seen as leaders.

Year one: look at me.

Year ten: look at them.

I don't need to be the one with the answers or the ideas or the credit all the time. What I want now is to watch the people I've developed step into their own.

The spirit of the team you build outlasts every initiative. The leaders you develop are your actual legacy.

Yes, this one, too, is a work in progress. But that shift - from ego to service - might be the most important one I've made.

7. The things that were

DISCUSSION

continued from page 2

The Future of Human Rights and International Law.

Please join the Great Decisions discussion group if you want to share your thoughts, to expand your knowledge about global affairs, or you simply want to read and discuss topics of substance with other adults. The first 10 participants who commit to joining the group will receive a briefing book. Participants who register for a single discussion group will receive a PDF version of the article. Watch the Ashland Public Library website for information about how to register for this discussion series. If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Bravacos at gbravacos@gmail.com.

important to me in year 1 are vastly different than the things that are important to me in year 10.

Year one: proving myself, building things, being seen as competent, making my mark.

Year ten: knowing myself, developing others, trying to rest, staying by choice.

I thought this job was about the town - projects, budgets, services, outcomes.

Turns out it was also about me. Who I was becoming. What was getting exposed. What I had to confront.

The job didn't change. I did.

8. Process became just as important as product.

For years, I measured success by outcomes. Projects completed. Budgets passed. Problems solved.

Somewhere along the way, I started noticing the how. Not just what we built, but how we built it. Not just what we decided, but how we got there.

There's beauty in the process itself...in the conversations, the setbacks, the slow accumulation of trust and understanding. I used to rush past all that to get to the result.

Now I know: the process is where the real work happens.

9. Managing people is more about managing yourself than anything.

This is the one underneath all

Town Manager Coffee Hours

Third Wednesday of the Month at 10 a.m. Ashland Community Center

Each month, you can meet with Town Manager Michael Herbert to discuss the town and its happenings over a cup of coffee! This gives you a great opportunity to get to know our town manager and Ashland a bit better through questions and great conversation.

Upcoming Coffee Hour Dates: Wednesday, Feb. 18

the others.

Every challenge I faced as a leader - the conflicts, the crises, the impossible decisions - ultimately came back to me and the person I was. My need to be right. My need to fix. My need to be seen. My patterns. My triggers. My exhaustion.

The town runs better when I run better.

All my relationships taught me the most important relationship is the one I have with myself.

Leaders who don't learn this eventually hit a wall. I know because I hit it...1-star: Would Not Recommend.



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10. A couple of these last ten years made me old.

I don't mean that metaphorically.

Some years changed my perspective. Made me more wise. I can hold complexity now in ways I couldn't before. I don't need to be right. I can sit with uncertainty better.

But a couple of years burdened me with grief. Months of carrying weight that aged me. I'm not the same person I was.

Some of that is good. Some of it is just heavy.

Both things are true.

Closing:

Here's the paradox I didn't expect: I became a better Town Manager when I stopped needing to be one.

No, that doesn't mean I am leaving tomorrow. But, somewhere in the last year, staying stopped being about what I'd lose if I left. I'm here now by choice, not by need. And that freedom - that lightness - lets me hold the role differently.

Ten years in one place will teach you things that moving on never would. Not about the job. About yourself.

Ten years is long enough that you can't hide behind the learning curve anymore. The role reveals who you actually are - your strengths, your edges, your tendencies. And eventually, you have a choice: keep growing, or move on.

I stayed. And I'm grateful for everything staying taught me.

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Senior Community Center Activities for February

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> or view online.

Programs and events frequently alter as we produce our schedule. We try our best to provide accurate information. We appreciate your patience!

Weather Cancellation Policy

The Community Center will follow the public school system's snow cancellation and delay policy. 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.

Act of Kindness Month

Throughout the month of February. In honor of Act of Kindness month, we invite you to share a kind note or compliment recognizing someone's thoughtful actions. Write the person's name and the act of kindness you would like to acknowledge on a paper heart (provided near the office). All hearts will be displayed on the entrance window for everyone to enjoy.

American Red Cross Blood Drive at Ashland Senior Center

Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 12 - 5 p.m. Donors can schedule an appointment directly at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give>.

[html/drive-results?zipSponsor=Ashland](https://www.ashlandmass.com/html/drive-results?zipSponsor=Ashland)

Donor Promo: Those who come to give blood between Jan. 26 and Feb. 28, 2026, will receive a \$20 e-gift card to a merchant of choice.

CLOSED ON PRESIDENTS' DAY

Monday, Feb. 16

FREE SERVICES

AARP Free Income Tax Preparation

Feb. 3 – April 7, Tuesdays 9 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. and Fridays 9 - 10:45 a.m. To schedule an appointment, you must pick up an intake packet at 162 West Union Street, Ashland. AARP will prepare Simple Returns. No Rental Properties-Depreciations.

Computer Lab

Our newly updated computer lab offers ADA-accessible computers, printing accessibility, and independent learning opportunities such as learning a new language, listening to podcasts or music, or using a quiet space for a virtual meeting with our NEW lending headsets.

Legal Phone Consultation

Friday, Feb. 13 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. With Arthur P. Bergeron, Mirick Law. Call to schedule an appointment.

SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) in person with Lenore Tracy, Thursday, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26 at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m. Appointment needed.

Veterans Office Hours with Richard Sabounjian

Wednesday, Feb. 4 and 18 from 9 - 11:30 a.m. Appointments recommended. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Call to schedule an appointment or to reserve a seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENTERTAINMENT

Digital Literacy Class: Ask the Expert Computer Lab

With Richard Pabst. Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Bring your computer or device problems and issues, and Richard will assist you.

Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 4, Episode 5

Thursday, Feb. 5 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Tea and coffee provided.

Movie with Popcorn: 42-The Jackie Robinson Story (2013) PG-13

Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 1 - 3:10 p.m.

"The Rule of Law"—Understanding Our Federal & State Constitutions with Retired

Judge Michael Fabbri (Part 2 of 3-Part series) Thursday, Feb. 12 from 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

BOARDS, COMMITTEE & COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Ashland Council on Aging (COA) Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 5 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Open to the Public

Friends of the Ashland Council on Aging (FOACOA) Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 5 from 12 - 1 p.m. Open to the public.

Town Manager's Coffee Hour

Wednesday, Feb. 18 from 10 - 11 a.m. All are welcome.

Dull Men's Club with Doc

Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. Coffee and Conversation. Drop ins welcome.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Blood Pressure Clinic

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Clocktown Memory Cafe with music by Stephen McGovern

Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 1 - 2:30 p.m. NEW time and day. Please RSVP to Susan McNulty, smcnulty@ashlandmass.com, or 508-532-7945.

Heart Health & Diet

Wednesday, Feb. 25 from 11 - 12 p.m. with Anne Fitzgerald, RN. Cardiovascular Disease is the #1 health concern among seniors. This talk offers practical, actionable steps to keep your heart strong.

Hearing Aid Cleaning with Hopkinton Audiology

Monday, Feb. 2 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Appointment recommended.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Hearing & Hearing Loss

Wednesday, Feb. 18 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. with Darcy Rappucci, MS, CCCA, Hopkinton Audiology. How to read an audiogram, managing hearing loss, facts about hearing insurance, resources, and technology available to help.

Home Safety Tips for Fall Prevention

Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. with Jennifer Luna, DP-NC, From the Residence at Valley Farm.

Mindful Coloring

First and third Thursdays of the Month at 1:30 p.m.

Mindfulness & Meditation with Mary Green

Thursdays at 11 a.m. \$4 per person suggested donation per class.

Parkinson's Boxing

First and third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 p.m.

Sound Meditation Journey with Sonia Stingo

Monday, Feb. 23 at 10:30 a.m.

ARTS, CRAFTS, SEWING & COOKING

Cook with Chef Lee: Sukiyaki

Thursday, Feb. 12 from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Sukiyaki is a one-pot Japanese meal featuring seared beef, shirataki mushrooms, tofu, onions, and cabbage simmered in a sweet umami broth made of soy sauce, mirin, and sugar. Cost \$5 per person.

Craft Class with Milly: Fairy Light Jar

Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Supplies provided. Call to reserve your seat.

Craft Class with Elissa: Beautiful Watercolor Collage

Friday, Feb. 20 from 10 - 11 a.m. Supplies provided. Call to reserve your seat.

Drop-In Knitting & Crocheting Group

Second and fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 a.m. Bring your current project, share conversations, and enjoy knitting with our group.

Knit Along with Nancy

Second and fourth Thursdays at 1 - 2:30 p.m. Learn to knit projects like a square trivet, hat, scarf, cardigan sweater, and round blanket with Nancy.

Intermediate & Advanced Watercolor Class

Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Some openings. See instructor for details and costs.

Sew with Tobi Fleece Mittens

Friday, Feb. 13 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. All levels of skill welcome. Bring your own sewing machine. Call to reserve your seat.

Sew with Tobi: Create a Decorative Fabric Mobile

Friday, Feb. 27 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. All levels of skill welcome. Bring your own sewing machine. Call to reserve your seat.

EXERCISE

All classes have a suggested donation of \$4 per person, unless otherwise indicated.

Bowling – Ryan's Amusement, Millis

Tuesdays at 9 a.m. Check cost with Bowling Alley.

SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 11

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SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 10

Chair Yoga

Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Exercise with Joni

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

Line Dancing with Lisa

Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

Ping Pong

Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

Tai Chi with Jon

Tuesdays at 11:45 a.m.

Zumba Gold with Kelli

Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

GAMES

Canasta

Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

Chess

Mondays at 1 p.m.

Cribbage

Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

Mahjong

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

Pitch Card Game

Mondays at 1 p.m.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/apl-calendars>

Inclusive & Diverse ROMANCE Book Recommendations

Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 6 - 6:30 p.m.

Science Fiction Book Recommendations with Author Elizabeth Bear

Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 7 - 7:30 p.m.

Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers: John Adams

Friday, Feb. 13, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Fantasy Book Recommendations with Kristin of the Fantasy Cafe

Thursday, Feb. 19, from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

DINING PROGRAMS - Dining Reservations Policy

Paid Lunches: Payment slips and money are placed in the Lunch Payment Box located outside the Main Office. If you cancel, you may either pick up that week or "donate" your lunch.

Entertainment: If you choose to participate in lunch entertainment without eating, the participation cost is \$4 per person.

Free Lunches: Refer to the FREE Lunch Policies. All reservations are made to the Main office. Max: 90.

Birthday Lunch: Celebrations are held on the first Monday of the month. You will receive a FREE lunch, a cupcake, and a scratch ticket. You MUST specify on your reservation that it is your birthday lunch. All reservations must be made by noon on the Thursday before the scheduled dining program.

Ashland Lions Club FREE Breakfast

Thursday, Feb. 5 from 9:30 - 11 a.m. Call 508-881-0140 ext. 1 to reserve your spot.



Ashland Community Center which houses the Ashland's Senior Center. Photo by Wendy Watkins

Veterans' FREE Continental Breakfast with Veterans Services MetroWest

Thursday, Feb. 12 from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. For Veteran plus 1 guest and/or spouse of a deceased Veteran plus 1 guest.

Lunch & Learn: Medicare & Medicaid Scams & Fraud

Monday, Feb. 2 at 12 p.m. Entrée: BLT Sandwich. \$7 per person.

Valentine's Day Lunch with Music

Monday, Feb. 9 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Lasagna. \$7 per person.

Lunch Prepared by Students from Keefe Tech

Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Creamy Dijon Chicken. \$8 per person.

Chinese New Year Celebration Lunch

Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 12 p.m.

Entrée: Chicken with broccoli. \$11 per person.

Lunch with Trivia and Mardi Gras Dessert

Monday, Feb. 23 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Turkey Rachel. \$7 per person.

Lunch & Learn: Prepared by Students from Keefe Tech

Tuesday, Feb. 24. at 12 p.m. Entrée: Tuscan Chicken. \$8 per person.

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Clear the Clutter and Start Fresh This Winter!

Winter's quieter months invite us to slow down, spend more time indoors, and finally tackle the clutter left behind by a busy holiday season — with help from Affordable Junk Removal. It is a natural time to give your home some extra attention by clearing out unused items and reclaiming everyday spaces. "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 a New Year's resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing where to begin with cleaning out your home and that is where Affordable can assist you.

Business spotlight

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

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Deadline is Monday, Feb. 9 2026

Join the Ashland Historical Society on Zoom on Feb. 15

Onslaught—The Wessagusset Incident, presented by Christopher Daley, will take place on Feb. 15 at 2 p.m. The event will be held on Zoom, with the access link posted on our website (<https://www.ashlandhistsociety.com/events/>) and on our social media channels. This program is free and open to the public.

This presentation chronicles the arrival of the pilgrims at Plymouth and the beginnings of their

colony, as well as the little-known arrival of "Weston's Men," a group that began a colony in what is now the town of Weymouth, then known as Wessagusset. The talk will examine the interaction with the natives by the two English groups and look at the factors that led to the bloodletting of 1623, and then a blow-by-blow description of the attack at Wessagusset, followed by a discussion on the far-reaching after effects.

Overnight Parking Ban Reminder

Snow is here! Please remember that overnight parking is prohibited in Ashland from Nov. 1 to March 31. Ashland Police will be enforcing the town bylaw below:

"No person shall allow, permit, or suffer any vehicle registered in his name, other than one acting in an emergency, to be parked

on any street for a period of time longer than one hour between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. of any day during the period from Nov. 1 through March 31 of the following year."

For questions about DPW's winter operations, contact dpw@ashlandmass.com or 508-881-0120.

February 2026 at the Ashland Library

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

The Library will be **CLOSED** on Monday, Feb. 16, for Presidents' Day

ADULT

Virtual - Author Nava Atlas and Cartoonist Bob Eckstein: "Inspired by Cat: Writers & Their Mews(es)" Monday, Feb. 2 at 7 p.m.

In Person - Front Street Readers Book Club Tuesday, Feb. 3 from 11 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Read *The Lido* by Libby Page

Virtual - Unsung Heroes of Civil Rights with Bill Thierfelder Tuesday, Feb. 3 from 7—8:30 p.m. Come celebrate the "other heroes" in the fight for equality.

Virtual - "Heated Rivalry" Discussion: The Book and the Show! Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. If you'd like to discuss with other HR fans, please join us for this super fun conversation!

In Person - Mah Jongg Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. Knowledge of the American version of Mah Jongg rules and your own National Mah Jongg League card is necessary.

Virtual - Environmental Book Club Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 6:30 p.m. Read *Stolen* by Ann-Helén Laestadius.

Virtual - An Evening For Pet Owners - Authors Melanie Kaplan & E.B. Bartles Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. Authors Melanie D.G. Kaplan (*Lab Dog: A Beagle and His Human Investigate the Surprising World of Animal Research*) and E.B. Bartles (*Good Grief: On Loving Pets, Here and Hereafter*) will discuss their new books on important topics of interest to pet owners and animal lovers.

In Person - Paint Night with Ashwini Chitnavis Thursday, Feb. 5 from 5:30—7:30 p.m. We welcome Ashwini Chitnavis to host this session where you learn to paint on canvas. No art experience necessary, just an open mind and a can-do attitude.

Virtual - Swashbuckling Heroines and High Seas Adventures with Novelist Vanessa Riley Thursday, Feb. 5 from 7—8:30 p.m. Register now to embark on a seafaring journey of self-discovery and reclamation of personal power.

Virtual - Romance Book Club Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. Topic: Innocent Hero

Virtual - Author and Historian Helen Fry Discusses "Spymaster: The Man Who Saved MI6" Saturday, Feb. 7 at 2—3:15 p.m. Helen will discuss her book,

Spymaster: The Man Who Saved MI6. Discover the untold story of Thomas Joseph Kendrick, a senior spymaster who saved lives and shaped history during WWII, blending daring spy networks and daring rescues in Nazi Germany, all while operating in the shadows of MI6 secrecy.

In Person - Card Making with Jan Poppendieck Monday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. Jan will teach embossing, die cutting, proper stamping, and the use of equipment, as well as individual and group techniques for creating unique cards.

Virtual - Cooking Demo with Heidi McIndoo: Mini Cheesecakes with Raspberry Sauce Monday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. Just in time for V-Day, something for you and your loved ones! Learn how to make Mini Cheesecakes with Yummy Raspberry Sauce with our favorite chef, Heidi McIndoo!

In Person - Historical Fiction Book Club Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 11 a.m. Read *Let Us March On* by Shara Moon.

Virtual - Historical Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Jane Healey Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 6:30—7 p.m. Join bestselling author, Jane Healey (and Ashland fave!), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of historical fiction out there!

Virtual - Classical Masterworks: Bizet's Carmen with Clint Edwards Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 7—8:15 p.m. Bizet's Carmen. Exploring the life of composer Georges Bizet and the music he created for his operatic masterpiece "Carmen."

Virtual - Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @redreadreviews Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 7:30—8 p.m. Join Jody Blanchette (aka @redreadreviews), monthly, for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of horror and thrillers out there!

Virtual: Inclusive & Diverse ROMANCE Book Recommendations with Read My Lips Boston Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 6—6:30 p.m. We are super excited to be partnering with the bookstore owners of Read My Lips Boston for this special series! Hear about the best ROMANCE book recommendations with BIPOC/LGBTQ+/Neurodivergent/Disabled, etc. characters or

by representative authors. Join book store owners (and twin sisters!), Lily and Hannah Barrett, quarterly for 30 minutes of pure romance book recommendations - that are by diverse authors or have inclusive storylines!

Virtual - The Art Spy - The Extraordinary Untold Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Valland Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. Author Michelle Young will discuss her new book, *The Art Spy: The Extraordinary Untold Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Valland*.

Virtual: SciFi Book Recommendations with Author Elizabeth Bear Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7—7:30 p.m. Join bestselling author, Elizabeth Bear, quarterly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of Science Fiction books out there!

In Person - Women's Wisdom Circle Thursday, Feb. 12 from 6—7:30 p.m. For this session, Paula Toppliffe will lead a discussion on: Self Love and Appreciation: a valentine for yourself.

Virtual - Sally Snowman, the last USCG Keeper of Boston Light, and Husband Jay Thomson Thursday, Feb. 12 from 7—8:30 p.m. A PowerPoint presentation presents photos of Boston Light's 307 years of history and a few anecdotes about Sally's experiences as a 21st-century keeper.

Virtual - Declutter series with Jamie Novak: Treasures You Love - an easy step to appraise Thursday, Feb. 12 from 7—8:30 p.m. Log on for this month's declutter club Zoom when declut-

tering humorist Jamie Novak shares how to easily have your treasures appraised. Then join the live guided tidy-up for a quick jumpstart!

Virtual - Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers: John Adams Friday, Feb. 13 at 10:30 a.m. Welcome to our year-long series in which "America's Preeminent Presidential Doodler", Heather Rogers, shares facts, factoids, and fun illustrations about the presidents of these United States. This month we're all about John Adams.

In Person - Mystery Book Club Friday, Feb. 13 at 12 p.m. Read *What The Dead Know* by Laura Lippman

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion Friday, Feb. 13 from 7—8 p.m. Watch *Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood*.

In Person - Cook Book Club Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 5 p.m. Theme: Date Night (no specific book.)

Virtual - Heart Healthy Cooking with Empty Nest Kitchen Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 7—8:15 p.m.

In Person - Bio/Memoir Book Club Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 11 a.m. Read *How to Say Babylon* by Safiya Sinclair.

Virtual - The Political Debate Over The Size & Use of U.S. Military Forces During The Civil War Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. Author Cecily N. Zander will give a presentation based on her latest book, *The Army Under Fire: The Politics of Antimilitarism in the Civil War Era*.

Virtual - Thrive! Caregiver Education series - Brain Health with Cindy Shultz Thursday, Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. Check out the website for more info.

Virtual - Fantasy Book Recs with Kristen of the Fantasy Cafe Thursday, Feb. 19 at 6:30—7p.m. Join blogger, Kristen, of Fantasy Cafe for this quarterly session of her recommendations of some of the best Fantasy books out there!

Virtual - What's Your Next Adventure? A Celebration of Journeys Great and Small! Thursday, Feb. 19 from 7—8:15 p.m. Come hear author, professor, and adventurer James Nehring explain how everyone, regardless of age or ability, can experience the thrills and personal empowerment of overcoming a challenge. Learn how you can create and complete your dream adventure on your own terms!

Virtual - Inclusive and Diverse Book Recs with Bookstagrammer @sometimestyleealynnreads Thursday, Feb. 19 from 7:30—8 p.m. Join bookstagrammer, Leelynn Brady (aka @sometimestyleealynnreads), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - any genre, as well as YA and Middle Grade books, as long as they are by diverse authors or have inclusive storylines!

Virtual - (how to avoid) "Death in Glacier National Park" with Author Randi Mine-tor Monday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. Be

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continued on page 15

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Ashland Lions Club February 2026 Update

Coats for Kids and Families

Ashland Lions Club partnered with Anton's Cleaners for the Coats for Kids and Families Drive to collect warm winter coats for adults and children. Due to your generous donations, we were able to collect over 600 coats for people in need this season! Thanks to Focus on Fitness, Cleaner's Choice, Ashland Police and Fire departments, and the AHS Leos Club for setting up collection stations and supporting our coat drive!

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, Feb. 7. 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.

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!

Lion Dan Mitchell, Ashland Lions Club

Recent Ashland Safety Log

The Ashland Police Department responded to a wide range of calls between Jan. 1 and Jan. 4, including area and building checks, medical emergencies, motor vehicle stops, parking enforcement, noise complaints, well-being checks, motor vehicle crashes, assists to citizens, lost and found property, disabled vehicles, 911 calls, and arrests.

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Entries of note include:

- Jan. 1, 12:12 a.m.,** Pond St., area check; checked OK.
- Jan. 1, 12:18 a.m.,** Eliot St., medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 1, 12:34 a.m.,** Eastbluff Rd., noise complaint; services rendered.
- Jan. 1, 1:23 a.m.,** Front St., motor vehicle stop; verbal warning issued.
- Jan. 1, 3:47 a.m.,** Heritage Ave., parking issue; checked OK.
- Jan. 1, 4:17 a.m.,** Oak St., parking issue; parking ticket issued.
- Jan. 1, 5:46 a.m.,** Old Connecticut Path, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 1, 5:59 a.m.,** Main St., medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 1, 9:23 a.m.,** Thurston Lane, parking issue; services rendered.
- Jan. 1, 9:40 a.m.,** Edgewood Drive, parking issue; services rendered.
- Jan. 1, 10:58 a.m.,** Indian Brook Road, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 1, 12:21 p.m.,** Cedar Street area, motor vehicle stop; verbal warning issued.
- Jan. 1, 3:47 p.m.,** Fern Crossing, 911 call logged.
- Jan. 1, 4:31 p.m.,** Algonquin Trail, assist citizen; unable to locate.
- Jan. 1, 4:45 p.m.,** Presidents Row, medical emergency; referred to another agency.
- Jan. 1, 5:37 p.m.,** Robert Hill Way, towed motor vehicle.
- Jan. 1, 11:07 p.m.,** Joanne Drive, parking issue; parking ticket issued.
- Jan. 2, 12:56 a.m.,** Pond St., 911 call logged.
- Jan. 2, 2:28 a.m.,** Union St., prisoner release. A 37-year-old Ashland male was released following arrest on a charge of assault and battery on a family or household member.
- Jan. 2, 9:25 a.m.,** Main St., medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 2, 10:32 a.m.,** Shore Road, medical emergency; medical re-

- fusal.
- Jan. 2, 10:51 a.m.,** Eliot Street and Prospect Street, motor vehicle crash; report to follow.
- Jan. 2, 11:21 a.m.,** Joanne Drive, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 2, 1:17 p.m.,** Cirrus Drive, well-being check; checked OK.
- Jan. 2, 2:14 p.m.,** Oak Street and Cordaville Road, motor vehicle crash; report to follow.
- Jan. 2, 3:02 p.m.,** State Park Road, lost or found property; services rendered.
- Jan. 2, 5:47 p.m.,** Pond Street, motor vehicle stop; arrest made. A 40-year-old Framingham male was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.
- Jan. 2, 6:44 p.m.,** Pond Street, disabled motor vehicle; services rendered.
- Jan. 2, 7:19 p.m.,** Femia Road, assist citizen.
- Jan. 3, early morning,** town-wide, multiple area and building checks conducted at schools, plazas, churches, parks, and commercial properties; all checked OK.
- Jan. 3, 6:46 a.m.,** Central Street, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 3, 9:18 a.m.,** West Union Street, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 3, 12:01 p.m.,** Main Street area, animal control issue logged.
- Jan. 3, afternoon,** Union Street and Pleasant Street, multiple motor vehicle stops; traffic warnings issued.
- Jan. 3, 4:19 p.m.,** Union Street, suspicious activity; services rendered.
- Jan. 4, 12:32 a.m.,** Park Road, medical emergency; patient transported.
- Jan. 4, 1:41 a.m.,** Central Street, noise complaint; services rendered.
- Jan. 4, 12:26 p.m.,** Eliot Street, motor vehicle crash; report to follow.
- Jan. 4, 2:44 p.m.,** Main Street, motor vehicle crash with arrest. A 44-year-old Ashland male was charged with disorderly conduct, assault and battery, and multiple counts of assault with a dangerous weapon.
- Jan. 4, 5:21 p.m.,** Union Street, prisoner release related to the earlier arrest.
- Jan. 4, 9:19 p.m.,** West Union Street, disturbance; services rendered.
- Jan. 4, 10:19 p.m.,** Whittemore Drive, motor vehicle lockout; services rendered.



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continued from page 13

ready for your upcoming summer vacation plans with this important and, probably, humorous presentation!

Virtual - Matrix Planting for Home Gardeners with Deborah Chud Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 7—8:30 p.m. Matrix planting is naturalistic gardening at its purest. It's been the hottest professional design trend over the past few years, but it hasn't gained much traction among home gardeners. Why? I believe it's because people don't know where to start. This presentation provides a starting point.

Virtual - In Conversation with Romance Author & Illustrator Venessa Vida Kelley Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. Bring your questions as we'll be having a rapid-fire AMA session about Venessa's books, writing process, illustrations, and what we can look forward to next from them.

Virtual - Burglary At The Louvre - How Can Writers Top This? Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. In this presentation, the Curators of Crime will examine the public's fascination with the recent burglary of Napoleonic jewels at the Louvre and discuss how, as authors, they have used the same elements in their books.

Virtual - "The Invention of Charlotte Brontë" with Author Graham Watson: Take Three! Thursday, Feb. 26 at 2 p.m. Join us, once again, as Graham discusses Charlotte's life - the myths vs. reality - as well as his own research and writing of this fantastic book!

Virtual - Art on Thursdays-January - The People's Painter: Jacob Lawrence Thursday, Feb. 26 from 7—8:15 p.m. By examining Jacob Lawrence's masterful storytelling technique and his role in the Harlem Renaissance, this program reveals how Lawrence became not just a chronicler of American history but a revolutionary force who expanded the very definition of what American art could be and whose stories it could tell.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion Friday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. Watch *Live and Become*.

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
Dungeons & Dragons: The

Next Campaign for ages 8-12

Wednesday, Feb. 4, Wednesday, Feb. 11, Wednesday, Feb. 25, from 4:30—6 p.m. Join the next campaign of Dungeons & Dragons and embark on an exciting journey into the world of role-playing games. You must have attended January's Build Your Character workshop (if you are completely new to this) to participate in this campaign. Space is very limited, and registration is required.

Coding Class for Kids For grades K-5
Saturday, Feb. 7 at 12:15 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 14 at 12:15 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 19 at 6 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 28 at 12:15 p.m.

Gear up for a tech-tastic adventure with our Coding Class for Kids! Every other Saturday, kids from Kindergarten through grade 5 will dive into the thrilling world of coding, where imagination meets innovation. Space is limited, and registration is required.

Off the Page Movie Club: The Lorax For families

Saturday, Feb. 7 at 1—3 p.m.
This month, we'll be highlighting *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss and its 2012 movie adaptation.

LEGO Club!

Monday, Feb. 9 at 4:30 p.m.
For kids in grades K-3. Registration is required, and space is limited.

Little Picassos Club Grades K-2

Tuesday, Feb. 10, from 4:30—5:15 p.m. We'll paint, sculpt, and everything in between—just bring your creativity! Registration required.

Art Club Grades 3-6
Thursday, Feb. 12 at 4:30 p.m.

The perfect place to hang out with other creative kids and hone in on your skills! Registration required.

Saturday Stories: I love Reading Edition For families with young children

Saturday, Feb. 14, from 10:30—11 a.m. Join us for a special Valentine's Day edition of our regular Saturday morning storytime! No registration required!

Drop-In Fantasy Craft: DIY Magic Wands Grades K-5

Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 11 a.m. Craft a fantastical wand using Model Magic, gemstones, feathers, multicolored string, and other goodies. Drop in, no registration required!

Dog Man "Crack the Case" Mystery Ages 7-12

Wednesday, Feb. 18 from 11 a.m.—12:30 p.m. No registration required.

Flicknic: Dog Man For families
Wednesday, Feb. 18, from 12:30—2:30 p.m. Feel free to bring your own blanket to sit on as you watch Dog Man fight crime and embark on zany adventures. No registration required!

Edible Science Experiments Grades 1-5

Thursday, Feb. 19 at 11 a.m. Children will explore fizzy reactions, flavor mapping, and sweet versus salty tastes while building confidence, curiosity, and excitement for learning. Registration is required as space is limited.

Rainforest Reptiles Show For families

Friday, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. This is a great opportunity to get to see and learn about different kinds of animals! Registration is required as space is limited.

History of Nintendo with One Up Games For kids & teens ages 8 and up

Saturday, Feb. 21, from 10 a.m.—1 p.m. Nintendo consoles, from NES to the Switch, will be available to play throughout the exhibit on old-school CRT TVs. No registration required.

Pokémon Cards with Legendary Trio Collectables Grades K-6
Saturday, Feb. 21, from 2—3:30 p.m. Space is limited, and registration is required.

Juntos en la Biblioteca: Actividades en Español en Familia For families Para familias

Monday, Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m.

Pokémon Club Grades 2-6
Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 6:30 p.m. Come hang out and make new Pokémon friends! Registration required.

Little Crafters
Thursday, Feb. 26 at 10:30 a.m. For families with children ages 0-5. No registration required.

WEEKLY STORYTIMES (no registration):

Tuesday Clocktown Rockers! Ages 2-5 with a caregiver. Tuesdays from 10:30-11 a.m.

Baby Time Ages 0-3 with a caregiver. Wednesdays from 10:30—11 a.m.

ABC Adventures For ages 3-6 with a caregiver. Fridays from 10:30—11 a.m.

Saturday Stories For families with young children. Saturdays at 10:30—11 a.m.

RECURRING WEEKLY PROGRAMS:

Project ABC: Play, Learn & Grow Ages 0-5

Mondays from 11 a.m.—12 p.m. Packed with creative activities, playful learning, and joyful

moments, this structured program will help your child build confidence and get excited about their educational journey. Registration is required, and is found on their website www.projectabc.org.

TEEN:

History of Nintendo with One Up Games For kids and teens ages 8 and up

Saturday, Feb. 21, from 10 a.m.—1 p.m. All Nintendo consoles, from the NES to the Switch, will be available to play on old-school CRT TVs throughout the exhibit. No registration required.

Greater Ashland Lions Club

February Highlights: Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, and Presidents' Day

Our annual Coat Drive collected many warm winter coats for children and adults. Thank you to all who donated coats. We know they were appreciated.

Our Trivia / Quiz Night this year will be on April 17, so start getting your team together. Tickets are \$20 a person (eight players maximum to a table). Call Lion Ro at 508-881-4743 to purchase yours. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people—especially women—are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health. It is important to know about the risks of heart disease and the importance of identifying and managing heart-related health conditions. Here are a couple of websites with information you can use: <https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/php/heart-month/index.html> and on Facebook: Million Hearts®

Do you have any used eyeglasses hanging around? We'll

take them! Please bring them to the Police Station (located in the Public Safety Building at 12 Union St), Market Basket (Pond Street/Rte.126), the VFW (at 311 Pleasant Street), or the Town Hall (Main Street).

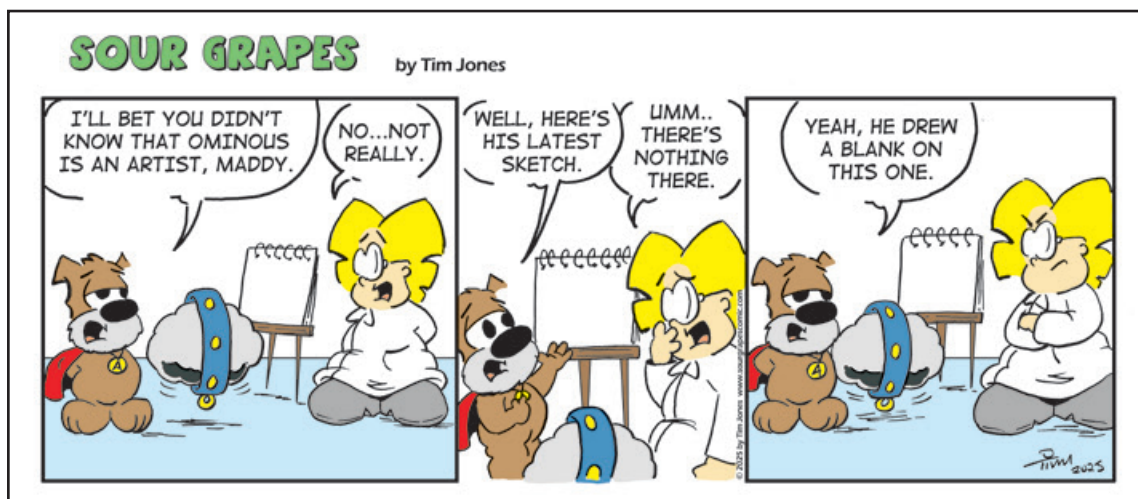
Our club still collects Pull-Tabs. They go to the Shriners, who, in turn, send them to be melted down. The funds received by the Shriners support many of their events.

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!

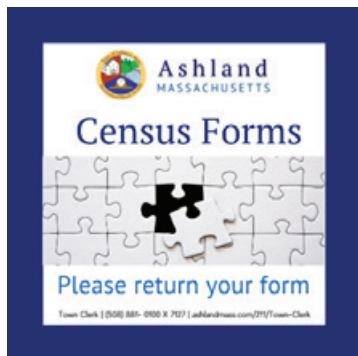
Submitted: Lion Rosalie Porter, 2nd VP



Ashland Local Updates

Dog License Registration is open!

Please register your dog before April 15. A \$50 fine will be added to each dog license after this date. The fee for intact dogs is \$20 per dog. The fee for spayed or neutered dogs is \$15 per dog, but if you (the owner) are seventy (70) years of age or older, then the tag is no charge. Don't forget to bring an updated rabies certificate with you. Please note that the free license does not apply to kennels. You may license your dog using the Town of Ashland's online system or by dropping off the form and payment to Town Hall. If you no longer reside in Ashland, or your dog is deceased, please contact the Town Clerk's Office by email, townclerkoffice@ashlandmass.com, or call 508-881-0100 ext. 7127 so records are updated.



special barcode printed on the form just for your address. It is mandatory to complete the census form, and the process is very easy. Simply make any changes, sign the form, and return it to the Town Clerk's office as soon as possible. Be sure to list everyone in the household, including children. If you do not return your Census Form, you risk being made inactive on the voting list per Massachusetts General Law. This is a reminder that the Census form does not register you to vote, nor does it change your name. You must re-register to vote under your new name for the changes to be made. If, for some reason, you do not receive

your census form, please visit the Town Clerk's office, and they will be happy to assist you.

Ashland Recreation

Did you know Ashland Recreation offers great programs for all ages? Here's a small sample of what's coming up. Visit their website to see the full list of programs available in town! Go to: ashlandma.myrec.com

ARC Kindness Club is a welcoming group where kids work together to spread kindness at school and in the community. Through fun projects and simple acts like making cards, helping others, or sharing a smile, members learn how small actions can make a big difference. The club encourages friendship, empathy, and a positive attitude while showing kids the power of being kind. Kindness Club begins Monday, Feb. 2, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m., Grades K-5.

Charcuterie Board Workshop Join us for a fun, hands-on workshop where you'll learn how to build a beautiful charcuterie

board with Red Apron Charcuterie! We'll cover simple tips for arranging, styling, and pairing meats and cheeses. Each attendee will get their own platter to take home. This event is on Thursday, Feb. 5, 6:30 - 8 p.m., ages 16 and up.

No School, No Problem! Friday, March 20, is a no-school day, and we are ready for some fun. Join us for an adventure to Sloomoo Boston if you are a slime enthusiast.

Vaccines for Children Program 2026

The Ashland Board of Health secured a grant from the MetroWest Health Foundation for 2026 to continue and expand the Vaccines for Children Program. This program provides state-mandated vaccines at no cost to uninsured or underinsured students in our community. Children without health insurance experience lower rates of vaccination than children with private insurance or Medicaid. Uninsured children born in 2019-2020 were 10 times

more likely to have received no vaccines by age 2 than those privately insured.

Many of the vaccines we provide will offer lifetime immunity for the child, leveling the field with regards to vaccine-preventable diseases, and removing obstacles to school enrollment. Fewer illnesses reduce school absenteeism and help keep the community at large protected from illness. Children can enroll in classes more quickly because we can provide vaccine appointments promptly. When additional vaccines are required for grades 7 and 11, we provide them at no cost as well, ensuring uninterrupted school attendance and compliance with state mandates. Our Public Health nurse works closely with the school nurses in our region to ensure a streamlined process for providing students with the vaccines they need as quickly as possible.

We are extremely pleased to continue to provide this service in our community, and very grateful to the MetroWest Health Foundation for supporting this program.

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 AZ ROC344027 AR 366920925, CA1035795, CT HIC.0671520, DC 420223000087, FL CBC056678, ID RCE-51604, IA C127230, LA 559544, MD MHIC111225, MA 213292, MI 262300331, 262300330, 262300329, 262300328, 262300318, 262300173, MN IR810524, MT 266192, NE 50145-24, NV 86990, NJ 13VH13285000, NM 408693, ND 47304, OR 218294, PA PA179643, RI GC-41354, TN 10981, UT 10783658-5501, VT 174.0000871, VA 2705169445, WA LEAFFLH763PG, WV WV056912. *The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the "#1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America.

Sports

No Legs, No Problem

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

At the young age of five, Jie Doyon became a bilateral amputee, having both his legs removed above the knee. While dealing with the loss, recovery, and finding a purpose are common amongst double amputees, many find strength in sports, community, and inspiring others. Doyon did just that by participating in sled hockey, wheelchair basketball, track, and karate.

"I had mixed feelings at first," his mother Heather Doyon said. "But it was good for him overall as he no longer had the nerve pain, and he felt so much better without that pain. Prior to the surgery, he couldn't work as he couldn't put any pressure on his legs."

Following the taking of his legs, Doyon had to deal with the other children saying terrible things about him, but over the years, it has gotten better, and those kids are realizing who Doyon is and what he is about. Despite all the original criticism, Doyon noted that he was okay with it and didn't let it bother him.

After becoming involved in all the adapted sports, which are different from the Special Olympics in the fact that they are fully competitive sports like the Paralympics, he came across wrestling by mistake.

"Coming out of after-care last year, he saw the high school kids wrestling in the gym and became interested and immediately told me that he wanted to try it," his mother said. "Jie wants to try everything and loves to compete. When the coach heard us talking, he came over to us and gave me Kyle (Grady's) contact information."

Grady is a Principal in the Nashoba Regional School District, but he is also the Direc-

tor of the Ashland Jr. Clockers Wrestling Program, where the young Doyon would begin his wrestling journey.

"As a mother, I am always nervous when he wants to try something new, but I have to let him go and figure it out for himself," Heather said. "I don't want to be the one who stands in his way."

Jie was glad his mother gave him the opportunity.

"When I saw them in the gym, I was wondering what it was all about," he said. "I was really interested in doing a sport in Ashland, and it was not going to be a problem for me to try, it is a little tricky though, being only in my second year."

According to his mother, Jie adapts well, jumped right in on day one, and has been picking up the sport. His Coaches are not worried about him winning; they want him to learn by losing and focus on getting better.

"He is still trying to figure out the moves, but he is definitely one who is up for a challenge," his mother said. "For the most part, he knows it's going to be a learning curve, especially since this is his first sport dealing with able-bodied participants. He's a perfectionist."

While only in his second year with the Junior Clockers, the coaching staff had never really encountered anyone like Jie and were unsure where to go next with his training.

"He has fully embraced the sport of wrestling with tremendous enthusiasm," Grady said. "The coaching staff has been inspired by his dedication, but we're pretty much exhausted our thoughts on how to best support his development as a wrestler and athlete."

With that thought in mind, Grady and the Junior Clockers contacted Rohan Murphy, a

double-leg amputee who wrestled growing up in New Jersey and then continued the sport as a walk-on at Penn State, where he wrestled for three years for the Nittany Lions. Murphy is one of East Islip, NJ's most decorated wrestlers, being named a three-time all-league and two-time county wrestler.

Originally, Murphy began participating in Paralympic weightlifting at Penn State. In 2006, at the IPC World Powerlifting Championship in Busan, South Korea, he lifted 281.1 pounds, breaking the previous Paralympic record of 270 pounds, which he had set earlier in the year. Nowadays, Murphy is a motivational speaker, and Grady got him to come talk to Ashland's Junior Clocker Wrestlers.

"I wanted him to talk to our wrestling room, but more importantly giving Jie someone to serve as a role model," Grady said. "He showed the staff and wrestlers how to take guys down without footwork and how having no legs can benefit you on the mat."

Being able to meet someone much like himself, Doyon was beyond ecstatic.

"I was really excited to meet him," Jie said. "He got on the mat and taught me some moves."

Although only in his second year in the sport, the young wrestler is looking to get better and attend some wrestling camps in the near future, where he can hopefully figure out how to pin an opponent and come off the mat with a win.

His overall dream is to not only continue to improve his wrestling skills but would also like to become a Paralympic sled hockey player for Team USA. Being an incredibly determined individual, Jie Doyon should one day accomplish his dream.



Jie Doyon and Rohan Murphy. Courtesy photo

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Ashland Garden Club Leadership News

After eight years as President of AGC, Gretchen Bravacos told the AGC members that she did not want to run for another year.

She appointed a Nominating Committee whose mission was to identify one or two members who would be willing to assume the role of President in time for elections to be held at the Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, or as it turns out, fortunately, the Nominating committee found that while many members were committed to helping with various aspects of the President's role, no one person wanted to assume the role of President.

As a result of input from various Garden Club members and her many years in leadership roles in the Master Gardener's organization, Chris Gatti, chairman of the AGC Nominating Committee, brainstormed with the Committee members with the goal of developing a more collaborative model of leadership for AGC.

Over the past six months, the Nominating Committee has continued to gather information through direct conversations with AGC members and

the results of several versions of a survey. Although the new collaborative model of leadership is not yet finalized, the work that Chris Gatti and her Committee have energized the AGC members who look forward to serving as a member of the newly defined Leadership Team, or the rotating Meeting Facilitator, or the Garden Oversight committee, etc.

Then again, maybe this new model of leadership will function best as a fluid concept that evolves as the members work together to accomplish the goal of beautifying the Town and educating the public about all aspects of gardening.

The Ashland Garden Club meets on the second Saturday of each month, September through June, at the Ashland Library in the lower-level meeting room, 10 - 11 a.m. Meetings are open to the public. Recently, we welcomed two new AGC members: Donna Huckaby and John Cahill. Our meetings are structured so that there is time for members to ask questions and/or advice from each other. We offer several educational opportunities free to the public.

'Ask a Master Gardener Panel'

Wednesday, March 25 from 6 - 7 p.m.

Spend an evening with three local Master Gardeners who will be available to answer your questions on a wide range of gardening topics. Whether you are unsure about planting perennials for the best results, wondering how to care for hydrangeas, looking for best practices for spring fertilizing, or trying to manage common critters such as deer, rabbits, and skunks, they can help. The gardeners will also share recommendations for the most useful gardening and horticultural resources to support your success throughout the growing season. It will be held in the Schiesske Large Meeting Room at the Ashland Public Library, 66 Front Street, Ashland, MA 01721.

About our Panelists:

Chris Gatti is a Certified Massachusetts Master Gardener who graduated from the Fall Massachusetts MG Class in 2016. Chris has spent her career working in education, training, and organizational development roles, driven by a strong love of learning. She was an elementary school teacher, a corporate trainer, and then led her own consulting and train-

ing firm for 25 years. She has always gardened, influenced by growing up next to her Italian grandfather's tomato farm. After serving on the MMGA Board of Directors for 8 years, she continues to volunteer for both the Ashland Garden Club and the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association. She is also a member of the Trustees of the Reservation, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and the New England Botanical Garden.

Elena Lapitsky is a Certified Massachusetts Master Gardener who graduated from the Massachusetts MG Class in 2021. Elena retired after nineteen years at BC, teaching the Russian language, and before that, in several other High schools. After her retirement from teaching, she wanted to continue with her second passion: gardening. Being born in a small country by the Baltic Sea, Latvia, in its capital Riga, a city that was founded in the 13th century, Elena grew up surrounded by many beautiful gardens and parks, which were influenced by the English garden style. The Museum of Nature was right next to her house, with annual

flower shows that she loved to attend. The Botanical Garden was also a place to spend time in the middle of nasty winters, and picking amber by the sea after high tides was a routine activity during summer. She is a member of the American Horticultural Society, the Audubon Society, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Elena is a very active member of the Ashland Garden Club and offers tours of her amazing "Garden on the Rocks" in Ashland.

Jonathan D. Stein is a Certified Massachusetts Master Gardener who graduated from the Massachusetts MG Class in 2021. Jonathan has spent most of his adult life in health care, now in his 46th year as a practicing chiropractor. Jonathan is a lifelong gardener influenced by his mother's love of gardening. He is a member of the Ashland Garden Club, the Ashland Community Gardens, the American Hosta Society, the New England Hosta Society, the American Conifer Society, and the New England Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. He teaches a number of adult education classes on various gardening topics and runs a small fine gardening company. In his home garden, he is interested in dwarf conifers and dwarf Japanese maples, as well as his woodland garden.

We are pleased to be partnering with the Ashland to bring this program to our community. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Ashland Public Library. Registration is requested.



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Real Estate Corner

New Tax Laws for Sellers



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REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

If you're selling a home for \$1 million or more, it's vital to be aware of the tax laws that will affect you.

Effective Nov. 1, 2025, Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) regulations require withholding on certain non-resi-

dent sales of Massachusetts real property that has a gross sale price of \$1 million or more. The regulation, 830 CMR 62B.2.4, is designed to ensure the collection of personal income tax or corporate excise tax from non-resident sellers who might not otherwise file a Massachusetts tax return. (To read the full regulation, visit [mass.gov/regulations/830-CMR-62b24-withholding-on-sales-of-massachusetts-real-estate](https://www.mass.gov/regulations/830-CMR-62b24-withholding-on-sales-of-massachusetts-real-estate).)

What qualifies as a non-resident for this purpose? Non-resident sellers (or other transferors of property) include individuals and business corporations with no continuing Massachusetts business presence. A resident includes those domiciled in the commonwealth and those who maintain a permanent place of abode and spend more than 183 days of the taxable year in

Massachusetts. A person is a full-year Massachusetts resident if they (1) have been a resident from Jan. 1 of the year in which the real estate transfer occurs through the closing, and (2) represent that they will continue to be a resident after closing.

The standard withholding amount is 4% of the gross sale price, plus an additional 4% on the portion exceeding the millionaire's tax threshold. The Massachusetts millionaire's tax threshold for 2026 is \$1,107,950. This amount is adjusted annually for inflation. Sellers can elect to use an alternative calculation, which involves withholding on the estimated net gain from the sale, at a rate of 5% for individuals or 8% for corporations.

A withholding agent, usually your attorney or your settlement agent, is responsible

for collecting and remitting the tax. Withholding agents must file a Nonresident Real Estate Withholding (NRW) Form and Transferor's Certification (including the settlement statement from the closing) and remit payment of the withheld funds to the DOR within 10 days of closing.

Certain transferors are exempt from withholding, but an NRW Form and Transferor's Certification must still be filed to claim the exemption.

Key exempt transferors include full-year Massachusetts residents; certain pass-through entities (excluding single-member LLCs), publicly traded partnerships, and corporations with a continuing business presence in Massachusetts; and estate and resident trusts. Some transactions qualify for full or partial exemption, including spousal

transfers and like-kind (Section 1031) exchanges.

For more information on this new regulation and a full list of exemptions, visit the Greater Boston Association of Realtors at [gbrea.com/GBAR/Sites/GBAR/News/General_News/2025/OOS-Sales-Tax-Regulations.aspx](https://www.gbrea.com/GBAR/Sites/GBAR/News/General_News/2025/OOS-Sales-Tax-Regulations.aspx). As always, your agent is your expert — when in doubt, ask questions!

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Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
01/13/2026	28-30 Olive St.	\$911,000
01/09/2026	120 Prospect St	\$650,000
12/29/2025	379 Captain Eames Cir.	\$630,000
12/19/2025	3 Blueberry Hill Ln.	\$897,000
12/17/2025	49 Prospect St.	\$771,000

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

The 4-bed, 3-bath, 2,462-square-foot home at 3 Blueberry Hill in Ashland recently sold for \$897,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com



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Meet Pooka & Chance – Two Shy Souls Ready to Blossom

Pooka and Chance are an adorable bonded pair of 11-year-old ladies who found their way back to us after their beloved owner passed away. These two senior sweethearts are gentle, loving souls who just need time, patience, and kindness to truly shine.

At first, Pooka (a sleek black panther) and Chance (a beautiful tabby) were understandably scared; they would hide and only allow pets in their “safe spots.” But with patience, consistency, and a little love, they’ve started to open up in the most heartwarming ways.

Chance was the first to come out of her shell. She now enjoys gentle pets, seeks out affection, and even “talks” to her foster when she’s happy. She’s learned to trust and now looks forward to spending time with her human.

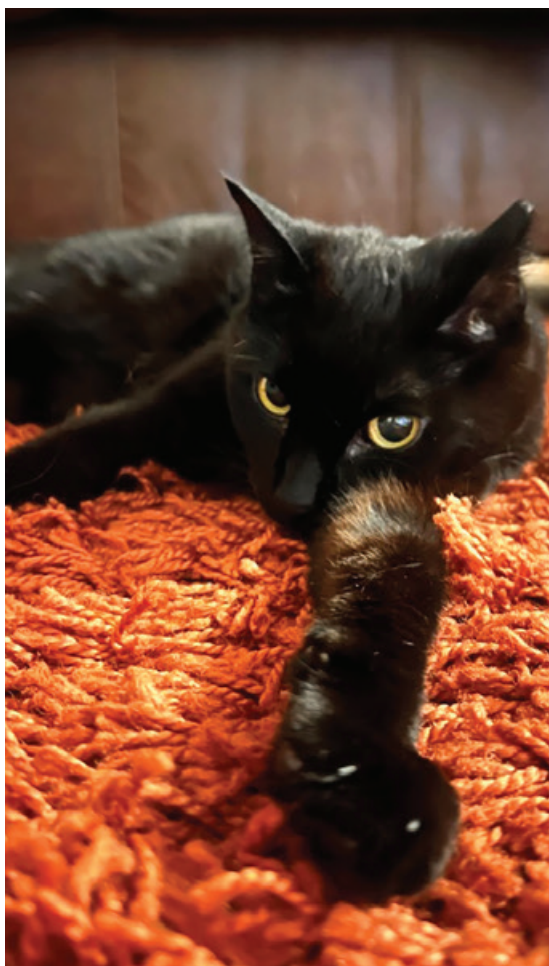
Pooka is a bit more reserved, but she’s equally full of love once she feels safe. She follows her sister’s lead, watching carefully be-

fore deciding to join in for pets or playtime. When she’s really comfortable, she’ll even roll over for a belly rub, especially when she’s up in her favorite cat tree throne!

Both girls love treats, sparkly puff balls, and playing together, especially at night, when they become little explorers, batting toys and watching the world outside the window. While they’re not lap cats (yet!), their progress has been incredible, and seeing them grow braver each day is truly rewarding.

Pooka and Chance are looking for a quiet, patient, and understanding forever home where they can continue to build confidence and enjoy life together. With time, love, and trust, they’ll show you just how sweet and special they really are.

Adoptions are by appointment only. If you are interested in meeting Pooka and Chance, please fill out our online adoption application www.shelterluv.com/matchme/adopt/MWHS/Cat.



Pooka. Courtesy photo



Chance. Courtesy photo



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