

localtownpages Franklin

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

February 1, 2026

Franklin Garden Club Keeps Town Green

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

As Kermit the Frog once said, it's not easy being green, especially in the wintertime, but members of the Franklin Garden Club seem determined to try! Although the club took a break from its monthly meetings last month after its sold-out holiday greens sale in December, monthly programming is back on this month. On February 3rd, the Franklin Garden Club will present a program, "Deep in the Heart of Winter – New Age Floral Designs," and then on March 3rd, they'll tackle "Flowers, Health



and Healing."

Meetings take place at the Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, from 6–8:30 p.m.

"The Garden Club, founded in 1987, offers many educational programs, and one does not have to be a Master Gardener to join. Meetings provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about various aspects of gardening from experts and to exchange informa-



Franklin Garden Club's annual sale supports their work around town as well as an annual scholarship. Photos by Eileen Smith.

tion. We welcome anyone who is interested to attend," say Club Co-Presidents Eileen Smith and Janice Ced-erquist. Future programs this year include April 7 – Craft Project;

May 5 – Orchid 101; and a Year-End Social in June.

"I think we sold out by 11 a.m.," says Mary

GARDEN CLUB
continued on page 2

See a Bobcat? Take a Pic, but Keep Your Distance

By GRAYDON WEBB

According to several reports around social media, it seems there may be some unnerving visitors in the area: bobcats! While it may seem like a creature such as this would be out of place in your town, wildlife experts say bobcats can be seen

all across Massachusetts. In fact, they're the only wild cat species still present in the state! In order to stay safe this winter, we wanted to give you some quick tips that could keep you - and

BOBCAT

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This trail cam caught Broadmoor Sanctuary's first confirmed bobcat sighting in over 15 years, although locally, folks have been posting their own pics on social media. Photo used courtesy of Jonathan Davis, Mass Audubon Society.

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GARDEN CLUB

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Anne Dean, who’s been a member of the group for 20 years, who explains many garden club members actually go out and forage for the greens to add to the wreaths, patio/cemetery boxes and this year, table arrangements. The group also supplied the Franklin Food Pantry with a holiday patio box, the Franklin Public Library with two holiday urns of greens and the Franklin Senior Center with two beautiful planters.

Proceeds from this past green sale, the club’s biggest fundraiser held each year at Daddario Hardware & Supply in town, support a number of initiatives around Franklin. Town residents might now know that the Franklin Garden Club:

- Helps select, plant and take care of the plantings through the summer at the Veterans Memorial Walkway garden, mulching it with the help of the Franklin boys’ baseball team, with Fairmont Fruit Farm supplying many of the plants used



The Franklin Garden Club members had help this year from the Franklin boys’ baseball team in spreading mulch at the Veterans Memorial Walkway

- Maintains planters at the Franklin Library and Franklin Food Pantry
- Sponsors an annual scholarship awarded to a Franklin High School graduating senior going into some major related to the environment, horticulture, conservation, or climate change
- Distributes of pine tree seedlings to first graders through an Arbor Day program at Franklin elementary schools, and
- Works on special projects with other community organizations, such as a spring craft each year at the Franklin Senior Center, putting together small jar bouquets for the patrons of the

Franklin Food Pantry and participating as a member of the Franklin Downtown Partnership in their annual Strawberry Stroll, Harvest Festival and town Beautification Day

Anyone can join the Franklin Garden Club. Members need not be residents of the town. Dues are \$50 per year.

“We really encourage people that would like to be member to come to one of our meetings,” says Dean, “You’ll have an opportunity to not only learn a little more about different aspects of gardening, but also to participate in as many community projects as you want.” Potential members can sign up at a meeting or can follow the Franklin Garden Club on Instagram.



Club members gather many greens for the sale.

The Franklin Garden Club is a member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts.

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Circle of Friends to Welcome Crys Matthews Feb. 7th

Crys Matthews will be making her first appearance at the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse in Franklin on Saturday, February 7th. A troubadour of truth, Nashville resident Crys Matthews is among the brightest stars of the new generation of social justice music-makers. An award-winning, prolific lyricist and composer, Matthews blends Country, Americana, Folk, Blues, and Bluegrass into a bold, complex performance steeped in traditional melodies punctuated by honest, original lyrics. Thoughtful, realistic and inspirational, Matthews’ songs speak to the voice of



our generation and remind us why music indeed soothes the soul. She is made for these times. <https://www.crysmatthews.com/>

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin’s First Universalist Society. Concerts are presented in a smoke free and alcohol free environment at the Society’s handicapped accessible Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin, and begin at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Beverages and gourmet desserts will be available. Please visit <https://circlefolk.org/> for more ticket information

Barbarians Youth Rugby Achieves 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Status

Wrentham, MA –Last month, Barbarians Youth Rugby officially received 501(c)(3) non-profit status. This significant milestone will enable the club to expand its mission of bringing

the sport of rugby to local youth while fostering personal development through the game’s core values. The organization may now accept tax-deductible donations, apply for grants, and fur-

ther invest in crucial areas such as equipment upgrades, coaching certification, facility access, and scholarship opportunities for players. This will ensure that the sport remains accessible to all

families in Wrentham and surrounding towns.

Visit www.barbariansrugby.club to learn more.



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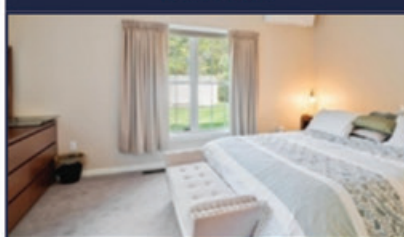
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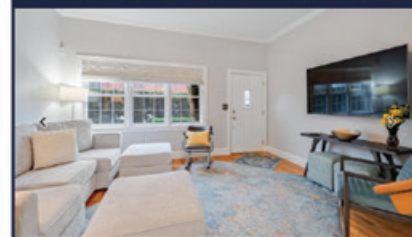
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HCA Calls for Art!

Creatives! Submit Your Artwork

CALL FOR ART: Steadfast Companions: Animals and Artists

The HCA Artist Collective is excited to announce a call for artwork for “Steadfast Companions: Animals and Artists,” a special exhibition celebrating the creativity and spirit of our students, instructors, and community members.

This show invites you to explore the theme “Animals and Artists”—whether that means showcasing a beloved creature that inspires you, capturing the spirit of wildlife, or interpreting the bond between humans and animals in your own unique way.

For more information, visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZEJ9YOeuHMg87KEsj1q3fkuFAT-pcG0wdQansfwZEjJEGGow/viewform>

CALL FOR ART: 2026 Winged Feet Exhibition and Auction

Winged Feet 2026, April 3-26, 2025

Opening Reception: April 3 6-7 p.m.

Entry Deadline: 1/30/2026
Artist Notifications: 2/5/2026
Art drop off at HCA: 3/21-22/2026

Hopkinton Center for the Arts and 26.2 Foundation, 501(c)(3) organizations, invite artists to submit their proposal for a Winged Foot, a project celebrating the Boston Marathon. The Winged Feet will be displayed on the Hopkinton Town Common from April 3 through April 26. Winged Feet will be auctioned off to benefit the Hopkinton Center for the Arts and the 26.2 Foundation.

Twenty-six proposals will be chosen this year. If your proposal is selected you will be paired with a local business sponsor who will provide a stipend of \$500 to cover the cost of art materials. Sponsors are chosen at random. Stipends will be paid at the opening reception. If you cannot attend it will be mailed to you.

If an artist’s proposal is accepted they will be provided with a flat winged foot cut out of Versatex. Designs must be family friendly and weather re-

sistant. The winged feet will be approximately 2 feet wide by 3-foot-high exterior art installations that will be mounted to a metal pole which will that rests at eye level. Designs should be appropriate for all ages.

When designing the Winged Foot please ensure that the foot points to the right so that all of the Winged Feet on display are facing the same way. Please only paint one side of the winged foot, if you want to paint the reverse please use a solid color; a metal pole will be affixed to the back for the outdoor installation.

For full details, visit <https://wingedfeet2026.artcall.org/>.

CALL FOR ART: Depth of Field: Open Call for Photography

March 16 - April 8, 2026

Reception: Friday March 20th, 6-7 p.m.

Entry Deadline: March 6, 2026

Artist Notifications: March 9, 2026

Art drop off at HCA: March 12-13, 2026

Pick up artwork: April 9-10, 2026

This exhibit aims to honor the art of photography in all its forms, embracing the wide range of approaches and styles that photographers bring to the

medium. By showcasing this diversity, we celebrate the creative spirit and the unique perspectives that make photography such a powerful art form.

Everyone is invited to submit online applications containing 1 or 2 works of art no larger than 30”wide. There is no age limit.

HCA Members will receive a discount on the submission fee, for coupon code please email megann@hopartscenter.org

No AI (Artificial Intelligence) artwork will be accepted.

Our guest judge will be Rebecca Skinner. She will be picking first, second and third place winners and three honorable mentions that will be announced at the reception on Friday March 20th

<https://hca-depthof-field2026.artcall.org/>

HCA CALL FOR ART: Arts in Bloom 2026 - For The Birds

April 29- May 29, 2025

Opening Reception: May 9, 6 p.m.

Entry Deadline: 04/08

Artist Notifications: 04/11

Art drop off at HCA: 4/25-4/26

Show opens: April 29

Pick up artwork: 05/30-31

HCA is excited to announce our 21st annual Arts in Bloom

exhibition, juried by artist Marcia R. Wise, who will choose the artwork to be exhibited and select six outstanding works for awards. The six winning artists will receive cash prizes totaling over \$1,000.

The Hopkinton Garden Club will be choosing several pieces to inspire floral arrangements that will be on display in the gallery. Last year, we had ten floral arrangements. Garden Club members choose a piece that inspires them.

The theme for this year’s Art in Bloom is For the Birds. This phrase, commonly used as an idiom, refers to something perceived as worthless, not to be taken seriously, of no value, or only believed by the gullible, or to express a dismissive or irreverent attitude. We’d like you to consider the concept of frivolity, things that waste our time (Bills, laundry, politics, addiction to devices, pop culture, cold weather, high prices, scam calls, name-dropping, boasting, etc.) Incorporate humor or sarcasm into your creative choices to capture the essence of this theme.

Although you may submit artworks that depict flowers, please consider other subjects to make it more interesting for the floral designers.

<https://artsinbloom2026.artcall.org/>

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HCA Receives Grant Awards

Hopkinton Center for the Arts (HCA) is thrilled to announce it has been awarded \$110,000 in grant funding from the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism to support the next exciting chapter in the future of Hopkinton’s historic Center School.

The grant will partially fund architectural and engineering schematic designs for this landmark building located at the iconic starting line of the Boston Marathon in downtown Hopkinton.

In a collaborative public-private partnership, Hopkinton

Center for the Arts, Hopkinton Youth & Family Services, and Hopkinton Parks & Recreation are working together with the permanent building committee and the town of Hopkinton to breathe new life into the Center School following the Town’s endorsement through a request for proposal process. The vision is to preserve the building’s historic exterior while reinventing the interior as a flexible, mixed-use space that will serve residents of all ages and strengthen Hopkinton’s cultural and civic life.

HCA has also announced it has received a \$10,000 gen-

eral operating grant from the Foundation for MetroWest. The grant will help address key operational needs as HCA works to expand accessibility to the arts for all ages. Flexible operating support such as this allows the organization to remain responsive, resilient, and focused on delivering high-quality, accessible arts experiences to the MetroWest community.

The Community Foundation for MetroWest is a community foundation that improves the quality of life in 30+ MetroWest communities.

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BOBCAT
continued from page 1

especially your pets - out of a bobcat's way!

First of all, you should be able to identify a bobcat in your area! According to Mass.Gov, bobcats "can be easily identified by [their] short, "bobbled" tail (up to 12 inches)." Their coats vary in shades of brown with black spots, and their adult size can be anywhere from 28-47 inches in length. The website also states, "male bobcats are approximately 33% larger than their female counterparts," so size can certainly vary!

Bobcats are probably more common around this time as we are nearing their mating period. From February to March, the cats tend to mate and pretty soon, they'll produce offspring in April or May. Bobcats make their habitats in rocky crevasses and hollow trees, looking for damp, dark areas to make their home and females may use the same den sites for several years in a row.

So, what can you do to stay safe during this time? Fortunately, bobcats don't tend to pose much harm to humans, or even domesticated pets. These cats prefer smaller prey like rabbits, possums, and the occasional bird. That being said, bobcats do have a history of attacking livestock, so it is advised by Mass.Gov to "avoid pasturing animals or placing coops in remote areas or in areas near heavily wooded cover." As long as pens have the right protection - such as thick wire fencing - they should be just fine.

Bobcats can be active at any time of day, but they're most often seen around dusk and dawn. Their tracks look quite similar to domestic cats, which can make it harder to determine if they're in the area or not. They're also great climbers, with an excellent sense of smell, sight, and hearing. Thankfully, according to the MSPCA, "they are shy and solitary animals," and if you lock up your trash properly and keep a good eye on your pets when they go outside, chances are you'll never have a bad encounter with a bobcat.

But still, it can be a bit of a shock to see them in the area. So, how can you help out the community if a bobcat does cross your path? Well, sharing pictures to social media does help to raise awareness. You can also contact your local animal control office, so they know of bobcats in the area. This can help them track its movement as well!

We spoke with a representative from Mass Audubon Northeast, Jonathan Davis, and he informed us that "bobcats have big territories and will cover as much as four miles in a single day." Outside factors like habitat loss and even automobile collisions have actually made bobcat appearances more rare in the area, and Davis says "they really require a large amount of conservation land to thrive," which also affects their movement patterns.

As previously stated, bobcats rarely cause any harm to humans and are, in fact, quite skittish. Humane World for Animals tells us that, should a bobcat cross your path, "be big and scary: Raise your arms over your head, yell or blow a whistle." Make a lot of noise as you move toward them slowly, and this will scare them off. Of course, this action should only occur if you encounter the animal in the wild, like on a walk, for example. When dealing with bobcats in general, Jonathan Davis reminds us, "give wildlife space if you encounter one, and don't approach."

We hope these tips and factoids will help calm your nerves about bobcat sightings in the area. Remember, as long as you keep an eye on your pets, dispose of trash properly, and secure livestock as best as you can, these wild cats will remain nothing but tracks in the snow!

If you're interested in more information on bobcats, you can find some resources from Mass Audubon at <https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/mammals-in-massachusetts/bobcats>.

Franklin United Methodist Church Community Concert February 7th

Community Concerts @ Franklin UMC Saturday February 7, 2026 will feature local Franklin performer Michael Rivelis on acoustic guitar. Relax and enjoy a night of beautiful music. Refreshments served after the concert. 7 p.m. Free.

Community Closet@ Franklin UMC is open for shopping on Tuesdays from 12-2 p.m. or by appointment. Call (508) 528-1092. Contact the church office at office@franklinumc.org if your community group would like to volunteer for clothing sorting. It's fun!

Franklin United Methodist Church is located at 82 West Central St., Franklin

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance February Events

Popcorn and Pride: Thursday February 5th, 6-8 p.m., 99 Restaurant, 847 West Central St.

Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance as we eat popcorn and get some dinner! The reservation is under our group name, Franklin LGBTQ Alliance.

Bake Sale! Saturday, February 14th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Stop & Shop, 40 Franklin Village Dr., left side entrance. Come buy some homemade baked goods on Valentine's Day! Prices and baked goods vary.

LGBTQ Book Club: Wednesday February 18th, 6:30- 8:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio 23 Hutchinson St. This month's selection: *Reflections in a Golden Eye* by Carson McCullers. You do not need to read the entire book to join the discussion!



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Maplegate Country Club Sold for \$24.8M to Solar Developer

This article first appeared in and is used courtesy of The Franklin Observer (<https://franklinobserver.town.news>).

By ALAN EARLS

The Maplegate Country Club, a 140-acre property in Franklin, on the Bellingham line at 160 Maple Street, has been sold for \$24,837,930.20 to an undisclosed private solar energy developer. The sale marks a significant transition for the property, which will be repurposed into a major solar energy facility.

The deal was brokered by Joseph Evans and Dusty Burke Jr. of American Commercial Real Estate, who managed the complex process that led to the property's new ownership and future as a large-scale renewable energy project.

According to information provided by Evans, the site will host two 15-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic systems, producing a combined 30-MW project, which will be among the largest solar installations in Massachusetts. Once operational, the systems are expected to supply

clean energy to approximately 6,000 income-eligible households through community solar programs, providing an estimated \$30 million in energy savings over the life of the power contracts.

The conversion of this property from a golf course to a solar energy facility will bring significant financial benefits to the town of Franklin. Previously, the property was enrolled under Chapter 61B, a Massachusetts law that provides tax incentives for land used for recreational purposes such as golf courses. Under this program, the property was taxed at a much lower rate than typical commercial or industrial properties. However, with its sale and development as a solar energy project, the property will now be taxed at an industrial rate based on its new market value. This shift is expected to generate approximately \$280,000 annually in additional property tax revenue for the town, providing much-needed financial support during a time of budgetary challenges.

For over 30 years, the own-

ership of Maplegate Country Club proudly operated the course, welcoming residents and visitors alike. Leonard French, who designed and built the course with remarkable determination and sacrifice, created a beloved community landmark that has stood the test of time. Alongside him, his wife, Shirley French, played a vital role in shaping the success of the course, and their unwavering dedication to the property has been a source of pride for many. Leonard passed away in 2017, but his legacy lives on through the course he created. The French family is deeply appreciative of the community's ongoing support, but they have come to the decision that it is now time to move on and embrace a new chapter for the property.

"This project represents a major investment in renewable energy across Massachusetts and reflects the growing role of private capital in supporting sustainable infrastructure," said Evans.



"The transaction required careful navigation of permitting processes across Franklin and Bellingham and extensive coordination with municipal boards and stakeholders throughout the region."

Dusty Burke added, "This sale marks an exciting new chapter for Franklin, both environmentally and economically. It shows how large-scale solar projects can benefit municipalities in meaningful ways, creating a long-lasting impact for the local economy while contributing to our clean energy future. "We were fortunate to have the guidance and expertise of Peter Brown of Brown Legal PLLC in Boston, whose

legal counsel was crucial in navigating the complex permitting processes for this project," said Evans. "Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the work of Bohler Engineering, whose civil engineering team played a vital role in designing and ensuring the infrastructure of the solar development site was engineered for long-term success."

The Maplegate Country Club sale was a private land transaction, financed entirely through private capital, and does not involve government-owned land or public funding. Its permitting success demonstrates how private investment can work very productively with community leaders to drive clean and less expensive energy infrastructure and economic activity in New England where the cost of electricity is out of control. Joseph Evans and Dusty Burke Jr. specialize in complex commercial real estate transactions throughout Massachusetts and New England.

Franklin Resident Gets a Second Chance at Love

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

At just 34-years-old, Franklin resident Calvin Graves has already lived an interesting life. Born and raised in Boston, a graduate of the performing arts high school Boston Arts Acad-

emy and later of Franklin Pierce University, Graves was drafted to play professional baseball with the Chicago Cubs, where he played for two years. He would go on to play in Japan, Guatemala, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Can-

ada, finishing his last three years as an individual baseball player for the Alpine Cowboys.

Now a Cyber Security Threat Analyst for TJX, Graves might have expected the quiet life as he settled into the town of Franklin after living for a bit in Bellingham, but a phone call would bring him overseas yet again, to Sardinia, Italy, to take a chance at rekindling a lost love, in front of the entire world.

Graves joined a Hallmark Plus television reality series, "Second Chance Love," in which he and his ex, Autumn Kilpatrick, of Alpine, TX, joined five couples hoping to rekindle lost love in a European island paradise.

"I had met her during one of my baseball seasons," says Graves, but when his season ended, and she was still in college, the two had parted. "It was something good at the wrong time," says Graves. The show, he says, offered them another shot at a different point in their lives, six years later.

The three weeks of filming "was awesome," says the former outfielder, adding, "They did a



Franklin resident Calvin Graves took a second shot at romance in the Hallmark Plus television reality series, "Second Chance Love." Photo provided.

great job producing and directing, nothing scripted, honestly," Graves admits that, with his performing arts background, he was more comfortable in front of cameras 12 hours a day than Kilpatrick, but three weeks in a beautiful villa with "amazing food" including "gelado that changed my whole perspective on ice cream," says Graves, certainly helped ease any discomfort.

Although the show, which aired Thursday evenings,

wrapped up in January, you can still satisfy your romantic curiosity, catching the series at

https://www.hallmarkplus.com/details/TV_SHOW/collection/FFLA/second-chance-love.

The Franklin resident makes his first appearance toward the end of episode two.

You can also check out photos from the experience at Instagram: Cali_cal02 .

3

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A Love-ly History

BY NATALEE WEBB-RUBINO

Valentine’s Day was not always a joyful celebration. It originated from the beheading of a Priest named Valentine in A.D. 270.

Valentine secretly married couples against a ban enacted by Roman Emperor Claudius II. The emperor believed men were not joining his army because of their duty to their wives and families. Claudius banned marriages and engagements to solve his infantry enlistment problem.

During the carnal “Feast of Lupercalia,” on February 14th in A.D. 270, Claudius had Valentine executed by decapitation. During his incarceration Valentine became friends with his jailor’s daughter. Before his guillotine walk, he left a farewell note for her. The letter was signed “from your Valentine.”

Another morbid February 14th is Chicago’s St. Valentine’s Day Massacre in 1929. Gang leader Al Capone sent four of his Associates to make a hit on his rival, Bugs Moran. Dressed in police uniforms, the thugs entered the Lincoln Park garage, lined up 7 of Moran’s gang members against a wall, and then shot them with machine guns. In all, 70 rounds of ammunition were pummeled into Moran’s hood-

lums immediately killing 6. The lone survivor would not testify against Capone.

Following Emperor Claudius’s execution of the Priest Valentine, the Christian Church proclaimed him a Saint. As “St. Valentine” he became the patron Saint of lovers, people with epilepsy, and beekeepers.

In A.D.496, then Pope Gelasius put an end to the pagan “Feast of Lupercalia” by declaring February 14th to be “St. Valentine’s Day.” Instead of pagan rituals, gifts of love messages, poems and flowers were exchanged.

The first mailing of a handwritten “Valentine Card” was posted in 1806. In 1913, Hallmark Cards of Kansas City, MO., began producing “Valentines DAY Cards.” Now simply known as Hallmark, they remain the leader in Valentines Day card sales.

Boston has a unique symbolism for Valentine’s Day, the “bridge of locks.” Have you ever wondered why the fence on the bridge at the Hynes Convention T stop has so many padlocks on it? The locks attached to the Bridge’s fencing are “love locks,” a globally recognized symbol of love whose tradition began in Paris. Some of the locks adorning the fence are professionally

engraved while others simply have their “who-loves-who” written with a thick magic marker.

In a survey by WalletHub in 2025 of 100 of the largest cities in America, Boston ranked #14. With its quaint charm, amazing waterfront views, and romantic restaurants, Boston is the perfect place for romance on this now “amorous” Valentines Day.

Celebrate the day with joyful hearts!

Bellingham, Franklin, Wrentham Receive MassTrails Grants

On January 5, Senator Becca Rausch announced that the Town of Bellingham, Franklin and Wrentham each received MassTrails grants.

“Trails connect our Commonwealth in beautiful and unexpected ways, bringing people closer to neighborhoods, parks and downtowns. Congratula-

tions to Town of Bellingham MA, Town of Franklin MA, and Town of Wrentham, Massachusetts for receiving MassTrails Grants to help develop and improve the Charles Headwater Greenway, the SNETT Rail Trail, and many more outdoor spaces,” Sen. Rausch wrote on Facebook.

Save the Date for Tri-County Golf Tournament, June 5

The Tee-Off for Tri-County is scheduled for June 5, 2026 at Wentworth Hills Country Club in Plainville with a 12:30 shotgun start. The event, still accepting sponsors, will raise funds for student

activities at Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School. For information, click the Golf Tournament tab at www.tri-county.us.



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Amy Azza, Esq

Amy N. Azza, experienced attorney of 24 years, is accepting new clients for their estate planning needs for wills, trusts, powers of attorney and health care proxies.

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WHY YOU NEED A WILL

Wills can distribute your property, name an executor, name guardians for children, forgive debts and more. Having a will also means that you, rather than your state’s laws, decide who gets your property when you die.

WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY

A health care proxy is a document that names someone you trust as your proxy, or agent, to express your wishes and make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

WHY YOU NEED A DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Durable Power of Attorney provides extensive power to the individual who is assigned that role. Absent an appointed Agent in a Durable Power of Attorney, it would be necessary for a family member or loved one to petition the court to become the guardian over the incapacitated person.



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Piette Jewelers: A Legacy of Elegance

By JANE LEBAK

Diamonds may be forever, but most diamond rings aren't backed by seventy-two years of family history.

"We treat our customers like family," says Ross Piette of Piette Jewelers. "That's how my grandparents ran the business, how my parents ran the business, and how we're running it now."

Since opening in 1954, Piette Jewelers has cultivated a reputation for reliability and style in the Blackstone Valley and greater Woonsocket areas. From sweet bracelets for Valentine's Day to matching necklaces for an entire bridal party, Piette's is conscious that while jewelry is a product, the meaning of jewelry is to enhance our lives.

"We're a hometown jeweler," says Ross. "As a part of the community, we're not just selling a product. We're providing you with an experience and a memento for an occasion that you're always going to remember."

Ross Piette is of the third generation to operate Piette Jewelers, along with his wife Jennifer and his brother Ryan. "I've been a part of this business since I was

born, poking around the store even as a little kid," says Ross. "I was trained by my parents and grandparents in all aspects of the trade until it became engrained in me."

So many of life's milestones are highlighted by jewelry. Whether it's a cross necklace for First Communion, a locket from a first love, a watch for graduating high school, or an anniversary ring, jewelry commemorates our achievements and punctuates the seasons of our lives. After seventy-two years of serving the Bellingham community, Piette's work has crossed generations. A couple that chooses their wedding set will return in ten years to select their child's first diamond earrings.

"That's what we mean by community," says Ross. "Rather than just selling a product, we look forward to being a part of our customers' lives."

Piette Jewelers offers a wide range of products, from casual, everyday necklaces to fancy, "hitting the red carpet" pieces.

Their community understanding is carried through in their products. Piette Jewelers in-



tentionally sources jewelry from family-owned businesses and local manufacturers.

Piette's looks out for the community in other ways, as well, by offering appraisal services and repairs. "Custom design is another service we offer," says Ross. "I've had customers return to us with older jewelry that has great sentimental value. Grandmothers may have had a ring for forty years, and working with us, they redesign it into something their grandchildren will wear. These custom designs breathe life into their history by creating a legacy piece they're proud to pass down."

These connections are what brings back customers every time they reach a new high point



in their lives. Ross says, "My parents have semi-retired, but this business is more than just a store. It's a part of our lives, so they keep coming back for some of our longtime customers."

Especially when certain occasions are inextricably linked in our minds with jewelry—such as engagements—it's important to have a jeweler with a solid history.

"Our work is timeless," says Ross. "I'm working on pieces right now that my father designed forty years ago, and that

tells me, our best creation is our legacy. We're creating further legacies for our customers, heirlooms and memories that they can pass down through the generations."

Visit Piette Jewelers online at <https://www.piettejewelers.com> or view up close photos on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/piettejewelers>. Afterward, you can stop by the shop at The Dean Bank Plaza, at 429 Pulaski Boulevard in Bellingham.

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New England Gold Wrestling 71st Tulsa Nationals

Last month, New England Gold Wrestling club, in Franklin, sent six wrestlers down to Tulsa Oklahoma to compete at the 71st Tulsa Nationals, possibly the

toughest youth wrestling tournament in the world.

Seventh grader Jackson Mahoney, who attends Franklin Middle School, entered the

tournament as the 4th seed in a bracket of 39 wrestlers from all over the country. Jackson won his first two matches and then took an unexpected loss in his quarterfinals match, knocking him down to the consolation bracket. This tournament is unique in that it offers a true 2nd place match between the loser of the finals match and the winner of the 3rd place match. Jackson won five straight matches after his loss, including beating the #1 seed and prestigious Super32 tournament champion Boaz Diaz of Cali-



ornia in a tight 1-0 decision. In his third-place match, facing the

opponent who beat him earlier in the tournament quarterfinals, Jackson won 6-2, getting his redemption and a shot at true 2nd place. Jackson won the True 2nd place match against NHSCA national middle school champion and a 4X New England Champion Cameron Veneziano of Newtown, CT in Jackson would the final ten seconds, securing a 4-2 win.

New England Gold brought home three True 2nd place finishers. Grogan Ivatts of Foxboro, Sydney Daxberger of Taunton and Jackson Mahoney of Franklin. A first for any club from Massachusetts.

Shown here is Jackson Mahoney with his dad and New England Gold coach Frank Mahoney.

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Your Money, Your Independence

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, especially 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 as-

sets 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, deduc-

tions, 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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Franklin Cultural District Survey

We’re working on a refreshed Franklin Cultural District website and want to hear directly from our community. Whether you’re an artist, resident, business owner, or visitor—your feedback will help shape a site that’s more useful, welcoming, and reflective of Franklin’s creative energy.

Please take a moment to fill out this short survey (8 questions - will take 3-5 minutes of your time). <https://tinyurl.com/CultDistSurvey2026>

Thank you!

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Franklin Matters Shares Candlelight Vigil Held January 8 for Good



Local residents gathered last month to remember Renee Nicole Good, of Minnesota, whose killing by an ICE agent received national attention. Photo by Steve Sherlock.

On Thursday, January 8th, local residents gathered on Franklin Town Common in a candlelight vigil for Renee Nicole Good, killed in Minneapolis, MN by an agent of ICE.

Online news source Franklin Matters (<https://www.franklin-matters.org/>) presents a 30-minute audio of the event. Each of

the speakers are introduced by master of ceremonies Rachel Plukas

1. Erin Ferguson
2. Ron Tibbetts
3. Rev Beverly Waring
4. State Rep Jeff Roy
5. Michael Walker Jones

Audio link -> <https://franklin-ma-matters.captivate.fm/episode/fm-1624-vigil-for-renee-nicole-good-01-08-26/>

Photos of the vigil can be found in one album <https://photos.app.goo.gl/QmAG9vXQXY8iQkQe7>

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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 ag-

gressive 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, exces-

sive 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.

Your stylist or esthetician can recommend professional products tailored to your specific needs, maximizing every service and keeping you looking your best.

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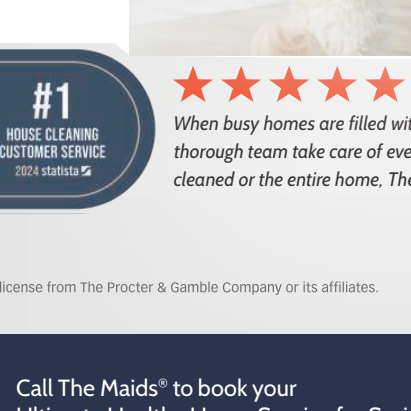
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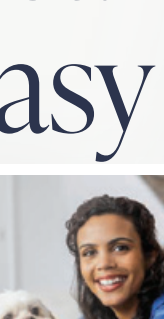
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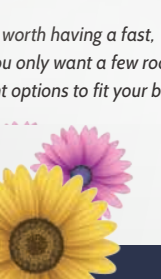


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Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild Plans Show at BVT in March

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild will hold their biennial quilt show on Saturday and Sunday, March 14th and 15th at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Visitors to the show will have the opportunity to view the TPQG Raffle Quilt and to purchase raffle tickets to win this beautiful quilt. The quilt measures 74.5" by 74.5" and is named Dresden Bloom. The quilt was created by TPQG members Karen Pierce, Glory Torres, and Rita Partridge. Their focus in creating this quilt was to find a pattern that showcased both applique and piecing techniques. Once the pattern was determined fabrics were selected that were bright and cheerful. The quilt was custom quilted by Kimberly Cloutier of Blooming Quilts.

You are invited to attend the quilt show and view this quilt in person and purchase raffle tickets. Tickets are also available from quilt members before the show and are \$2 each or six for \$10.



The 2026 Thimble Pleasures Raffle Quilt was custom quilted by Kimberly Cloutier of Blooming Quilts

Podcaster Shines Bright Light on Franklin Cold Case

This article first appeared in and is used courtesy of The Franklin Observer, <https://franklinobserver.town.news>.

By ALAN EARLS

The sad story of Theresa Corley, a Bellingham teen who left a Franklin bar late one night in December of 1978 and was found later, strangled, on the margin of Interstate 495, has haunted locals for nearly half a century. At the time, investigators determined that she may have been sexually assaulted at some point but evidence sufficient to prosecute anyone has never been found.

There have been some attempts to revive the investigation, including the inclusion of Corley's case in a pack of "cold case cards" put out a few years ago by the Mass. State Police.

Now, podcaster Nicole Ryan, who has built her reputation on coverage of the Karen Read murder trials with her Read Report, is putting her own efforts into trying to get a resolution. The first episode of her coverage can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/CorleyReport>.

February 2026 Franklin Veterans' Services Office Notes

February 4 - Monthly Coffee Social - 10a.m. at the Senior Center. All Veterans are welcome to join us for coffee, conversation and announcements.

February 4 - is the official birthday of the organization known as United Service Organizations or USO. The USO has been a fixture in military life for more than seven decades. Founded in 1941, the agency is a private, non-profit organization that supports men and women in the U.S. military and their families with programs, entertainment, and other services, to keep them connected to home.

February 19 - Veterans' Council Meeting - 7 p.m. at the Senior Center. All Franklin residents interested in Veterans' activities are welcome to join us. The council meets the third Thursday of every month. Memorial Day Parade planning will be discussed at the next four council meetings. Volunteers are always needed!

February 19 - Coast Guard Reserve's 85rd Birthday

The Tune It Out guitar lessons program for Veterans meets on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. There is no charge for lessons and no guitar experience is required. We have guitars! Call the Veterans' Services office for details.

Warrior Within Yoga classes for Veterans and First Responders are held on Thursdays at 4 p.m. at the Senior Center. No charge. Call our office to register.

The next engraved brick installation on the Veterans Memorial Walkway is scheduled to coincide with Memorial Day. Brick orders are now being accepted for the May installation. Engraved bricks make great birthday, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day gifts. Order forms are available in the Town Hall and Senior Center lobbies as well as on the Veterans' Services page on the Town web site.

Visit our web page at: <https://www.franklinma.gov/335/Veterans-Services>.

Call Jen Schofield at 508-570-6544 to run in our Newspaper!

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Call for Artists & Writers

Franklin Ridge Begins Construction

The Franklin Cultural District Committee invites visual artists and writers to submit original work for our Spring and Summer 2026 printed marketing guides. Selected works will be featured as part of our “Franklin Welcomes the World” campaign.

The Franklin Cultural District’s 2026 Seasonal Guides will serve as Franklin’s leading cultural and visitor-facing marketing materials during the World Cup programs this summer, reaching thousands of visitors and residents.

Who Can Apply

This call is open to creatives with a Franklin connection, including those who, live or work in Franklin, grew up or studied here, create here regularly, or have personal/professional ties to the community.

What We’re Looking For

Visual Artists: Illustrators, painters, photographers, print-makers, digital artists, & other visual creatives

Writers: Poets, lyricists, flash fiction writers, & short-form storytellers

Submissions should reflect Franklin—its people, places, creativity, seasons, and shared spaces. Themes may include community and connection, public gathering and downtown life, nature and the changing seasons, and small-town character and cultural expression.

Selected Creatives Will Receive

- Featured placement in the Spring/Summer 2026 printed guides
- Artist/writer credit, including name and contact or social information
- A short feature or artist statement (as space allows)
- Promotion through Franklin Culture’s digital platforms
- Featured in pop-up exhibitions related to the Cultural District/Franklin Culture

Timeline

- Submission Deadline: March 1, 2026
- Guide Release: May 2026

How to Submit

Email the following to Cory Shea, Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, at cshea@franklinma.gov with the subject line: FCD Creative Submission

Please include:

- Visual artists: 3–5 work samples (JPEG or PDF)
- Writers: 1–2 written pieces (under 250 words each)
- A short bio or artist statement (whichever best fits your work)
- A brief note on your Franklin connection

Through the Franklin Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, the Town of Franklin is proud to announce that the Franklin Ridge Senior Housing project has secured all necessary funding and construction-related approvals to commence the construction of this three-story, 60-unit affordable senior housing complex in November.

Over the past eleven years, the Town of Franklin and Franklin Municipal Affordable Housing Trust have worked closely with JNJUHL & Associates, a local, affordable housing developer, to provide much needed affordable housing for Franklin’s senior community 62 years of age or older. Located adjacent to the Eaton Place senior housing complex, the Franklin Ridge housing development will consist of (54) One-Bedroom Units and (6) Two-Bedroom Units, in addition to community space that includes a community room with a kitchenette, library, a multi-purpose room and offices for management and social service staff.

“With the senior population in Franklin growing exponentially, the Town continues to be committed to providing high quality affordable senior housing which keeps our Franklin seniors within the community for the long-term” stated Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. “Seniors are an essential and valued component of this community, providing not only an important link to our past, but a viable element that continues to make a significant contribution through volunteering as well as supporting town activities and organizations. This project will allow income eligible seniors to right-size their living situation and stay in the community they love”.

With 70% local preference, which is the maximum percentage allowed under state regulation, the Town is focused on getting as many local eligible seniors as possible into the Franklin Ridge Senior Housing project upon its completion in 2027.

Jon Juhl, President of JNJUHL & Associates, continues “this project was truly a community effort: the Franklin Municipal Affordable Housing Trust is providing the land, as well as a significant financial contribution of \$500,000 toward the project. The Town is also using over \$320,000 in Community Preservation Act funding to leverage millions of dollars in federal and state funding from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. This affordable housing project could not have been accomplished without the hard work and support of many Town Departments and Committees including the Town Administrator’s Office, Department of Planning & Community Development, Building Department, Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals; all with one goal in mind: to meet the supportive housing needs of seniors while building a green and sustainable project. Franklin Ridge will be just that: housing which has adaptive, accessible apartments, is 100% electric, and has solar back-up. It is a project that will benefit Franklin seniors – and our community—for many years to come.”

Franklin Ridge Senior Housing Project has been designed for seniors, age 62 and older, who meet income eligibility requirements. Construction will start this winter, and occupancy is expected by mid-late 2027. Rental applications will be managed by The Community Builders, a Boston-based non-profit housing development and management company, starting in early 2027. Outreach sessions to the senior center and broader community will begin in 2026.

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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 emergency 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 Pan-Optix 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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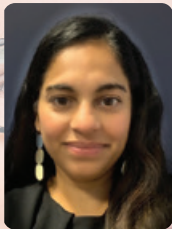
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Massachusetts Reports Very High Flu Activity with Cases Climbing

Boston, MA – In early January, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) reported very high and rising levels of influenza activity statewide as the Commonwealth moves through peak flu season. Thousands of residents have become ill, with many experiencing serious complications, leading to increased visits to urgent care centers and emergency departments, and high levels of hospitalization.

The current widespread burden of illness underscores the importance of taking preventive measures, especially vaccination, to reduce severe disease and protect individuals, families, and communities.

Hospitals across Massachusetts are continuing to see high numbers of patients seeking care for respiratory illness. Each day last week, there were nearly 9,000 emergency department visits statewide, with approximately one-quarter of those related to acute respiratory illness, including flu, COVID-19, and RSV. Some regions in the state reported challenging hospital capacity levels exceeding 90% in medical-surgical units, largely related to influenza.

DPH urges everyone 6 months of age and older to stay up to date on flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. These annual shots can be given at the same visit and are available from local boards of health, community health centers, pharmacies, and many health care providers.

Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease, including adults aged 65 years and older; children between 6 months and 2 years old; people with chronic respiratory conditions or heart disease; individuals who are immunocompromised; and people who are pregnant. Vaccination also helps protect family members, coworkers, and others in the community who may be more vulnerable to serious illness.

For RSV, one-time immunization is recommended for adults age 75 and older; those aged 50-74 who have conditions that put them at increased risk; and people who are pregnant. For infants and children, parents should talk with their child's health care provider about RSV immunization. It is recommended that infants younger than 8 months be immunized if the birth parent did not receive the RSV shot during pregnancy. Children between 8 and 19 months who are at increased risk because of certain pulmonary or immune system disorders should also be immunized.

In Massachusetts, vaccines are covered by insurance and are available at no cost for almost all adults. All vaccines for individuals younger than 18 years are supplied free of charge to health care providers through the state's universal childhood immunization program.

For those who begin to experience flu symptoms – which include high fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, extreme fatigue, cough, sore throat, and congestion – antiviral medications, such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu), are available by prescription. When started early, these medications can significantly reduce the severity of illness. Parents are encouraged to seek medical advice promptly if they or their children develop flu-like symptoms.

Spending time indoors and around larger groups increases the likelihood of exposure to respiratory viruses. The following everyday measures can help prevent illness:

- Stay up to date on flu and COVID-19 vaccinations
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- Stay home when sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor settings, especially if you or a loved one is at higher risk.

DPH continues to closely monitor respiratory activity and hospital capacity across Massachusetts. Up-to-date data are available on the DPH respiratory virus dashboard.

1776 Financial Services Offers Scott Dittrich Memorial Scholarship

Franklin, MA -1776 Financial Services is proud to offer a scholarship to one Franklin High School senior who will pursue a business-related major at a four-year college or university. The scholarship is a progressive one that will be given out over the four years of study.

The scholarship is given in memory of 1776 Financial Services co-founder Scott Dittrich, who passed away in March 2023. Throughout his lifetime, Scott demonstrated the extraordinary ability to regularly engage others and influence change and was dedicated to serving the community.

For more information or to apply for the scholarship, students should contact the Franklin High School guidance office.

DPW Presents Report to Town Council

On January 21st, the Franklin DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi presented the Town Council with a report on the Department's Infrastructure and Costs. View it at <https://ma-franklin.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/8133/Town-Council-Presentation--January-21-2026>. Find the link directly in the Town Council agenda for that meeting on the town website.

Rotary Club of Franklin MA 7th Valentine's Brunch, February 7, 2026

The Rotary Club of Franklin MA is proud to announce that their 7th Annual Valentine's Brunch is slated for February 7, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Franklin Housing Authority Hall, located at 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, MA 02038.

All Franklin seniors and residents of Franklin Housing Authority are welcome to join the Rotary Club as their special guests, where all will be treated to a delicious, homemade Valentine's brunch. Feel free to show your love and wear your red!

Seniors are urged to enter their names on a sign-up so that no one is left out. Sign-up sheets may found at the following locations:

- Central Park Terrace, 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin
- Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, Franklin

The Rotary Club International is a non-profit organization made up of a diverse group of men and women "who come together to create positive, lasting change in our communities and around the world." <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary>

If you would like more information about our organization or interested in attending a meeting, please contact Diane Padula at rotarycluboffranklinma@gmail.com and she will make arrangements for you to be a guest at one of Rotary's upcoming meetings.

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Hockomock Area YMCA Expands Free Teen Fitness Opportunities Through Grant Support

Franklin, MA – The Hockomock Area YMCA's Bernon Family Branch in Franklin is proud to announce an initiative made possible through a grant from the Town of Franklin. Available now, Franklin residents ages 13 to 17 are eligible for a free six-month YMCA membership, opening the door to programs and experiences that promote youth development, healthy living, and community connection.

This initiative reflects a shared commitment between the YMCA and the Town of Franklin to invest in the well-being and future of local teens. Now in its second year, the program will continue through December 2026. Since the grant program launched, more than 270 Franklin teens have benefited from their free six-month membership, gaining access to fitness facilities, group classes, and supportive coaching in a safe, welcoming environment.

Membership includes full access to the Bernon Family Branch's facilities—health and wellness center, gymnasium, indoor and outdoor pools and aquatics center, indoor track, and group exercise classes. Teens can also enjoy basketball, pickleball, yoga, spin classes, and more—all at no additional cost to members.



Programs Offered at No Cost

In addition to facility access, the YMCA offers programs designed to help teens explore interests, build friendships, and develop healthy habits. Highlights include:

- Learn to Lift: Building Confidence and Strength
- Learn to Lift is a strength training program for ages

13–16 focused on building safe and effective workouts. Teens will learn proper loading and form, gain confidence in the weight room, and track progress. Strength training is one of the most popular fitness trends today, offering benefits like improved bone health, injury prevention, and long-term wellness.

Learn to Lift is offered at no cost to teens through this grant. Normally priced at \$40 per month for members and \$80 per month for non-members, the program meets Tuesdays from 4:15–5 p.m., providing a structured and supportive environment for teens to build strength and confidence.

Learn to Babysit: A.S.H.I. Certification

This certification course is offered at no cost to teens through the grant. It will be held on two upcoming Saturdays, January 24 or February 14 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Y. For more information, email Krystina Edens at Krystinae@hockymca.org.

Lifeguard Certification

This blended course includes e-learning and in-person instruction, starting February 8 at the Franklin YMCA. It is also provided at no cost to teens age 16+ through the grant. For more information, email Krystina Edens at krystinae@hockymca.org.

for future success in the weight room—and they'll leave with a routine of four different workouts they can use right away."

Other Opportunities

- Social gatherings that foster connection and belonging.
- Leadership and community service opportunities to empower youth.

Employment Opportunities: Join the Y Team

The YMCA also provides part-time employment opportunities—an additional way for teens to get involved in the Y community while gaining valuable work experience. Positions include lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, Child Watch, sports coach, and camp counselors.

Leanne Eggimann, Senior Director of Camp and Youth Sports, explained, "When I hire sports instructors or camp counselors, I look for enthusiasm and a genuine understanding of the YMCA's impact in our community. My first job at the Y was as a camp counselor, where I learned how deeply the Y supports families. That experience taught me professionalism and sparked my desire to grow within the organization."

Teens interested in joining can visit hockymca.org/teens-join-now, stop by the Bernon Family Branch at 45 Forge Hill Road, Franklin, or call (508) 528-8708 for more information.

For additional details, please contact:

Kristin Torracco, Membership Director, Hockomock Area YMCA, at (508) 528-8708 or kristint@hockymca.org.

Chris Raymond, Fitness & Personal Training Director, who leads Learn to Lift, shared, "I'll be working directly with teens in Learn to Lift, helping them build a simple and safe gym routine. We'll focus on major movements like Bench Press, Squat, Deadlift, and other compound lifts. My goal is to give them the tips and tricks that set them up

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Franklin's Jefferson Elementary School Named a Massachusetts Blue Ribbon School

Franklin, MA - Jefferson Elementary School was one of only six schools in Massachusetts chosen by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for a National Blue Ribbon School nomination in the 2025 Schools of Recognition program.

As part of its annual accountability reporting process, DESE identifies a small number of Schools of Recognition. These schools demonstrate progress toward annual accountability targets, with an emphasis on improved achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. The highest annual recognition in the program is the National Blue Ribbon School Nominee designation.

Jefferson Elementary School

was selected as part of the Exemplary High-Performing School category. This award recognizes schools that continue to demonstrate excellence across all subjects and deliver an overarching education program for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

State officials recognized the consistency of Jefferson's performance and the teaching practices that support it. The school's practices are built on a strong curriculum and data-informed instruction. Staff collaborate closely and often involve multiple grades and subjects in their teaching.

Jefferson's inclusive practices were also a factor in the nomination. The school has multiple

programs that are designed to link specialized instruction to general education classes, enabling students with disabilities to study grade-level material. This strategy has improved learning outcomes while maintaining students' connections to the school community.

This collaboration happens throughout the building. General educators, special educators, specialists, and administrators collaborate to plan, assess, and modify curriculum and instruction as needed. The result is a whole-school model that focuses on providing access, consistency, and high expectations for each student, tailored to individual needs.

"This recognition is the result of the thoughtful leadership of

Principal Stefani Wasik and Assistant Principal Beth Murray, commitment of our educators, and engagement of students and families at Jefferson Elementary School, which continues today throughout the district following the reorganization," said Superintendent Lucas Giguere. "We are very proud of this achievement and grateful for the state's recognition."

Although the National Blue Ribbon Schools program at the federal level ended in August 2025, Massachusetts has chosen to continue this important recognition.

DESE is scheduled to honor Jefferson Elementary School at the 2025 Schools of Recognition Celebration, to be held on Jan. 20, at the Massachusetts State

House. The state will recognize the six National Blue Ribbon School nominees, two ESEA Distinguished Schools, and 55 Schools of Recognition.

For the 2025-26 school year, Franklin Public Schools underwent a district reorganization based on the recommendation of the School Facilities and Educational Master Plan Report. The plan created a central unified middle school and four partner elementary schools in two locations.

In the fall, most students from Jefferson entered the Washington Street K-2/3-5 Elementary School, located in the former Remington Middle School/Jefferson Elementary School Complex.

Metrowest Boston Visitors Bureau Announces Annual Tourism Summit on February 26

Framingham, MA - The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) will be holding their Annual Tourism Summit and Legislative Breakfast, entitled "The World Is Coming: Preparing for Visitors, Impact & Opportunity", on February 26 from 8:00am - 12:00pm at the newly renovated and rebranded Renaissance Framingham Hotel & Conference Center. The event is open to everyone, and will include a travel and hospitality industry update, both at the regional level delivered by MBVB Executive Director Stacey David, as well as at the state level, given by Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism Executive Director Kate Fox. Additional speakers include Kerrie Tripp from Discover New England, who will update on the expectations for international travelers for World Cup, and Senator Becca Rausch, who will speak about the power of arts, culture, and the creative economy to drive tourism and uplift our communities. The second half of the program will include an update on World Cup expectations for



Stacey David, Executive Director of the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau, at the organization's 2025 Tourism Summit.
Photo by David Fox Photography

the area, including plans for a MetroWest Regional Fan Zone in multiple communities, as well as a panel discussion on creating pop-up businesses in your town for economic development, both to capitalize on World Cup travelers and year-round. The event will end with optional tours of the newly renovated and rebranded Renaissance hotel (formerly the Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Cen-

ter). All businesses in MetroWest and the surrounding communities are invited to attend, including hotels, restaurants, attractions, non-profit arts & culture organizations, retailers, town administrators, and more. Registration is required. Below is a partial agenda. To view the full agenda and register, please visit www.metrowestvisitors.org/annual_meeting.

AGENDA:

Stacey David, Executive Director, MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau

Stacey will give a year in review on MetroWest, including visitor data and a recap of last year's MBVB marketing results, followed by this year's plans for promoting MetroWest to various market segments, including World Cup travelers...and how you can benefit.

Senator Becca Rausch, Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex District

Senator Rausch will speak

about the power of arts, culture, and the creative economy to drive tourism and uplift our communities.

Kate Fox, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism

An update on the domestic and international destination marketing strategies underway at the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, plus stats and data on MA's visitors.

TOURISM

continued on page 22

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Coming Up at Franklin Senior Center

The Franklin Senior Center is located at 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin. Reach them at (508) 520-4945.

Monday, February 2, 11 a.m., Page Turner's Book Club, *James* by Percival Everett

Book Challenge: reread *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

Wednesday, February 4, 10 a.m., Veterans Coffee Social hosted by Veterans Services Office, 1 p.m. Joe Landry Talk

Friday, February 6, 1:30 p.m., Franklin Ridge Presentation

Monday, February 9, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Hearing Clinic, appointment required

Wednesday, February 11, 11 a.m. Mobile Food Pantry, 2:45 p.m. Zentangle Art Class (\$25), 4 p.m. Alzheimer's Support

Thursday, February 12, 1 p.m., Craft Corner with Jean, also 1 p.m. Learn about Senior Connection

Friday, February 13, 11 a.m., Monthly Party: Mardi Gras with live entertainment Catnip Junkies, \$10

Tuesday, February 17, 12:30-2 p.m., Legal Clinic, appointment required

Wednesday, February 18, 12:30 p.m., Cancer Support Group, 1 p.m. Memory Café

Thursday, February 19, 1 p.m., Low Vision Assistive Technology with Dave Dunham

Friday, February 20, 1 p.m., Comedy Café with Sylvia Lewis

Monday, February 23, 1 p.m., Understanding Vascular Disease with Laura Boltano, MD, 1:30 p.m. 50+ Job Seekers

Tuesday, February 24, 1 p.m., Audio Book Club: Morning on Horseback by David G. McCullough, 1:30 p.m. Drum Circle, sponsored by Franklin Cultural Council

Wednesday, February 25, 1 p.m. Bereavement Support, also 1 p.m. Senior Scribblers writing group, 4 p.m. Alzheimer's Support

Thursday, February 26, 1 p.m., Kathy's Art Class, \$3, Easter craft

Friday, February 27, 9 a.m., Friends of Franklin Elders meeting, 11 a.m., Eat around the World: China

Massachusetts Fire Deaths Drop by 12% in 2025

44 Fatalities Reported; More than 90% Took Place at Home

Stow, MA - Massachusetts fire deaths in 2025 declined from a seven-year high in 2024, with more than 90% taking place in the victims' homes, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine said.

Excluding fatal motor vehicle collisions with an ensuing fire, Massachusetts recorded 44 fire deaths in 30 fires during 2025.

Single-family homes accounted for 14 deaths, followed by the devastating fire at Gabriel House Assisted Living in Fall River, which claimed 10 lives and represented the greatest loss of life to a single Massachusetts fire incident in decades. Nine people died in apartment or multifamily home fires, four people died in mobile home fires, and three people died in two-family homes.

The unsafe use or disposal of smoking materials was the known cause or a possible factor in 21 fire deaths in 2025, making it by far the most common factor and continuing a decades-long trend. Smoking is especially dangerous in the presence of medical oxygen – a fact pattern that investigators believe contributed

to the Gabriel House fire. The Department of Fire Services last year updated its Home Oxygen Fire Safety brochure, which is offered on the DFS website (www.mass.gov/info-details/dfs-fire-safety-education-flyers#home-oxygen-safety).

Smoke alarm operation could be provisionally determined for 30 of the 40 residential fire deaths. Only 16 of these homes or units of origin had working smoke alarms. The alarms in the remainder were either not working or missing entirely.

"Sadly, the places we should feel safest – our homes – are the places where most people lose their lives to fire," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Changes to building construction allow fires to grow and spread faster. Synthetic furnishings create deadly smoke and toxic gases as they burn. The US Fire Administration estimates that we have less time to escape a fire at home than ever before, so it's vital to have working smoke alarms to alert us to the danger before it's too late."

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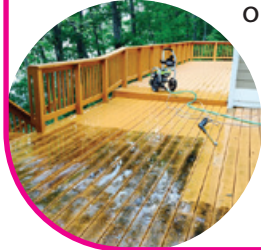
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Franklin Art Association to Welcome Sculptor Brendan Sullivan February 4th

The Franklin Art Association warmly welcomes the public to its next public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on February 4, 2026 at the Franklin Senior Center. Our artist demonstrator will be sculptor, Brendan Sullivan. His work is a contemporary inspired exploration of the evolving landscape of American Masculinity; working with materials, form and cultural ritual. He received his BFA in Studio Art at Umass, Amherst and his MFA at the New York Academy of Art in 2018. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and residencies. Drawing from his own experiences as a man, an athlete and manual laborer, Sullivan examines the social and psychological tension between vulnerability and strength imagery embedded in masculine identity. He hopes his work will challenge fixed ideas of masculinity and tradition. Wood, steel, worn leather, industrial remnants and animal images, etc.



Come to hear his discussion about masculine traditional imagery with his sculptural examples and demonstration on Wednesday, February 4th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center.

The Franklin Art Association takes pride in offering a student scholarship yearly to a local art student wishing to continue their art career in art instruction after high school graduation. Donations are welcome. FAA is having an on-going raffle for



the scholarship of local artist's, Peg Munson's seashore pastel artwork.

Please join us at our monthly meetings for art instruction, the camaraderie of art conversation and refreshments at intermission.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Stony Brook Camera Club February Meetings

The Stony Brook Camera Club meets in person and/or virtually on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September to June. In person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin. Our meetings feature speakers, competitions, and discussions of general interest. We also sponsor a number of photography activities and workshops throughout the year.

SBCC includes and welcomes photographers of all abilities.

Our program for February:

- February 5: (Zoom) Member competition
- February 12: (Zoom) "Vision, Passion, and Projects" with Cole Thompson
- February 19: (Hybrid) "Photographing Rhode Island" with Kevin Bruff
- February 26: (In Person) Cabin Fever Workshop

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Norfolk County Real Estate Activity Rises in December

Dedham, MA – Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported that real estate activity in Norfolk County remained strong in December 2025, with increases in both Deed and mortgage recordings compared to last year.

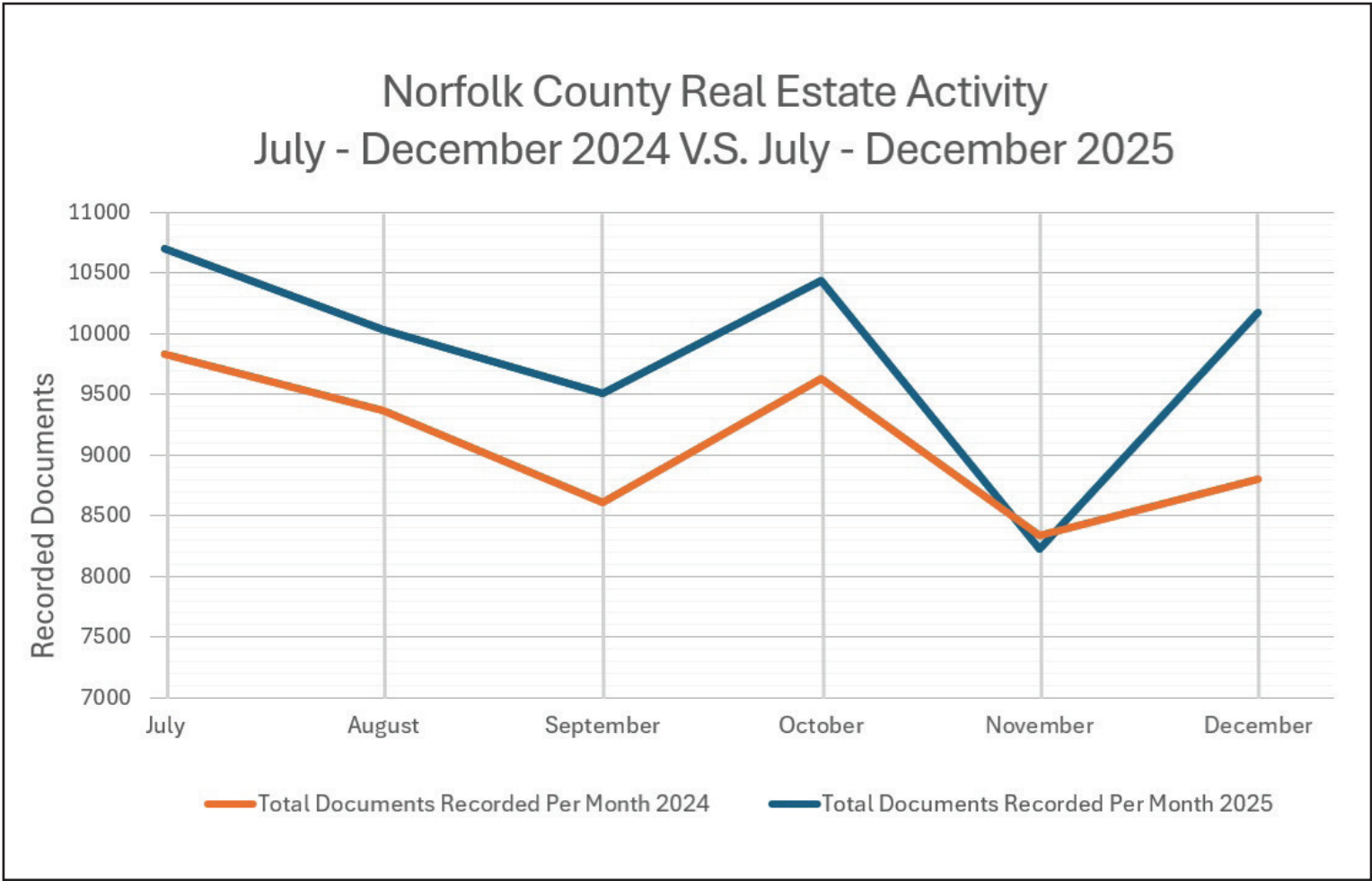
The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds recorded a total of 10,178 documents in December 2025, a 16% increase from December 2024 and a 24% increase from November 2025.

“The increase in overall document recordings compared to last December is a strong indicator of continued engagement in the real estate market,” stated Norfolk County Register of Deeds, William P. O'Donnell. “This level of activity reflects confidence among buyers, sellers, and lenders as we close out the year.”

The total number of deeds recorded in December, which includes both commercial and residential real estate sales and transfers, was 1,545, up 13% from December 2024 and 25% higher than November 2025. Looking at just real estate sales, 745 properties were sold, an 11% increase compared to last year.

The average sale price of commercial and residential properties in December 2025 was \$1,437,216, an 18% decrease from December 2024, but a 2% increase from November 2025. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales in December was \$1.07 billion, down 10% compared to last year, but up 27% from November.

“This reduction in overall real estate prices compared to last year may offer some relief to



those looking to purchase property in Norfolk County,” said Register O'Donnell. “Lower average sale prices could create new opportunities for first-time homebuyers and current homeowners looking to move who were previously priced out of the market. However, purchase prices remain high relative to past years”

Lending activity also showed strong performance. A total of 1,753 mortgages were recorded in December 2025, up 29% from December 2024 and 25% higher than November 2025. The total dollar amount of mortgage indebted-

ness recorded in December was \$1,280,227,467, a 12% increase compared to last year and 28% higher than the previous month.

The foreclosure market in Norfolk County saw positive developments during December 2025. There were 4 foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, down from 6 recorded in December 2024. Notices to foreclose also declined significantly, with 11 notices recorded in December this year compared to 33 during the same time period last year, a 67% decrease.

“Any reduction in foreclosure

activity is positive news,” said Register O'Donnell. “With that said, we must remember that foreclosure activity has a human impact, and there are still a number of our neighbors who have lost their homes, and even more are dangerously close to losing their homes. I would urge anyone struggling to pay their mortgage or who knows someone who is struggling to contact one of the non-profit organizations listed on our website, www.norfolkdeeds.org.”

“The positive trends we have seen in December underscore the resilience and continued desirability of Norfolk County as a

place to live, work, and invest,” said Register O'Donnell. “Despite fluctuations in the broader economy, the local real estate market has shown strength across key indicators including property sales, mortgage activity, and pricing adjustments that may improve affordability. This momentum reflects confidence in our communities as we move into the new year.”

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High St., Dedham. Reach them at (781) 461-6101 or registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org. Also find them on Facebook and X.

TETOURISMT

continued from page 19

Kerrie Tripp, Director of Products & Sales, Discover New England

Kerrie will offer insight into international traveler profiles, trends, and predictions, and the best ways to capture World Cup and other international tourists, including how to work with receptive tour operators.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is Coming!

Learn about Boston World Cup's plans and predictions regarding travelers for World Cup, hear about MetroWest's plans for fan zones and watch parties, and how you can get involved for this worldwide event that will bring 2 million visitors and \$1B of economic impact to Massachusetts.

Panel: How Pop Ups Drive Economic Development

Learn about the benefits and logistics of creating pop ups in your town for economic development. Lindsey Jaworek of the

Marlborough Economic Development Corporation will talk about their permanent seasonal pop up shops. Beth Reynolds, Assistant Town Manager in Ashland, will discuss how Ashland uses pop ups at events to drive foot traffic and enhance special events. Cory Shea, Franklin's Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, will share how to revitalize downtowns by creating pop up shops in empty storefronts. We will also explore how pop ups allow local artists and retailers to launch new busi-

nesses with minimal investment, and how you can create these opportunities in your community in time for World Cup visitors.

Hotel Tour

Join GM David Laurent and his team on a tour of the newly renovated and rebranded Renaissance Framingham Hotel & Conference Center

About The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau:

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau is a non-profit orga-

nization dedicated to promoting economic development through travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region: Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough. For more information, please visit the MBVB website at www.metrowestvisitors.org.

Completion of New England Clean Energy Connect Transmission Line Announced at State House

Boston, MA - After years of careful planning, legislating, and implementation, the completion of the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) transmission line has happened and is now delivering affordable, stable hydropower from Canada to Massachusetts

The long-awaited New England Clean Energy Connect is a 145-mile high-voltage transmission line that carries power generated by hydroelectric facilities in Quebec to the Commonwealth. With a capacity of 1,200 megawatts, the line can transmit enough power to satisfy about 20% of Massachusetts' total electricity needs. And thanks to a 20-year fixed price contract with the state's electric utilities, it's projected to save ratepayers \$50 million a year.

The fixed prices in the contracts provide power and clean energy attributes at prices well below the projected costs of buying the same amount on the market, and lock in those prices for the next 20 years.

"Bringing Canadian hydropower into Massachusetts is a major milestone that strengthens our energy reliability, advances our clean energy goals, and—most importantly—delivers a robust new source of power to consumers at a reasonable and

predictable price," said State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy, former Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy (D-10th Norfolk). "This long-anticipated moment is the culmination of nearly a decade of careful planning, legislating, and implementation, carried forward despite significant legal, political, and logistical obstacles. I had the opportunity to see the source of this power firsthand when I visited the St. James Bay hydropower facilities—an engineering marvel—in Quebec last March, and it is deeply gratifying to see that work come to fruition."

In addition to lowering electricity prices, this clean, sustainable hydropower will help meet rising electricity demand, provide needed energy reliability in the winter, and reduce harmful pollution in Massachusetts and the region. During cold temperature periods, New England relies on higher-priced, more carbon-intensive fuels. This leads to expensive and volatile winter energy pricing and regional reliability concerns. The NECEC project will help address these challenges by providing consistent clean energy production during cold temperatures.

"Today, power is flowing to Massachusetts through the New



England Clean Energy Connect transmission line," said Governor Healey. "My administration worked closely with the Legislature, the Attorney General, and private partners to ensure the project moved forward and delivered savings. The NECEC line represents our all-of-the-above approach in action – working with regional partners to bring affordable energy into the state that will lower costs and meet our growing demand. We are proud to flip the switch on this line and bring costs down, and we are continuing to work to bring more energy into Massachusetts."

Several Hydro-Québec teams dedicated their efforts and expertise to designing and building this strategic 100-km infrastructure across Québec. On the US side, their partner constructed a 230-km transmission line in Maine. Among the project's highlights

are the creation of a new family of towers that blend more seamlessly into the landscape, a crossing of over one kilometer at the former Asbestos mine in Thetford-Mines and the integration of four of the largest transformers in Hydro-Québec's power system.

"This is an historic day; the New England Clean Energy Connect is now delivering enough renewable energy to power a million homes," said Hydro-Québec Energy Services U.S. COO Serge Abergel. "We are proud to be your partners. We have all overcome many ob-

stacles to get to today. Now we are not just talking; we are delivering. This is a shining example of our regional partnership, which will continue for the next 20 years and beyond."

In 2018, following a competitive solicitation, the Massachusetts electric distribution companies negotiated and executed contracts with the NECEC project. Following authorization from the Massachusetts Legislature in 2023, the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the Attorney General's Office, Eversource, National Grid, and Unitil negotiated with NECEC to ensure these contracts remain beneficial for Massachusetts ratepayers. The joint settlement agreement was later approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, helping pave the way for the project to finish construction. Under the contracts, NECEC will import 9.55 terawatt-hours annually of 100 percent hydroelectricity from Quebec to the New England electric grid.

Temple Etz Chaim to Hold Comedy Show Fundraiser March 14

Temple Etz Chaim is planning a comedy fundraiser on Saturday, March 14, from 7-10 p.m. at the Milford Portuguese Club, 119 Prospect Heights, Milford. Get ready to laugh with NYC comedian Ariel Elias – as seen on Jimmy Kimmel Live! and fea-

turing opening act local comic Shane Olesen.

Enjoy light appetizers, a cash bar, a silent auction and 50/50 raffle, because comedy pairs best with cocktails, mocktails, and a little friendly bidding!

This program is open to adults

18 years of age and older.
\$80 Premium Table Seating
\$60 General Admission Theater Seating

Your support helps strengthen Temple Etz Chaim, the Jewish community, and the greater Franklin community.

Click QR code to RSVP by Sunday, March 1st



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Franklin vs. Weymouth Food Pantries Face Off in “SOUPer Bowl 2026” Soup Drive

The Franklin Food Pantry is gearing up to defend its title as SOUPer Bowl Champion against the Weymouth Food Pantry in the highly anticipated SOUPer Bowl 2026 canned soup competition. The two pantries are asking their communities to donate cans of soup starting January 8, 2026. The pantry that receives the most soup by February 8, 2026, will be named SOUPer Bowl Champ 2026. The Franklin Food Pantry and Weymouth Food Pantry previously faced off in 2025. The competition resulted in a combined total of 4,967 cans of soup, with Franklin edging out the win by a mere 205 cans.

While SOUPer Bowl 2026 is a friendly, spirited competition, the stakes are profoundly serious. Hunger in Massachusetts is reaching crisis levels, with a staggering 1 in 3 people experiencing food insecurity. This challenge will help stock the shelves in both pantries and combat the skyrocketing hunger in our communities.

Here’s how to get in on the

- game and support your pantry:
- What: SOUPer Bowl 2026 (Canned Soup Drive)
 - Who: Franklin Food Pantry vs. Weymouth Food Pantry
 - When: January 8 to February 8, 2026
 - To Donate:
 - Bring donations to the Franklin Food Pantry, 341 W Central St., Franklin, MA, 02038, or donate via the Franklin Food Pantry’s Amazon Wish List
 - Bring donations to the Weymouth Food Pantry Warehouse, 40 Reservoir Park Dr., Suite E, Rockland, MA, 02370, or donate via Weymouth Food Pantry’s Amazon Wish List

Individuals, families, houses of worship, sports teams, clubs, business, and other groups are encouraged to join the competition.

Follow the score and receive updates by following the Franklin Food Pantry’s and Weymouth Food Pantry’s Facebook and Instagram pages. In this “SOUPer Bowl,” the real victory is eliminating hunger—and that’s a win for everyone!

About Franklin Food Pantry, Inc.

The Franklin Food Pantry, Inc. offers supplemental food assistance, household necessities, and resource referrals to more than 1,880 individuals per year. The Pantry relies on donations and grants to purchase items and pay for daily operations, and partnerships with The Greater Boston Food Bank, Spoonfuls, and local grocery stores to achieve greater buying power and lower costs. Programs include Inside Shopping, Curbside Pickup, Emergency Food Boxes, Mobile Pantries, Home Delivery, Kids’ Snack Bags, Weekend Backpacks, Holiday Meals, and the SNAP match at Franklin

FRANKLIN
FOOD
PANTRY

VS.

WEYMOUTH
FOOD
PANTRY

SOUPER BOWL

TACKLE



HUNGER

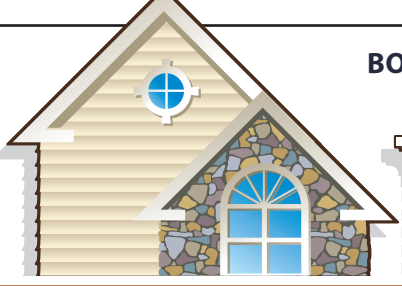


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ZONE 2: REACH 104,764
Ashland, Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Natick, Norfolk, Norwood, Upton and Wrentham

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try is located at 341 W Central St. in Franklin, MA on Route 140. Please visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org, or on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn for more information.

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Jen Schofield

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Calendar

February 3

Franklin Garden Club Meeting, 6 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, “Deep in the Heart of Winter – New Age Floral Designs”

Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m., Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, <https://voiceoffranklin.toastmastersclubs.org>

February 4

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin. Artist demonstrator is sculptor, Brendan Sullivan.

February 5

Stony Brook Camera Club Member competition, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, stonybrookcc.com

Stirring the Pot: A Conversation on Culinary Creativity, 7 p.m., Medfield Council on Aging, 1 Ice House Rd., Medfield, leading chefs, authors, and culinary entrepreneurs share stories and insights into the creative process behind the plate, free, but suggested donation \$25, register at www.bell-forge.org.

February 7

Rotary Club of Franklin MA Annual Valentine’s Senior Brunch, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.,

1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin. Free for all Franklin seniors or residents of Franklin Housing Authority. Sign up at Central Park Terrace, 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin or Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, Franklin

Community Concerts @ Franklin UMC presents Michael Rivelis on acoustic guitar, 7 p.m., Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 West Central St., Franklin. Refreshments served after concert. Free.

Bruce Mattson’s Mardi Gras Party! (Ex keyboardist for the Gregg Allman band), Doors open at 6:30 with 7pm showtime, Niagara Coffee Haus, 8 Exchange St., Millis, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bruce-mattsons-mardi-gras-party-tickets-1979659805770>

Nashville’s Crys Matthews, 7:30 p.m., Circle of Friends Franklin’s First Universalist Society Meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St. in Franklin, <https://circlefolk.org/>

February 8

Second Sunday Speaker Series: Looking back at 115 Years of Scouting, 1:15 p.m. (doors open 1 p.m.), Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, with Peter Glass, Curator at the Casoni Museum, a part of the Camp Squanto Alumni Association on

the South Shore who will share history and display some items related to the generations of Scouting in the region. Admission free; donations appreciated.

February 11

The Bad Apples Present: Date Night Concert, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

February 12

Stony Brook Camera Club “Vision, Passion, and Projects” with Cole Thompson, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, stonybrookcc.com

February 14

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Valentine’s Bake Sale, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Stop & Shop, 40 Franklin Village Drive, left side entrance

Chocolate Tasting, 3 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Registration Required

February 17

Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m., Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, <https://voiceoffranklin.toastmastersclubs.org>

February 18

Scott Martell Magic Show, 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, recommended for Ages 4-12

LGBTQ Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio 23 Hutchinson St. This month’s selection: Reflections in a Golden Eye by Carson McCullers.

February 19

Mr. Vinny Shadow Puppets, 10:30 a.m., Lunar New Year Celebration, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

Stony Brook Camera Club “Photographing Rhode Island” with Kevin Bruff, 7:30 p.m., Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin, MA, Hybrid program, stonybrookcc.com

February 20

Franklin Library Book Sale, 1 – 5 p.m., 118 Main St., Franklin, All books \$1

February 21

Winter Beach Party! 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, kids’ program, complete with play sand

Franklin Library Book Sale, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., 118 Main St., Franklin, All books \$1, bag sale 1-4 p.m.

Free Back Pain Workshop, 9 a.m., Professional Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine, 620 Old W. Central St., Franklin, Registration Required, space limited, call (508) 520-6100

February 22

FUSF presents film Common Ground, and Potluck, 12:30 p.m., First Universalist Society at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin, film, starring among others, Woody Harrelson, Laura Dern, Jason Momoa and Danny Glover takes a look at our food system.

February 26

Stony Brook Camera Club Cabin Fever Workshop, 7:30 p.m., Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin, MA, stonybrookcc.com

MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) Annual Tourism Summit and Legislative Breakfast, “The World Is Coming: Preparing for Visitors, Impact & Opportunity”, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., Renaissance Framingham Hotel & Conference Center, To view the full agenda and register, visit www.metrowestvisitors.org/annual_meeting.

February 28

Putin’s War: His Motives, Claims, and Lies, 3 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Explore the history, consequences, and quandaries of the Russia Ukraine conflict.



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FUSF Food Justice Team to Screen *Common Ground*, Hold Potluck

On Sunday, February 22, 2026, at 12:30 pm, the First Universalist Food Justice Team will be screening the award-winning film “Common Ground”, starring among others, Woody Harrelson, Laura Dern, Jason Momoa and Danny Glover. “By fusing journalistic expose’ with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, Common Ground unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us. The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of white, black, and indigenous farmers who are using alternative “regenerative” models of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America’s economy”.

Enjoy a potluck while watching or feel free to bring your own lunch. Admission is free. The screening and post-film discussion will take place at the First Universalist Society at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin.

Please also mark your calendars for March 8, 2026 when the discussion of regenerative agriculture farming practices continues with a discussion with Ali Coakley, proprietor, Night Owl Farm, Franklin.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. For more information, please contact us at info@fusf.org or call (508) 528-5348.

Historic Happenings Franklin Historical Museum for February

Regular Hours: Saturdays 10-1, Sundays 1-4

Sunday, Feb. 8 – The ‘Second Sunday Speaker Series’-- Looking back at 115 Years of Scouting

Peter Glass, Curator at the Casoni Museum, a part of the Camp Squanto Alumni Association on the South Shore, and the only Scouting Museum in New England, will come to the Franklin Historical Museum to share some slices of Scouting history as well as to display some items and objects related to the generations of Scouting in the region. Notably Feb. 8 is when the Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910. Glass serves Scouts America as a Territorial Commissioner. And is also a retired Music teacher and Band Director. The museum opens at 1 and closes at 4. Admission is free but donations are always appreciated.

Saturday, Feb. 14 and continuing thereafter – Revolutionary Franklin on the “KiASK”

The Franklin Historical Museum’s ‘KiASK’ touch-screen terminal is being updated with stories drawn from the Revolutionary War period in and around our town. Come and explore the concise stories and intriguing images...

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central Street, Franklin. Questions? Contact Alan Earls at (508) 560 3786. Visit us online at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.org>



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Sports

Franklin Looking to Get Back to Familiar Territory

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Over the past few years, the Franklin boys' basketball team has found its way into the MIAA Division 1 State Championship game. Two years ago, the Panthers cruised into the Championship game winning their four games by an average of 19.5 points per game, but unfortunately fell short (59-53) to North. Last year, Franklin once again rode into that same final game by a combined 16.5 average over its four games. This time, coach CJ Neely took his team to the top of the mountain with a three-point win over Newton North to bring home the State Championship.

After finally picking up the elusive hardware, Neely stepped aside, and Mike Masto has stepped into his sneakers to fill the void. Masto began his coaching career in 2011 as the Franklin freshman boys' basketball coach before moving up and taking the reins of the junior varsity team under Neely. Masto would leave Franklin to become the head coach at Walpole for two years before moving over to Natick for the next six seasons before making his return to Franklin.

"Franklin has always been my dream job," he said. "I started teaching here in 2010 and basketball was my passion. I knew that I had to depart Franklin in order to return. I needed experience."

Now, as his returns to take over a successful program created by Neely, he finds himself under a large magnifying glass, with the pressure to keep the ship righted having lost nine seniors from last year's squad.

"Pressure is a privilege, and I told the kids that we need to create our own culture – write our own story," the Panthers coach said. "The team has responded and know that graduating those nine seniors we were pretty much going into a complete overhaul this year."

Having worked under Neely, Masto believes that he has a similar philosophy as his predecessor and wants to get his team to the same mountain.

"Having worked with CJ, I know how he went about things, but I have my own ways of doing things," Masto said. "Coming in, I knew that there was going to be a little bit of a learning curve on both sides. We would have to learn about each other (coaches and players) but would eventually get there."

Coming into this season, the new coach will be looking for his captains to lend a hand to helping him get his process across to the players. Senior Justice Samuels and Jack Sullivan along with junior Nas Johnson will be the ones providing the hard work and max effort, coming to practice early and staying late to set the example for the rest of the team.

On the actual court during games, Samuels, the only returner with any championship playing time, will be looked upon to use his rebounding skills to get put back baskets as well as rim protection on the defensive side of the ball. Sullivan has shown during the early part of the season to be the Panthers' leading scorer, something that was not anticipated by the coaching staff.

"Justice can dominate a game, so there is a lot of attention placed on him by opposing teams allowing him to create other opportunities," the Panther Coach said. "Jack, who only saw a little bit of varsity time last year because of the senior group being so strong, has taken a step forward this year and is currently averaging 12.7 points per game."

Two other seniors who have stepped up and picked up some of the scoring slack have been James Crowley, averaging 8.1 points per game and Ben Scaccia with 7.7 points. According to the Coach, Scaccia is definitely a scorer; he can slash to the rim really well, but he has had to get use to the speed of the game. Having played junior varsity basketball last year, he must get used to varsity play.

Crowley, on the other hand, is more of a post player who will get the majority of his points in the paint, while also using his



With Coach Mike Masto at the helm and just one returning player with tourney experience, Franklin boys' basketball looks to build as it eyes a repeat tournament win.

outstanding rebound abilities defensively as well as offensively. In a recent game against North Attleboro, he pulled down 15 rebounds for the Panthers.

Sophomore Danny Santos has been a pleasant surprise thus far, averaging 9.3 points per game, while as a point guard he has been able to handle opposing team's press and get Franklin moving into their offense.

While the obvious goals are to get back to the State Championship for the third year in a row, Masto's expectations are focus; a day-by-day mentality, building one brick at a time.

"I knew coming in that it was going to be a learning curve, and no one is bigger than the team itself, we are all parts," he said. "We need to work on the controllables and work hard. They have all bought in and understand what it is all about. Everyone is an important piece to the puzzle."

Franklin opened the season 0-2, while feeling the pressure. The team began to focus and turned things around, winning four of its last five games.

"Having only one person (Samuels) with any real varsity basketball experience, the rest of the team needed to gain that experience," the coach said.

"We are starting to earn that experience and are feeling better about ourselves. If we continue to focus, taking it step by step, that next game, mentality, we should be all right."

The team without a doubt wants to be in those big-time games, but Masto and his coaching staff are just trying to keep the perspective while growing with each game. The coach is

proud of his team having embodied his philosophy, and if they continue to learn throughout the season, Franklin could once again get into the Division 1 State Tournament and make its way toward a third straight Championship game and possibly bring home back-to-back titles.

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Franklin Public Library February 2026

Franklin Public Library VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

It's tax season and volunteers at Franklin Public Library are here to help! If you made \$67k or less as a household in 2025, have a disability, or limited English, our volunteers are prepared to work with you to file your federal and state taxes for free. Learn more about the VITA program and what documents you need at www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-tax-volunteers or email site coordinator Mitzi Gousie at mgousie@minlib.net

ESOL Tutoring Program

Franklin Public Library's

English for Speakers of Other Languages Program is looking for new volunteer tutors. You do not need teaching experience to volunteer; you just need to speak English clearly and be committed to helping a neighbor improve their English skills! If that sounds like you, please fill out the volunteer form on the ESOL page of the library's website.

Special Events for Kids & Teens

Interactive Movie! Thursday, February 5 @ 1 p.m.

Families - join us for a special Interactive movie screening! Enjoy popcorn and some fun surprises.

Teen Paint Party, Tuesday, February 17 @ 6 p.m.

Registration Required

Join Miss Lily and create your very own step-by-step painting of some sweet candy hearts! For ages 12+. All materials provided.

Scott Martell Magic Show, Wednesday, February 18 @ 10:30 a.m. (Ages 4-12)

Join us as we welcome magician Scott Martell and enjoy a family magic show featuring lots of comedy and surprises!

Slime Time, Wednesday, February 18 @ 4 p.m.

Make your own slime at the Library!

Mr. Vinny Shadow Puppets, Thursday, February 19 @ 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Vinny from the Toe Jam Puppet Band presents a dynamic and hilarious family show! Get ready for lots of jokes and audience participation, and a few fun surprises.

Winter Beach Party! Saturday, February 21 @ 10:30 a.m.

Let's bring a little summer warmth to this cold month! Join us as we turn our big program room into an indoor summer oasis. Grab a cold drink and hit the play sand, enjoy beach balls, sand castles, snacks, and groovy tunes.

Special Events for Adults

Chocolate Tasting, Saturday, February 14 @ 3 p.m.

Registration Required

New England, and Massachusetts in particular, has been a candy crown jewel since colonial times. Come taste various chocolate types from across the commonwealth as we explore the various types and treats!

Putin's War: His Motives, Claims, and Lies, Saturday, February 28 @ 3 p.m.

Dmitri Yakovlev wholeheartedly supports Ukraine in their fight for freedom and argues that the conflict soon may become the whole world's problem. Ex-

plore the history, consequences, and quandaries of the Russia Ukraine conflict.

Special Events for All Ages

The Bad Apples Present: Date Night Concert, Wednesday, February 11 @ 6:30 p.m.

Join us at the library for an awesome weeknight concert with the Bad Apples! Featuring your favorite love songs, you're sure to fall in love with the library after this evening.

Lunar New Year Celebration, Thursday, February 19 @ 1 p.m.

It's the year of the horse! Come celebrate at the library with crafts, games, snacks and more.

Franklin Library Book Sale

Friday, February 20: 1 – 5 p.m.,
Saturday, February 21: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. All books \$1.

Bag Sale - \$5 A Bag, Saturday, February 21: 1 – 4 p.m.

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Franklin Food Pantry Updates

Save the Date: Party for The Pantry 2026

Mark your calendar for Party for The Pantry at THE BLACK BOX on Saturday, March 28, 2026, featuring live music from local bands, door prizes, and a silent auction with exclusive trips from AmFund.

Sponsorship opportunities are available! Email Jen Johnson, Development Associate, at Jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org.

Legacy Gifts to The Pantry

Have you considered leaving a legacy gift to The Pantry? This can be as simple as asking your friends and family to make memorial gifts in your honor in lieu of flowers or as involved as naming The Pantry as a beneficiary of your estate. For more information on our Circle of Light program, email our Development Director at donations@franklinfoodpantry.org.

Please be sure to consult your trusted financial and legal advisors and inform your family before finalizing your plans.

Thanksgiving and Winter Holiday

The Pantry met a rising need this season, providing 1,080 Thanksgiving and winter holiday meals.

Using the Food Pantry

If you need or know of someone who needs food or personal care items, visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org or contact Laura Du, Client Services Manager, at (508) 528-3115, or Ldu@franklinfoodpantry.org for more information. Visits to the Franklin Food Pantry are completely confidential.

The Franklin Food Pantry is located 341 West Central St., Franklin. Visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org for more information.

Letter To the Editor: Thank You, Community

On behalf of Cornerstone at Milford, the staff and the residents, I would like to thank the businesses and organizations in Milford and the neighboring towns of Franklin, Bellingham, and Medway for their kind donations to our Stockings for Seniors event. It's hard to believe, but Stockings for Seniors is in its 12th year. This annual event allows Cornerstone at Milford seniors to support their peers in our region, during what can be a challenging time of year.

Cornerstone at Milford originally developed this event around the holidays in the hopes of providing kindness, recognition, and love to those who may not have family nearby or may have experienced a loss this year. We

distributed over 250 stockings filled with personal care items such as mittens, socks, hand lotion, lip balm, playing cards, and notebooks.

We want to extend a special thank you to everyone who generously supported us this year, whether you donated your time or items for distribution. We wish to thank:

- Milford Senior Center Sewing Club
- Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School
- Rosemary Tsacoyianis-Centered Care Coaching by Ro
- Amare-Lisa Wood
- O'Malley Geropsychology - Kelly O'Malley, Owner

- Bright Agency Insurance - Krishna Swanson
- Realty One Group - Nancy Briggs and Martha Morese, Senior Realtor Specialists
- Homefield Credit Union
- Tri-County Regional Chamber of Commerce
- ERA Key Realty in Milford
- Jackie, Personal Aide

With gratitude,

Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living & Compass Memory Support

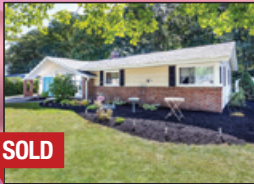
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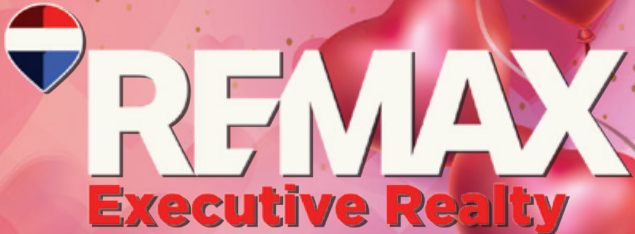
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State Officials Issue Annual Reminder on Open Burning Season

Fire Safety, Environmental Health, and Injury Prevention are Top Concerns

Stow, MA -Massachusetts’ fire and environmental leaders are reminding residents to use caution, care, and common sense if they plan to burn certain agricultural waste during open burning season, which runs from January 15 to May 1.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Commissioner Bonnie Heiple of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

“Open burning season applies only to specific types of fuel and is always limited based on the daily fire hazard, environmental concerns, and location,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “Even where burning is authorized, you must have a permit from your local fire department and you must be able to extinguish the fire on a moment’s notice. Please make safety your priority when burning.”

“Improper open burning creates safety risks and can harm air quality,” said MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple. “Only burning approved natural materials — like driftwood and prunings — and burning on ‘good air days,’ when pollution levels are low and air circulates well, ensures these fires can be managed safely.”

“Massachusetts residents have seen just how quickly outdoor fires can grow out of control,” said DCR Chief Fire Warden Celino. “We encourage everyone to exercise caution - don’t risk a fire that puts you, your home, or your community at risk. Burn only approved materials, always get a permit from your local fire department, and ensure that any fire is extinguished properly and completely.”

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for “no burn” days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued; and the Massachusetts

Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits.

In Franklin, open burning season runs from January 15 through May 1. Residents may apply for a free permit, good for the season, at <https://www.franklinma.gov/197/Burning-Permits-2026>.

Burning rules include

- Brush, cane, driftwood, forestry debris, agriculture-related materials, agricultural land clearing only, and fungus-infected Elmwood are allowed under the following conditions:
 - Burning must be at least 75 feet from any dwellings.
 - Burning must be carried out between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily. The fire must be extinguished by 4 p.m.
 - Burning must begin by noon.
 - A water source to control and extinguish the fire must be present.

- Burning of the following materials is **PROHIBITED** and may subject you to revocation of your permit and/or a fine:
 - Grass, hay, leaves, and stumps. **YOU MAY NOT BURN LEAVES.**
 - Tires
 - Construction materials and lumber
- **EACH** day of burning, you must
 - Call (508) 553-5574 each day in between 9am and noon to see if burning is allowed.
 - Have a means of controlling the fire, such as a garden hose, pressurized water pump, shovels and rakes, with sufficient help.
 - Attend fire at all times.
 - Extinguish the fire fully by 4 p.m.

The Fire Chief maintains the right to revoke any permits or to cancel any permits due to high forest fire danger or to deny a permit to any person who he

believes will not follow the Open Burning Requirements and Responsibilities or to any person who has violated these requirements in the past.

Safety Tips

- Never use gasoline or other flammable liquids to start a fire.
- An adult must attend the fire until it is extinguished.
- Watch the wind and be prepared to extinguish the fire.
- Don’t delay a call for help if the fire gets out of control. Don’t hesitate to contact the fire department.
- Select a location away from utility lines.
- Burn one small pile and add to it.
- It is recommended that you burn upon sandy or gravelly land free from living or dead vegetation.

Neighboring Reminder

Please be considerate to your neighbors and your surroundings. Creating a nuisance is grounds for permit revocation.



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Massasoit Community College Announces Fall 2025 Dean’s List

Brockton, MA – Massasoit Community College has announced its Fall 2025 Dean’s List. The 996 students, representing dozens of communities across Massachusetts and Rhode Island, have completed at least nine credits and earned a 3.40 GPA or higher.

The following local students from Franklin have achieved the Dean’s List:

Sean William Merritt, Alexander William Nacopoulos, and Kevin P. Ranahan.

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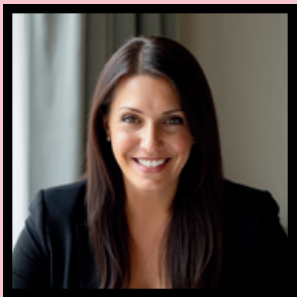
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