Upton & Mendon FREE PRESS

Vol. 4 No. 2 | *Free to Every Home and Business Every Month* | Feb. 12 - March 11, 2026

Revolutionary War documents transcribed in Upton

By Theresa Knapp

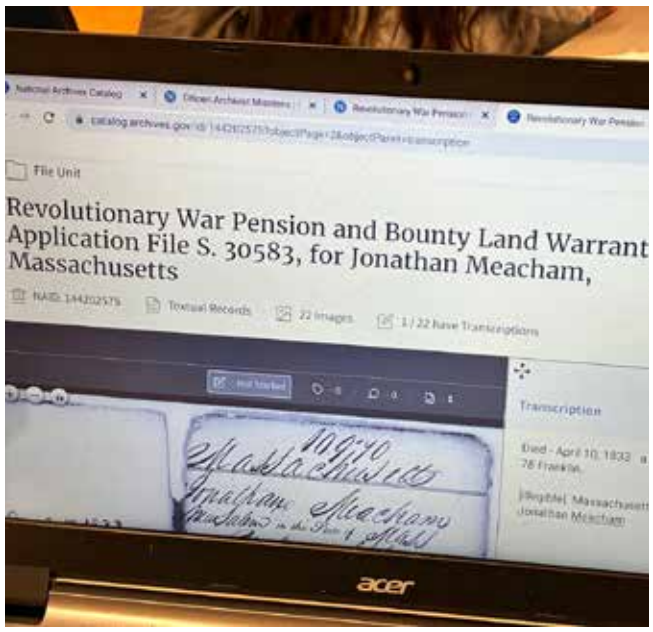
On Jan. 14, volunteers gathered at the Upton Community Center to help the National Archives and the National Park Service transcribe Revolutionary War documents. The event was co-sponsored by the Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park and the Upton Historical Society.

The event began with Park Rangers providing training to 25 volunteers who ranged in age from high school to senior citizen. Volunteers were required to sign up in advance and every slot was full.

Barry Lynn of the Upton Historical Society said the event's 25 seats were filled be-

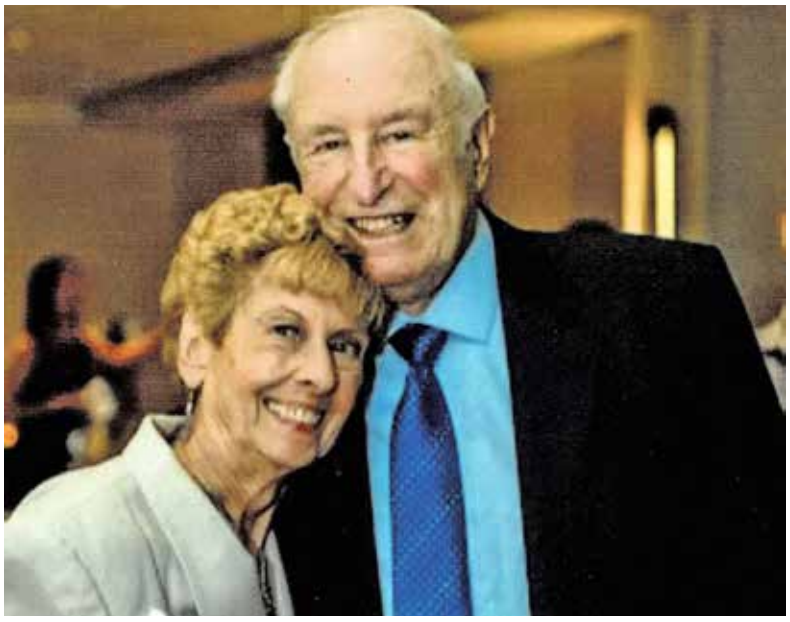
REVOLUTIONARY

continued on page 10



This is an example of one of the Revolutionary War pension documents transcribed for the National Archives and the National Park Service in Upton. *Photo credit: Theresa Knapp*

Mastroianni, 98, recognized as Mendon's oldest resident



Anthony Mastroianni with his late wife, Marjorie. *Courtesy photo*

Anthony "Tony" Mastroianni was recently recognized by the Mendon Council on Aging as Mendon's oldest resident at 98 years young.

Tony and his late wife, Marjorie, shared an extraordinary 65 years of marriage before her passing three years ago. Together, they

MASTROIANNI

continued on page 6

PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PERMIT NO. 142
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, MA

Postal Customer Local

FREE PRESS
Scan this QR CODE to visit our Website

Scan this QR CODE to visit our Facebook Page
FREE PRESS

Mendon-Upton recognized for achievement in math

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District (MURSD) has been added to the short list of districts surpassing pre-pandemic achievement in math.

The Analysis

Out of over 300 school districts in Massachusetts, Mendon-Upton was recognized as one of only 54 districts that have surpassed pre-pandemic student achievement in math in grades 3-8, and state leaders are taking notice.

"Grade 4 student growth MCAS in math has been well above the mean at about the 60th percentile for the past four years," explained Assistant Superintendent Kirkpatrick. "This strong growth has far outpaced most other districts and, importantly, has been experienced by all students, including students with disabilities."

Although statewide math proficiency has been somewhat stagnant since 2022, MURSD math proficiency improved, with 62% of MURSD students in grades 3 and 4 meeting/exceeding grade-level expectations, seven points higher than proficiency levels for MURSD elementary students prior to the pandemic and 18 percentage points higher than the state average.

"Strong growth in elementary math has enabled student achievement at both Henry P. Clough and Memorial elementary schools to surge past pre-pandemic achievement levels," said Assistant Superintendent Kirkpatrick. "At Memorial, 71% of last year's cohort of fourth graders met or exceeded expectations in math. This is why the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) invited school and district leaders to an invitation-only Celebration Academic Success Convening on Dec. 2, and a follow-up visit on Dec. 11 by the Office of Educator Effectiveness."

Statewide Achievement

Leaders at both schools indicated that educators working together to implement high-quality curriculum resources and monitor student progress has been pivotal to student success.

"Together we implemented new math resources — a big and sometimes messy change," said Memorial Elementary School Assistant Principal Lauren Chuk. "With administration working alongside teachers and really listening to them in order to understand and validate the challenges they experience, we addressed implementation challenges together."

On Dec. 11, Karen Johnston, a representative from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Educator Effectiveness, visited the MURSD to learn how grade-level data teams at the elementary level work. She also visited fourth-grade math classes at Memorial Elementary, and a co-taught fourth-grade math class at Clough. *Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District*

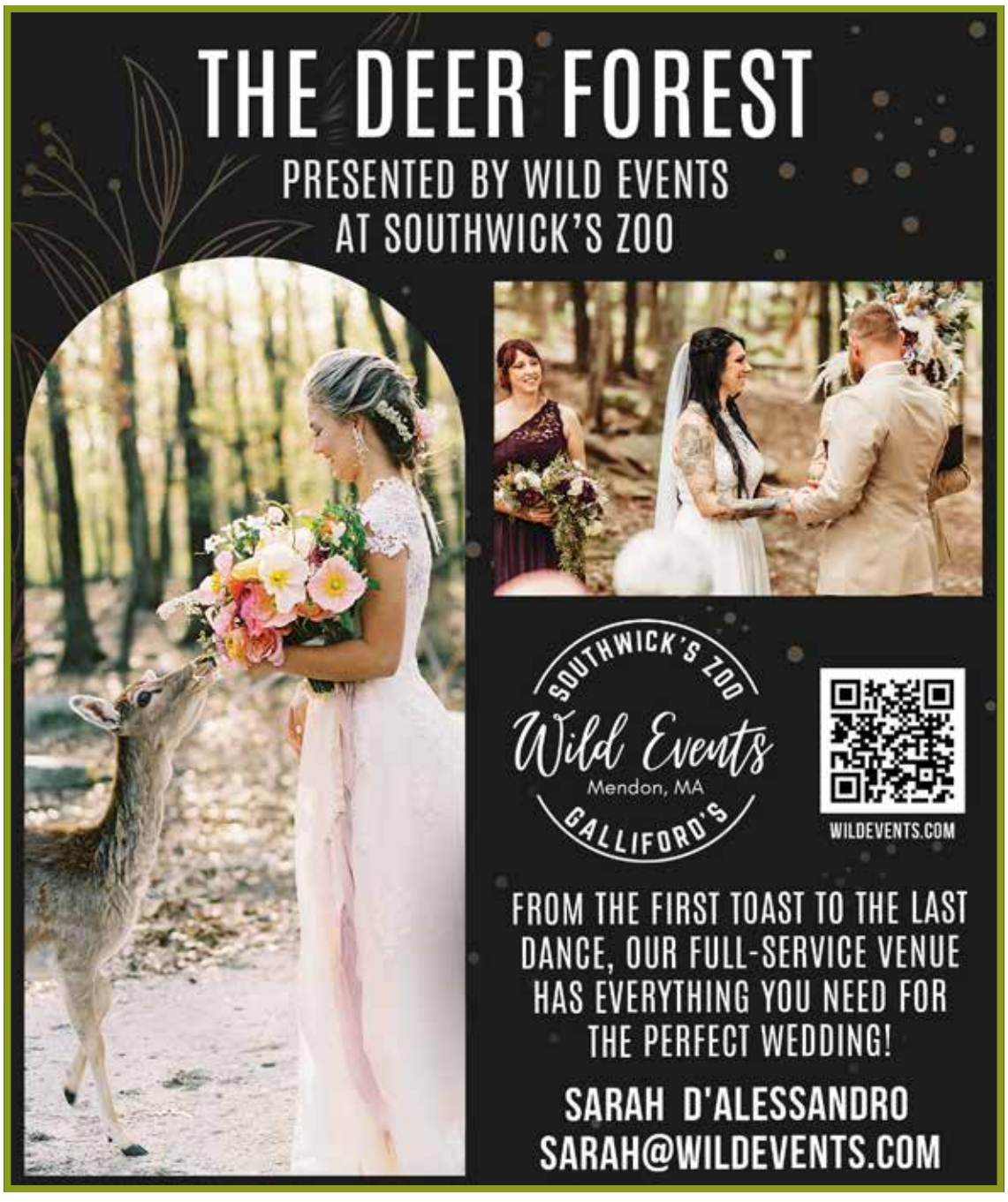
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) invited Memorial Elementary School Principal Wendy Bell and Henry P. Clough Elementary School Principal Liz Garden to present to other school and district leaders at a DESE-sponsored Celebration of Academic Success held on Dec. 2. The principals shared some of their successful practices.

Wendy Bell shared that when Memorial School administrators noticed that educators were struggling with some aspects of the elementary math program, they worked with teachers to help them review the scope and sequence of the program and the implications of making autonomous decisions to not teach certain key lessons.

"We read through all the units and talked about the skills that needed to be mastered in each unit," said Principal Bell. "Then we supported teams in teaching the curriculum with integrity."

Over the past few years the district has made important advances in helping educators access academic data and formatively reviewing this data to provide support

MATH
continued on page 3



Auto loans made simple
Rates as low as 4.37 % APR*

CENTRAL ONE
centralfcu.com | (508) 482-5371
Visit centralfcu.com or our Milford branch located at 82 Prospect Street to apply today!
*Annual Percentage Rate. Rate listed is for personal use vehicles only and is subject to change. Federally insured by NCUA.

MATH

continued from page 2

and adjust practice.

"One of the key structures leading to our success has been grade-level data team meeting time that is sacred," said Principal Garden. "We meet regularly and review formative data and plan next steps as teams."

Feedback & Recognition

Following the Celebration of Success Convening, representatives from DESE visited the district on Dec. 11 to witness first-hand how data meetings are conducted, how educators are collaborating, and how co-teaching has supported students along the way.

"They can tell from our results, and our Student Opportunity Act (SOA) plan and progress reports, that we have been able to successfully implement high-quality curriculum resources, use data effectively, and develop cultures where teachers are supported to lead improvement efforts," said Assistant Superintendent Kirkpatrick. "DESE is interested in learning from Mendon-Upton in order to share effective practices with other schools and districts."

DESE's SOA Coordinator Karen Johnston spent time in a grade-level data team meeting and fourth-grade math classes at Memorial Elementary, and a fourth-grade math class co-taught at Clough.

Johnston told MURSD educators that DESE has taken note of the progress that Mendon-Upton has been making, especially in elementary math.

"A school might see how well you are doing and say, 'How can we do that?' and we want to help them learn what you've done," Johnston told the MURSD educators following her visit.

To conclude her visit, Johnston had a series of questions for MURSD administrators. She asked for examples of high-impact district decisions that were not connected to grant-funding.

"We analyzed the schedule and made changes that were necessary to provide quality Tier I instruction and the staff worked together to make these important changes to support student learning," said Principal Garden.

Principal Bell added, "We have also developed and implemented data protocols and routines that guide our team conversations."

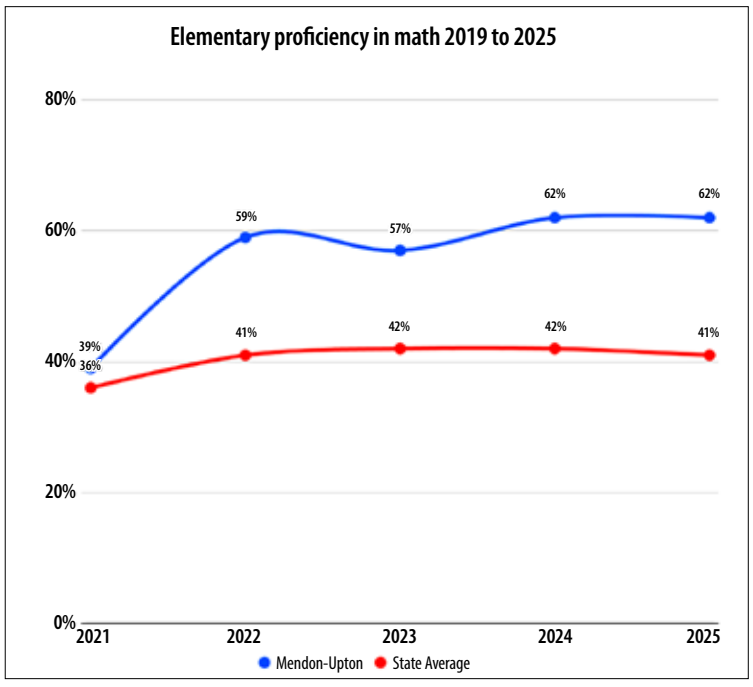
"Grant funding provides the curriculum, data resources, and support for teacher leadership development, from which we have benefitted and for which we are grateful," said Superintendent Maureen Cohen, "But the reason our students and schools have been so successful is in the way these leaders and teachers have used these resources. The incredible attitude and effort of our educators are the aspects of our success that go way beyond the funding."

Looking ahead, grant funding is likely to be extremely limited, and the district will need the support of the community to acquire additional resources.

"We have been fortunate to be awarded over $550,000 in the last 4 years to support our data systems curriculum resource acquisition, and will need the support of the community to continue to upgrade curriculum and as grant funding dwindles." Said Assistant Superintendent Kirkpatrick.

But, working together there is and will be a lot to celebrate.

"I could not be more proud of our young math students, their teachers, and our school and district leaders," Superintendent Cohen continued. "It's nice to be recognized and to know others want to learn from us, but what is most important is that our students have regained the ground lost during the pandemic and continue to grow beyond that."



MURSD elementary students (blue) achieve in math at levels way above state averages (red). *Graphic Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District*

Brand Spankin' New 2025 TOYOTA
RAV4 LE SUV ADV AWD - 2.5L
• 27/34 MPG City/Hwy • Lane Departure

#ST1072
MSRP: $33,409
BUY FOR AS LOW AS: $31,709+
LEASE FOR AS LOW AS: $320* PER MONTH • PLUS TAX
SAVE $1700 48 RAV4s AVAILABLE
*New 2025 RAV4 LE AWD with MSRP: $33,409. Lease requires approved credit; based on 10,000 miles per year. $0.15 per mile excess. Lease for $320 per month for 36 months with $4,430 due at signing (including $3,460 cash or trade down, first month's payment of $320, and acquisition of $650). Tax, title, registration, and inspection fees are additional. $0 Security deposit. Lessee is responsible for insurance, maintenance, repairs, excess wear/tear, and $350 disposition fee where permitted by law. Example Stk# ST1072. Offer ends 02/28/2026.

Brand Spankin' New 2026 TOYOTA
TACOMA SR5 4x4 - i-FORCE 2.4L
• Double Cab • Alloys • Lane Departure • 5-ft bed

#TM26-202
MSRP: $42,969
BUY FOR AS LOW AS: $40,469+
LEASE FOR AS LOW AS: $349* PER MONTH • PLUS TAX
SAVE $2500 40 TACOMAs AVAILABLE
*New 2026 Tacoma SR5 2.4L Double Cab with MSRP: $42,969. Lease requires approved credit; based on 10,000 miles per year. $0.15 per mile excess. Lease for $349 per month for 36 months with $4,998 due at signing (including $3,999 cash or trade down, first month's payment of $349, and acquisition of $650). Tax, title, registration, and inspection fees are additional. $0 Security deposit. Lessee is responsible for insurance, maintenance, repairs, excess wear/tear, and $350 disposition fee where permitted by law. Example Stk# TM26-202. Offer ends 02/28/2026.

TOYOTA
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY SAVINGS EVENT

IMPERIAL TOYOTA TOYOTA
300 FORTUNE BOULEVARD | MILFORD, MA 01757
508-488-2382 • IMPERIALTOYOTAMA.COM
NOW SERVICING ALL MAKES AND MODELS | MON-TH 9-9, FRI & SAT 9-6, SUN 12-6
TOYOTA
+SALE ENDS 02/28/2026. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER PROMOTION OR DISCOUNTS. PRICES NOT VALID WITH PRIOR SALES. SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY. PRICE INCLUDES ALL APPLICABLE REBATES AND INCENTIVES INCLUDING $1,000 IMPERIAL TRADE ASSIST. SEE US FOR DETAILS. DELIVERY MUST BE TAKEN FROM DEALER STOCK. CUSTOMER'S FINAL PAYMENT MAY BE HIGHER OR LOWER DEPENDING ON FINAL TRANSACTION PRICE. ADVERTISED PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE TAX, TITLE, REGISTRATION AND $595 DOCUMENTATION FEE. THE BUY FOR PRICE REQUIRES DEALERSHIP SOURCE FINANCING. 7 DAY OR 200 MILE RETURN EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR YOUR TOTAL CONFIDENCE - IF YOU'RE NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR IMPERIAL CERTIFIED USED VEHICLE, BRING IT BACK WITHIN 7 DAYS OR 200 MILES AND WE WILL GIVE YOU A CREDIT OF YOUR FULL PURCHASE PRICE TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF ANOTHER IN STOCK VEHICLE. NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS. PHOTOS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY. CALL 1-508-488-2382 TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT TO TEST DRIVE.

Daughters of the American Revolution to celebrate local heroine on March 26

In honor of our Nation's 250th anniversary, Upton Historical Society is proud to host a special presentation on the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) by Millie Williams, President of the Deborah Wheelock Chapter on Thursday, March 26, at 6:30 p.m. in the Upton Community Center. It promises to be more than just an opportunity to learn about the DAR; it's a moment to honor a remarkable woman in Upton's history.

A highlight of the evening will be the tribute to Polly Dean Bradish, an Upton abolitionist recognized for her courageous role in the Underground Railroad. Bradish, who risked her life to harbor fugitive slaves in Upton, exemplifies the spirit of bravery and compassion that the DAR seeks to honor. We will remember Polly Dean Bradish not just as a figure of history but as a beacon of hope and humanity. Attendees are sure to be moved by the stories of Bradish's selflessness and the impact of her actions on those seeking freedom.

About the DAR

The DAR is a lineage-based organization that has long been dedicated to promoting historic preservation, education, and patriotism. Millie Williams will enlighten attendees about the organization's history and the process of joining. Being a part of the DAR is about connecting with our past and ensuring the values of freedom and service are carried into the future.

This event will also serve as an invitation to women who are descendants of Revolutionary War veterans to consider joining the DAR. Membership offers a unique opportunity to engage with a network of women committed to learning, service, and community involvement. Participants are expected to leave with a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices of past generations and a renewed commitment to preserving their legacy. The event will remind attendees that the stories of individuals like Polly Dean Bradish continue to inspire and shape the future. Let us never forget the sacrifice of lives from the Revolutionary War to present day that gave us our freedom.

Portrait of Polly Dean Bradish, renowned Upton abolitionist, early 19th century, by Porter and Doyle, in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. *Photo public domain*

FREE PRESS

Published Monthly
on the 2nd Thursday
Mailed FREE
to the Communities of
Upton & Mendon
Circulation: 6000
households & businesses

Publisher
Jennifer Schofield

Editor
Theresa Knapp

Send Editorial to:
editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com

Advertising Sales
Susanne Odell Farber
508-954-8148
sue@sodellconsult.com

Advertising Sales Manager
Jen Schofield
508-570-6544
jenschofield@localtownpages.com

Creative Design & Layout
Michelle McSherry
Kim Vasseur
Wendy Watkins

Office Address
9 Industrial Road, Suite 107
Milford, MA 01757

Ad Space Deadline is the Friday 13 days prior to publication date.

Ad Artwork Deadline is the Wednesday 8 days prior to publication date.

Reader Submission Deadline is the 25th day of the month preceding the publication date. For example, items should be submitted by Feb. 25 to be included in the March issue.

Please submit to:
editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com

Free Press assumes no financial liability for errors or omissions in printed advertising and reserves the right to reject/edit advertising or editorial submissions.

© Copyright 2026 Free Press

Nipmuc Regional High School Class of 1966 will hold 60th reunion in June

The 60th reunion of the Nipmuc Regional High School Class of 1966 will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 6 p.m. at the Red Rock Grill and Bar, 66 West Main Street in Upton.

We were there for our 55th and had such a great time, we decided to go there again for our 60th!

Outdoors, casual, and like last time, everyone orders for themselves off the menu and pays for their own food and drinks.

No reservations, no advance collecting of money, just show up!

There are a few classmates for whom we have lost contact with through these 60 years, including:

- Harold Higgins
- Bernard Koenig
- Linda Miller
- Norman Ricard
- Marcia Shapley
- Barbara Taft
- Marcia Tobey
- Patricia Wadsworth
- Theresa Whitney

If anyone has contact information for these individuals, please contact Larrypearson48@gmail.com

Hope to see everyone there, that includes class members or anyone with an association with the Nipmuc Regional High School Class of 1966!

Local business owners: Don't overlook retirement plans

Mark Freeman, CEPA

FINANCIAL FOCUS®
Provided by Edward Jones

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A qualified financial advisor can help you navigate these decisions, explaining the trade-offs between different plan types and identifying which option best suits your unique situation. They can also help you understand eligibility requirements and ensure the plan you choose aligns with your business goals and personal financial objectives.

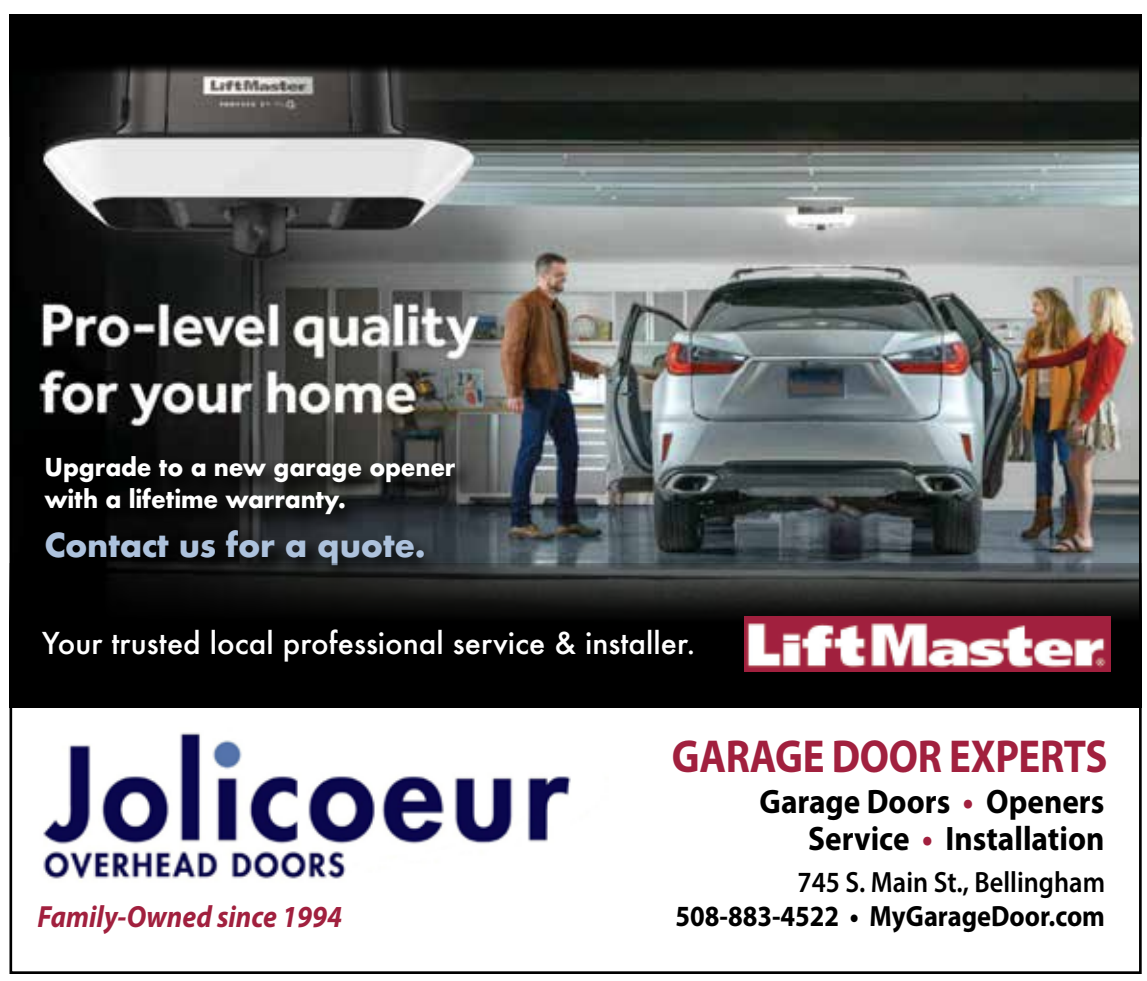
Starting a workplace retirement plan represents an investment in your future, your employees and the long-term success of your business.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
77 West Main Street,
Hopkinton, MA 508-293-4017
Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.



Upton resident to run Boston Marathon for DetectTogether

Letter to the Editor:

My name is Kelly Polinski, and I've lived in Upton since 2018 with my husband and our two children. Like many families here, our days are shaped by juggling school schedules, sports practices, early mornings, late nights, and the constant balancing act of work, family, and everything in between. If you're out and about, you might see me walking my dog or running along the familiar roads and hills that make Upton feel like home.

This April, I'll be running the Boston Marathon—a long-time goal of mine—and many of my training miles happen right here in town. The reality of marathon training is fairly mundane: it's about consistency, accountability, and showing up even when motivation is low. I do it for myself, but I also do it for a bigger purpose, one that makes showing up on hard days a little easier.

I'm running in support of DetectTogether, a local nonprofit focused on early cancer detection. Both my grandmother and my mother were diagnosed with the same type of cancer, which means I am now considered high-risk myself. That knowledge can be unsettling, but it has also been empowering. It has shaped how I approach my own health and strengthened my resolve to advocate for the importance of early detection and awareness.

Running has become one way I process the reality of my cancer risk—by choosing something hard, something constructive, and something that reminds me of my own strength. It's a way to take what feels uncertain and turn it into forward motion. Through this effort, I hope to help give others the same advantage I've been given. DetectTogether teaches people how to recognize early warning signs of cancer so they can seek care sooner and significantly improve their chances of survival.

What has made this journey especially meaningful is doing it within this community. From quick waves during runs, to words of encouragement at school events, to support from local businesses, the encouragement I've felt here has been deeply grounding. Upton is a place where people notice one another, where community is built quietly through shared effort and mutual support.

When I cross the finish line in Boston, this story will have been shaped mile by mile here at home. No matter how the race unfolds, Upton will remain an integral part of the journey. For those who feel moved to support this effort, all donations to DetectTogether help advance early cancer detection and education.

Kelly Polinski, Upton

Kelly Polinski of Upton will run the Boston Marathon in support of DetectTogether, a local nonprofit focused on early cancer detection.
Courtesy photo

MASTROIANNI

continued from page 1

raised three children in Milford, where Tony himself was born and raised, before moving to Mendon 27 years ago. He is the proud grandfather of five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A World War II veteran, Tony served an 18-month tour with the U.S. Navy in South America. His dedication to his fellow service members extended long beyond his military service. He served as Italian Veterans Commander in both the Town of Milford and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Tony has also been recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for more than 58 years of devoted service as a Massachusetts Veterans' Agent, supporting veterans across five area towns. His steadfast commitment to supporting veterans and their families has left a lasting legacy, including his role as mentor to Mendon's recently retired Veterans' Agent Robin Fletcher.

The Mendon Council on Aging recognized Tony Mastroianni's life of service, family devotion, and community impact in their January 2026 newsletter.

Source: Mendon Council on Aging

A previous version of this story included an incorrect age.

Mitsubishi Electric Ductless Systems
provide year-round comfort and are up to
40% more efficient than traditional systems.

BOUCHER ENERGY SYSTEMS, INC.

mass save HEAT PUMP INSTALLER

Boucher Energy is an Approved Mass Save Heat Pump Installer

Upfront rebates & financing available

508-473-6648
BoucherEnergy.com

DIAMOND CONTRACTOR ELITE

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

The Upton Mendon Free Press is currently seeking freelance writers who live in the area and are interested in writing for our publication. If interested, please email
editor@UptonMendonfreepress.com

Clear the clutter and start fresh this Winter!

Business spotlight

Winter's quieter months invite us to slow down, spend more time indoors, and finally tackle the clutter left behind by a busy holiday season — with help from Affordable Junk Removal. It is a natural time to give your home some extra attention by clearing out unused items and reclaiming everyday spaces. "Life is hectic, we are all so busy in our daily lives that we don't notice how quickly we are being overrun with junk," said Jason Schadler, who founded the business in this area 20 years ago. "It's nice to park your car in the garage during the cold months, but maybe you need to make room there first, and we can help with that."

With Affordable Junk Removal, you can rent a dumpster or have their Junk Removal Professionals come to haul away items that have been gathering dust and taking up precious space. Setting a New Year's resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing where to begin with cleaning out your home and that is where Affordable can assist you.

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

Changes in legislation have made it increasingly more difficult to dispose of certain items, like mattresses, for example. It is a state law that most textiles and mattresses must be recycled. "Finding places to take mattresses is a challenge and the fees for disposal have gone through the roof," said Schadler. Items like these carry a separate recycling fee that the commercial transfer stations charge because of how labor intensive that recycling is. "People are usually shocked at the cost, and we find ourselves educating the customer as to why these fees exist. Here at Affordable, we view ourselves as an avenue our clients can turn to when they have these items and want them disposed of legally, safely and properly."

Affordable has many repeat customers. "When people call, they reach me, not some automated corporate call center," he said. "They know me and the crew and trust us. We do a great job and are fast, efficient, and reliable. We come when we say we will and if anything unexpected comes up, we communicate. We live here too, we are your friends and neighbors. We sponsor your little league teams and run into you at the grocery store. We are your local guys." A quick look at the many years of positive online reviews attests to this.

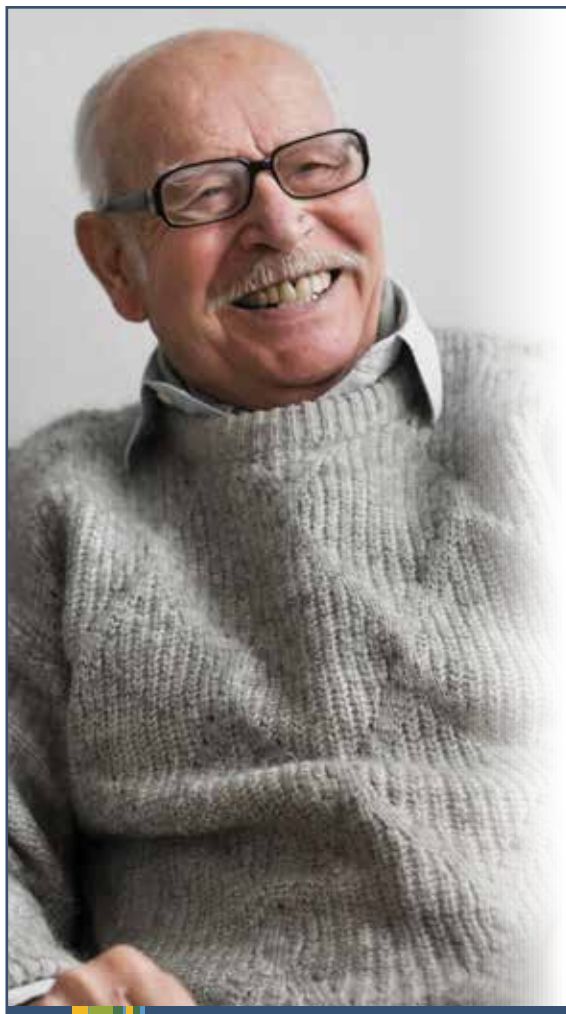
For more information, visit AffordableJunkRemoval.com. For an estimate or appointment, call or text 774-287-1133.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

New England Steak & Seafood Restaurant
OPEN SATURDAY, FEB.14 NOON-10PM
Come Celebrate Valentine's Day With Us!
REGULAR DINNER MENU SERVED
Route 16, Mendon • 508-473-5079
nesteakandseafood.com

PLEASE RECYCLE ME!

LAWN AND SNOW SERVICES
Cut & Clear
Attention to Detail
Local Small Business
Lawn Cutting
Seasonal Cleanups
Walk, Driveway & Bed Edging
Mulching • Shrub Trimming
FULLY INSURED • FREE QUOTES
CutAndClearLawnAndSnowServices.com | 774.462.1742



Winter Comfort, Genuine Connection

As the seasons change, embrace a lifestyle where comfort, connection, and peace of mind come together. From engaging activities and festive gatherings to exceptional amenities and personalized support—including assisted living and memory care—our community is here to help you thrive now and into the future.

Call 508-533-3300 today to learn more—we can't wait to welcome you home.

SALMON HEALTH & RETIREMENT
SALMON at Medway
44 Willow Pond Circle
Medway, MA 02053

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 PanOptix Pro trifocal lens, a next-generation implant providing sharp vision at near, intermediate, and distance ranges.

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

The center was also the first to install the Unity Cataract System, a fully integrated surgical platform that combines imaging, fluidics, and phacoemulsification in one system. This allows surgeons greater control, consistency, and efficiency, improving safety and outcomes.

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

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

For more details, see our ad on this page.

Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.

Milford man charged in connection with Upton fires

Off-duty Upton firefighter and wife spot blaze, assist with apprehension

UPTON—A Milford man was arrested in January for allegedly setting one of several recent illegal fires along the Peppercorn Trail, said Upton Fire Chief Michael Marchand, Upton Police Chief Nicholas Palmieri, and State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine.

Cameron Griffin, 28, was apprehended on the night of Jan. 22 at the scene of an outdoor fire near the Peppercorn Hill parking area along Crockett Road in Upton. He was charged with unlawful burning, disorderly conduct, and disturbing the peace in connection with the fire. He was additionally charged with child endangerment in light of a child who was in his vehicle at the time of the incident.

An off-duty Upton firefighter saw the blaze in its early stages after being alerted by his wife and drove from his nearby home to the scene. The firefighter positioned his vehicle to block Griffin's escape and remained on scene until Upton Police arrived and took him into custody.

Upton Fire Chief Michael Marchand identified the firefighter as Firefighter/EMT Matthew Kerr.

"Matt didn't hesitate to respond to what could have grown to a significant brush fire," said Chief Marchand. "Once at the scene, his decisive action helped Upton Police take the suspect into custody and likely end this spree of incendiary fires. On behalf of the Upton Fire Department and our brothers and sisters at Milford Fire, I want to recognize his efforts to protect public safety in our community."

Off-duty Upton Firefighter/EMT Matthew Kerr saw the blaze in its early stages after being alerted by his wife and drove from his nearby home to the scene.

Thursday's fire was one of several in the area since last summer, with at least five reported between July 25 and July 26, 2025, and another on Jan. 13, 2026. These fires are being investigated by the Upton and Milford police and fire departments, the Department of Conservation & Recreation, and the State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office. Investigators plan to seek additional charges in connection with these incidents, all of which took place in the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area.

"Upton Police and our law enforcement partners in Milford take great satisfaction in this arrest," said Chief Palmieri. "Any fire can be dangerous, but especially one in an outdoor setting frequented by residents and visitors who deserve to enjoy our natural resources."

"The 2024 Massachusetts wildfires showed all of us just how quickly an outdoor fire can spread," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Intentionally setting a fire in a wooded area is courting disaster, and this arrest demonstrates that it will have consequences."

Submitted by Mass. Department of Fire Services

Upton CoA February 2026

Tax Preparation and Filing–Sign Up for Free

By appointment only, Mondays through March

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, IRS-certified volunteers will help you prepare and file your Federal and State returns right here at the Upton Senior Center. While AARP is focused on taxpayers who are over 50 and have low to moderate income, the service is open to anyone of any age and is free of charge. Appointments begin on Monday, Feb. 9 and continue each Monday through March. Call 508-529-4558 for information and to make an appointment.

Mindful Meditation

Friday, Feb. 13 at 1 p.m.

Calm your mind and body so you can acknowledge and accept your thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment through Mindful Meditation with Robin Natanel.

Memory Café

Wed., Feb. 18 at 2 p.m.

The Memory Café offers a safe, welcoming space for people experiencing memory changes—whether or not they have a formal dementia diagnosis—and for their caregivers, family, and friends. It's a place to connect, share stories, and enjoy activities together.

Crafts with Betty

Friday, Feb. 20 at 10 a.m.

Dream of spring by making birdhouses and butterflies. All materials will be provided — just bring your creativity, enjoy good company, and leave with a handmade winter treasure! Register by Feb. 17.

Lunch Trip

Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 12:30 p.m.

This month, we're heading to Miss Mendon Diner in Mendon for a delicious meal and a fun, relaxing afternoon together. Transportation available. RSVP by Feb. 20.

Upton Food Pantry

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

NEW Hours of Operation

Mondays 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Wednesdays 12 - 3 p.m.
Fridays 10 - 1 p.m.

Are you unable to come at these days and times? Transportation or home delivery available on request. Call 508-529-4558 for more info or to make an appointment.

The UCC Food Pantry is seeking donations:

- Sugar-free Items (jelly, cookies, Jello…)
- Cookies
- Granola Bars
- Ground Coffee
- Crackers/Cracker packs
- Laundry Detergent
- Cleaning Products
- Hand Soap
- Gift cards monetary donations also accepted.

MORAN PLUMBING SOLUTIONS
FOR ALL YOUR PLUMBING NEEDS
CALL TODAY!
508-918-4648
Gerald Moran, Owner
License # PL36504-J
Insured

REVOLUTIONARY

continued from page 1

fore the event, so they had to direct people to other local events.

"I was very excited about the number of volunteers we received. Our event was so successful that I asked the National Park Service if we could do a second event in Upton; they thanked us, and we agreed on Feb. 20 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m."

Gabriel Norwood and his wife Jacklyn Flaherty were among the volunteers. The couple recently moved to Upton and joined the Historical Society.

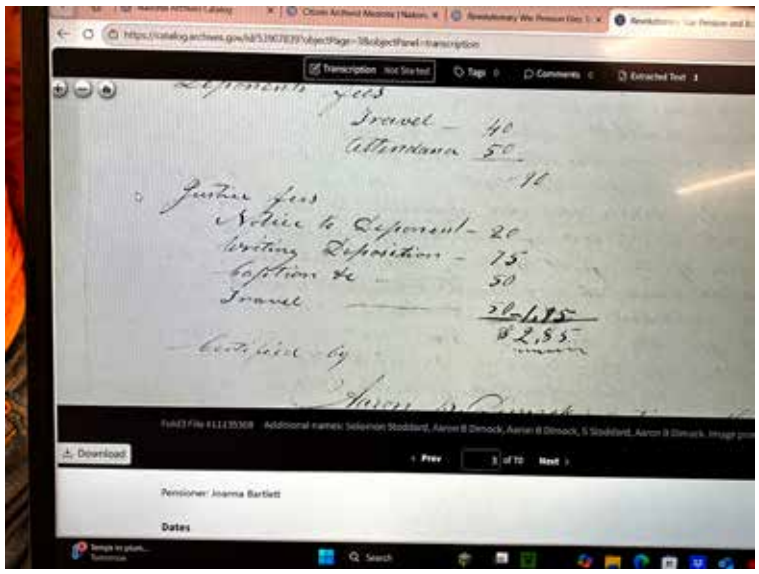
"An event like this is a perfect opportunity to get people interested in the 250th anniversary [of the nation]. And this group is a great cross section of the community getting together in one place to do the same thing," said Norwood. "You can learn so many things about the people themselves from pension documents."

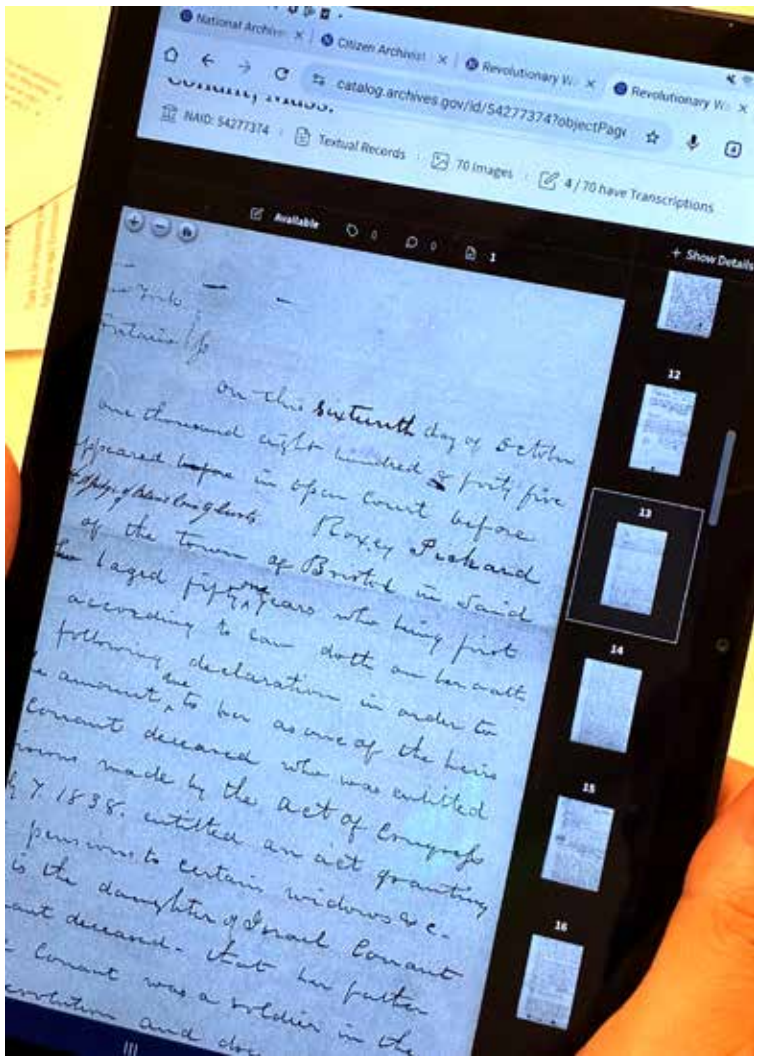
Norwood was transcribing a court document, written in cursive, dated Oct. 16, 1845, related to 'Israel Conant' and his daughter. The handwriting was difficult to decipher in spots.

"It's really cool looking at really old documents," said Flaherty as she transcribed a document for 'Jonathan Meacham' from New Salem, Mass., who died on April 10, 1833. "And this is something that can't be done by AI, a human is a lot better at understanding illegible handwriting."

Nipmuc students Naya Ramadan and Olivia Carlson were both inspired to participate after recently seeing the Mendon and Upton Declarations of Independence in person. *Photo credit: Theresa Knapp*

Gabriel Norwood and Jaclyn Flaherty of Upton participated in the transcription event in January. *Photo credit: Theresa Knapp*





(Left, and above) Examples of the Revolutionary War pension documents being transcribed for the National Archives and the National Park Service. *Photo credit: Theresa Knapp*

The next transcription event will be held on Feb. 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Upton Community Center To register, email UptonMAHistoricalSociety@Gmail.com

Naya Ramadan and Olivia Carlson are both 9th graders at Nipmuc Regional High School, and were transcribing ledger documents for 'Aaron B. Dimock.'

Ramadan said the teens had recently seen the handwritten copies of the Declaration of Independence for both Upton and Mendon at their high school, and that piqued her interest in transcribing these documents.

Carlson said she too was inspired by her in-person encounter with the towns' historic documents. "I wanted to help because I love history, especially U.S. history and local history, and I've always been involved in the community; and I can read cursive fairly well."

The next transcription event will be held on Feb. 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Upton Community Center. To register, email UptonMAHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.

Don't just watch TV — Make it!

ABMI-TV $1500 SCHOLARSHIP

All local high school seniors graduating in 2026 are eligible!

Check with the guidance department at your school to apply online! Applicants must reside in either Bellingham or Mendon.

Access Bellingham-Mendon, Inc.

10 WILLIAM WAY (OFF RTE. 140) • BELLINGHAM, MA 02019

Tel: 508-966-3234 • Email: abmi8@comcast.net

Visit us on the web at abmi8.org

BELLINGHAM LOCAL TV ABMI TV ACCESS MENDON

Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

29 North Avenue, Mendon • 508-473-3259 • TaftPublicLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues. & Wed. 10-7 • Thurs. 3-7 • Fri. 12-5 • Sat. 9-12 • Sun. & Mon. CLOSED

ADULT & TEEN PROGRAMS

Upcoming Events:

To register for an event, click on the Library Event Calendar and registration link at the top of the library's homepage www.taftpubliclibrary.org

Adult Handcrafting Group

Join the Adult Handcrafting Group on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library. Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. No registration is required. Crafts are NOT supplied.

Slow Flow Yoga for Adults and Teens

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

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club is led by Library Assistant Kris Heumann. The group typically meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Upcoming book club discussions are as follows: In March, *The Inimitable Jeeves* by P.G. Wodehouse. In April, *Red Notice* by Bill Browder.

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

Awards Book Club

Hosted by Taft Library Assistant Jane Blackwood, the Awards Book Club meets on a quarterly basis to discuss fiction award winners of the year. Jane selects from the books that took home the coveted Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Booker Prize and more! The current book in the Awards Book Club discussion series is *The True True Story of Raja the Gullible* by Rabih Alameddine, winner of the 2025 National Book Award for fiction. Copies of the book can be picked up at the downstairs circulation desk. Discussion is TBD, likely early May. Contact the library at 508-473-3259 for further information.

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club is back with a whole new slate of books to discuss for 2025-2026. Led by Library Director Andrew Jenrich, the club will tackle the following upcoming books this year:

An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us by Ed Yong. Discussion will be on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Dates of discussion for some of the upcoming books are to be determined. The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club typically meets on a quarterly basis. Those interested can request a copy of the next book at the downstairs circulation desk.

German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun. Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. In February the group will meet on Monday the 23 at 6 p.m. Contact the library at 508-473-3259 for additional details. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

2026 Challenge Book Club

The library is beginning a new book talk series revolving around a monthly challenge prompt. Participants are encouraged to share the title or titles (and brief synopsis) of a book they've read or would like to read centered on the prompt. Prompts for the next few months of the club are as follows:

February: A book about love or friendship

March: A book by a woman author

April: A book from a different time period

The group typically meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Assistance from Jenna Gouin and the Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

Jenna Gouin, MBA/MSOL will be on site at the Taft Library on March 9 from 9 - 11 a.m. to provide assistance filling out applications for MassHealth, SNAP, WIC, fuel assistance, Medicare, Social Security, Veteran's Benefits, and more. Ms. Gouin can also provide referrals to community organizations, mental health and substance abuse providers and give guidance in obtaining financial resources to address past due bills. Each session is 30-minutes long. Those interested can sign up for a 30-minute block of time by clicking on the Calendar & Events link on the Taft Library website www.taftpubliclibrary.org.

Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. downstairs in the Art Holmes Community Room, unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library website.

Friends Wool Felting Class

On Thursday, Feb. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the library, learn the art of needle felting or perfect your skills with Rachel Benson from The Fiber Web. With a few basic tools and some practice, anyone can make beautiful and unique needle felted creations. Preregistration and a payment of $13 per person (no refunds) required. All materials will be supplied. Payments in cash or check (made out to the Friends of the Taft Public Library) can be dropped off at the library. Register by using the Calendar & Events link on the Taft website.

COMING IN MARCH!

Dustin Pari Presents The Montauk Project

Join paranormalist Dustin Pari on Tuesday, March 10 at 7 p.m. for a program exploring the enduring legend of the Montauk Project – an alleged series of secret Cold War-era experiments said to involve mind control, psychic research, and interdimensional phenomena – and examines how these claims influenced popular culture. Attendees will learn how the original concept for the hit television series *Stranger Things* was rooted in the so-called Montauk Project before the story was relocated to the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana. Blending documented history, conspiracy lore, and television storytelling, the program invites participants to consider how government secrecy, 1980s nostalgia, and speculative science converge to create one of modern pop culture's most compelling mythologies. Registration is required as space is limited.

TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS

Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website taftpubliclibrary.org and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.

Itty Bitty Story Time

Itty Bitty Storytime is designed for our youngest patrons birth to 3 years old. Join us for a lot of fun on Tuesdays and select Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Story & Craft Time

Join us for Story and Craft Time perfect for the preschool-aged child. All sessions take place on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday afternoons at 1 p.m.

Alphabet Storytime

It's all about the alphabet! Each week we will focus on a

TAFT LIBRARY

continued on page 19

Album Listening Club seeks to unite Upton music lovers

Feb. 19 meeting to feature The Doors

By Jack Oleksyk
Student writer

Many of us are familiar with the concept of a book club, but one upcoming event seeks to recreate this idea with music at its core.

If you are passionate about music, the Album Listening Club is a great chance to share your interest with others. Participants will listen to an album on their own time and come prepared to discuss their thoughts with others. Topics can range from specific musical details to large-scale societal impact, and the discourse will be an open conversation where all attendees can share their perspectives.

The first album will be The Doors' 1967 self-titled debut album, and participants will take turns choosing the next albums to analyze. There is no cost to attend, and all ages are invited and encouraged to join. The first meeting will be Thurs., Feb. 19, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Upton Community Center.

The Album Listening Club was put into motion by 140Arts' Music Committee based on a concept by Upton resident Wayne Neves. Not only does it have the potential to grow arts appreciation, but it also serves as a place where neighbors can form bonds and social connections.

Music Committee member Ian Brackett holds the belief that this club will have a positive impact in our community. Brackett thinks the album club "will appeal to people of all different ages," since there is "no limit to the diversity of people that can be unified by having discussions on the subject of music." In a space like this, says Brackett, there is the opportunity for members to "meet a lot of new people" and learn to "formulate and express their own opinions to others."

Learning to have discussions with people of different backgrounds is a skill that can be applied beyond the walls of the Community Center, potentially leaving members more comfortable getting involved with discourse in their own lives and communities.

If you do not have the time to repeatedly listen to albums on your own time but still want to share a music-listening experience with others in town, several upcoming events highlight various aspects of our arts community. On Saturday, March 14, local band The New Incarnation will be hosting a listening party for their debut album *Jupiter Carpets*. If you prefer live music, several upcoming events will feature live performances from talented musicians and poets. To highlight Women's History Month, 140Arts is putting together a Women's Music and Poetry Night on Friday, March 20. Featured musicians will include Adrianna Peloquin, Susan Lee Anderson, and more, while Cathy Weaver Taylor and others will recite poetry. Last but certainly not least, accomplished musician Dan Cloutier will be performing on Saturday, April 25.

Vinyl copy of The Doors' 1967 debut album. *Photo by Grayson Slayter*

Cloutier, whose most recent album The Iceberg has received glowing reviews from various local news outlets, has sold out storied venues such as Boston's Club Passim, where he is performing this March. The Iceberg was recorded, fittingly, in the icy regions of Greenland and Newfoundland, and follows a theme of finding hope and light even in life's darker moments. Cloutier has opened for performers such as Richie Havens, John Hiatt, and more. Check 140Arts Collaborative's Facebook page regularly if you are interested in any of the above events, as updates will be posted as more details become available.

Whether you are searching for live music, connections, or just want to support the arts in your local community, these events provide an opportunity to get involved. If you are more interested in the visual arts or theater, there are plenty of events run by 140Arts focusing on those subjects as well. No matter your experience level or area of expertise, 140Arts celebrates all members of our community, and values the unique ways each individual can contribute to strengthening the arts in town.

For more information, follow 140Arts Collaborative on Facebook or Instagram (@140artscollaborative), or send an email to info@140arts.org.

The author is a senior at Nipmuc Regional High School

WE ARE YOUR RELIABLE INSURANCE NEIGHBOR

Work with people you can trust:
Nicole, Julie, Brian, Mike, Letty, Amy

Our family-owned and operated independent agency offers only competitively priced and time-tested insurance products designed to fit your individual needs. Specializing in home, auto, business, condo and renters insurance since our establishment in 1950, our agency is deeply rooted in the communities we serve and committed to providing the very best of value for your hard-earned dollars. Whether new to the area or a lifelong resident, you will benefit from the sound advice provided by our professional service advisers.

MAPFRE | INSURANCE

Contact us today!
(508) 435-6388
80 Main Street, Hopkinton
PhippsInsurance.com

HOME · CONDO · RENTER · AUTO · BUSINESS

Elder Care mediation

Wednesday, March 18 - 1 p.m.

Navigating Conflict for Seniors: Exploring Elder Mediation - Presented by MetroWest Mediation Services of Framingham. Since 1979, MetroWest Mediation Services has been providing community and family dispute mediation.

This elder care mediation offers an opportunity for seniors to address issues around future plans, current care, and familial responsibilities in a collaborative manner. In this workshop, presented by professionally trained mediators, attendees will learn essential conflict resolution skills tailored for working with elders and their families. Attendees will also learn about the various services available through MetroWest Mediation Services, enhancing their ability to support aging individuals and their families effectively.

Whether you are a family member, a caregiver, or a professional in the field, you will leave with a deeper understanding of conflict resolution skills and the resources available to support seniors and their families. Join us to enhance your skills, expand your knowledge, and make a positive impact on the lives of aging individuals and their families.

Please save the date – Wednesday, March 18 at 1 p.m. and stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register or call 508-478-6175.

Mendon Senior Center news

Sharing Strength ~ Support Program

At a new time! Open to all Seniors! The Mendon Senior Center continues to host Sharing Strength; a supportive program led by Counselor Gail Bourassa, LMHC of My Choice Therapy. The group, using everyone's experience, will explore topics related to health and wellness such as stress, hobbies, coping, routines etc. Upcoming scheduled dates are 2/26, 3/12, and 3/26 at a new time—11 a.m. Please contact director Amy Wilson Kent, if you are interested in attending this group.

Need Support? Jenn can Help!

Our new Senior Center Outreach Coordinator, Jenn Talamini, offers:

- Free, confidential counseling
- Caregiver support
- Information and referrals on aging issues
- Home visits are available by appointment.

Call Jenn at 508-478-6175, ext. 2 for assistance. This position is partially funded by a state grant.

New Players Welcome!

The Mendon Senior Center offers a variety of recreational activities including:

- Cribbage –Wednesdays 9:45 a.m.
- Hand, Knee and Foot a Canasta Card game –Tuesdays 1 p.m.
- Mah-Jong – Wednesdays & Thursdays 1 p.m.

Want to learn how to play? Our members are eager and willing to instruct you. Call ahead to let us know of your interest. Don't see your favorite game listed, please let us know what you'd like to see offered!

Tri-Valley Lunch Program

If you want an alternative to eating home alone and don't want to feel the pinch in your wallet, why not consider this friendly, affordable alternative at the Mendon Senior Center? Our volunteers will make you feel right at home. The varied Tri-Valley menus offer nutritious, delicious choices. Lunch is served 12 noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Transportation is available. Call Shawna Timperio to register. Come be our guest! Your first meal is on us! Special thanks to our wonderful Tri-Valley lunch servers and helpers: Wendy Bohannon, Phil Cieply, Karen Cieply, Betsy Edsall, Warren Goodnow, Rosie Gibson-Hare, Lisa Hurley, Mary MacDougall, Hala Muhareb, Peg Nogueira, Dona Son and Diane Howell.

February Menu

- Tuesday, Feb. 17

Non-Tri-Valley meal - Birthday Bash! $5

- Thursday, Feb. 19

Garlic Herb Chicken with Cranberry Herb Stuffing

- Tuesday, Feb. 24

Swedish Meatballs with Mashed Potatoes

- Thursday, Feb. 26

Ranch Chicken with Wild Rice and Spinach

Friendly Reminders! Meals are served at 12 noon. The cost is a $3 donation per meal. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. Transportation is available. Call Shawna to schedule your ride. Meals are subject to change.

Birthday Bash

Our February Birthday Bash will take place on Feb. 17, with festivities beginning at noon. We will be entertained by Pat Durkin, showcasing his talents as a vocal soloist and pianist. Please join us as we celebrate our February birthdays and enjoy a fun afternoon with friends. Our birthday guests are invited free of charge; all other guests are encouraged to make a $5 donation.

Friends Dine Out

We invite you to join us for the Friends monthly Dine Out. Carpool with friends from the senior center the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 12 noon or meet at the restaurant at 12:30 p.m. The cost of lunch is your responsibility, but the company is free! Please sign-up at the senior center. Upcoming dates: Wednesday Feb. 18 ~ Quaker Tavern, Uxbridge, March 18~ TBA, April 15~ BVT, Upton.

Fitness Programs

Curious about adding a little movement to your week? We'd love for you to join us! Please call Shawna Timperio at the center for more information about our exercise programs. New participants can try their first class for free.

Chair Exercise: Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.

This popular 60 minute class chair yoga program offers the same benefits as traditional yoga, like boosting strength, flexibility and mental well being. The practice is great for older adults, people with health conditions, and those who work at a desk all day.

Qigong: Wednesdays 10 a.m.

Qigong, pronounced Cheegong, is a practice that utilizes gentle stretching and breathing exercises. Upon finishing this 60 minute class, students will feel relaxed yet energized.

Tai Chi: Wednesdays 11 a.m.

Tai Chi, per instructor Faith Kennedy is "meditation in motion" and is gentle for all ages. This is also a 60 minute class.

Shine Health Insurance Counseling

Certified SHINE counselors are available to assist you with questions about Medicare. SHINE services are free and unbiased. Counselors are available to discuss all options related to Medicare and additional coverage, and we do not sell any plans. Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to make an appointment. SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and administered through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Aging and

MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 17

CPR Etc.
CPR, AED, First Aid Training
Bloodborne Pathogen
On-Site Training
Companies • Schools • Private (in-home)
No Class Too Small • Anytime, Anywhere
Susan Tetreault
Licensed & Insured
508-473-3630
cpr_etc@comcast.net

LAB OF ALL TRADES
Your local handyman
Give Us a Call ... No Job Too Small
Bedrooms | Basements
Bathrooms | Kitchens
Decks, Patios, Yards | Garages
Living Rooms | Dining Rooms
☑ Reliable ☑ Experienced ☑ Responsive
☑ Professional ☑ Insured
LabofAllTrades.com | 508-377-2137

Mark's Transportation LLC
CALL TODAY
for more information
561-654-9881
DRIVERS WANTED
30 Positions
NOW AVAILABLE!
WE PAY MORE
$1,000 Sign-On Bonus*
Transport Students & Adults.
NO CDL Required, 7D Certificate Only.
We'll help you get the Certification.
SPLIT SHIFTS: Early morning, mid/late afternoon.
Great job for retired person or someone needing part-time work.
Must be 21 or older with valid Driver's License.

Office is located at
51 East Main St., Milford, MA
OFFICE HOURS:
Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
**New applicants only; restrictions apply*

Upton Historical Society shares what town was like 100 years ago

In 1926, the Town of Upton had a population of approximately 2,000 people (today's population is 7,540) and it was home to the largest women's hat factory in the world. The following is additional information about the town 100 years ago, as compiled by the Upton Historical Society.

Upton Grange #125 was legally incorporated on April 3, 1926.

The factory of Wm. Knowlton & Sons Co., West Upton.

Upton Grange is Incorporated

On April 3, 1926, the Upton Grange #125 was legally incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts. Also in 1926, the Grange purchased the Upton Center Schoolhouse which was originally built in 1851. This was Upton's first public school house for primary and intermediate grades and then the first high school in 1869. This historic building housed the local Grange chapter, and it has been used continuously for monthly meetings, functions, agricultural fairs, and community-based economic development opportunities. The Grange is the oldest family organization in Upton. Originally the Farmers Club was started in 1866, which became the Grange in 1885. Note, the Grange was the first national organization to grant women the right to vote, 60 years before the adoption of Universal Suffrage in the United States.

The William Knowlton & Sons Hat Factory Transitioned

From 1833-1835, William Knowlton and Col. Elijah Stoddard partnered to build and run a general store that specialized in domestic straw goods and manufactured straw bonnets. In 1835-1845 Knowlton partnered with Capt. William Legg and then for a short time Knowlton partnered with Joseph Farnum. The business evolved from a local cottage industry, where many Upton women braided straw hats in their homes, into the world's largest women's hat factory. The William Knowlton & Sons Hat Factory (5.2-acre industrial site) became the largest women's hat factory in the world and sold under many labels to high end retailers from NY to Paris, during its peak in the late 19th century.

In 1926, the major economic industries in Upton were the hat factory, woodworking and agriculture. The business remained in the Knowlton family until 1926 when they sold their hat factory to the Merrimac Hat Corp, which was founded in 1850 in Amesbury, MA. This was a significant transition for the town's primary industry from a local family-owned business for over 90 years to a corporation based outside of Upton. The Upton site produced Ladies Wool Bodies, Ladies Wool Hats, Ladies Fur Hats and Ladies Straw Hats for the Merrimac Hat Corp. The factory employed nearly 1,000 workers (about 40% of Upton's residents) and continued to operate until 1972, under two other companies.

A William Knowlton & Sons Hat Factory employee inspects the hats.

Upton Fire Dept modernized its firefighting equipment

On Jan 3, 1925, tragedy stuck the Town of Upton and its Fire Department. Arthur E. King, who served 25 years as a fireman and chief was killed when his own home caught fire on Grove Street. Following the fire, Chief Edward Baker, who served 35 years (14 as chief), returned home ill. It is believed

100 YEARS AGO

continued on page 15

George's Surf 'n Turf
Serving the Best from Land 'n Sea
AT THE REDWOOD DRIVE-IN • Route 16, Mendon
George's Surf &Turf
IS OPENING
Wed., March 4th
It's that time of year again!
Spring's just around the corner and so are we!
We're located on Route 16 at the Redwood in Mendon.
Our order window is open Mon.-Sat. at 11am and Sundays at noon.
For take-out orders or more info., call 508-473-2125
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
Serving:
•Haddock
•Shrimp
•Scallops
•Whole Clams
•Clam Strips
•Clam Cakes
•Chicken Fingers
•Onion Rings
•Fries
•Burgers
•Hot Dogs
•New England Clam Chowder
•Lobster Rolls
•Ice Cream
....and more!
ASK ABOUT OUR DAILY SPECIALS
including our daily Vegetarian Special
FREE Order of Onion Rings
on Any Rainy Day*
*WITH ANY PURCHASE & THIS AD
For Healthy Hearts we use only 100% unsalted cholesterol-free vegetable oil.

HomeHelp Solutions, LLC
(508) 570-8818
homehelpsolutions@outlook.com
Your Local Home Improvement Specialist
CALL FOR A FREE QUOTE
• Home Repair
• Painting
• Bathroom & Kitchen Improvement
• Flooring Installation & Repair
• TV Installation
• Minor Plumbing
• Exterior Maintenance
• Power Washing
& more ...

Town Line Dairy Farm
Upton, MA
508-529-6039
Home Grown Beef & Chicken
Honey
Maple Syrup
Local Milk
EGGS
WINTER DEALS From The Farm
• Fresh Home Grown Pork, Lamb and Beef Available
• Seasonal Produce
•Local Products
• Fresh Eggs
64 Williams Street, Upton, MA

100 YEARS AGO

continued from page 14

that he suffered a heart attack during the blaze. Chief Baker immediately saw the need to purchase a new pumper after the tragedy. Chief Baker ordered the state-of-the-art Howe-Reo Speedwagon, a triple combination pumper from his brother William Baker who represented the Howe Fire Apparatus Company in Indiana. Tragedy would once again strike Upton on March 10, 1925, when Chief Baker perished in the line of duty, before the pumper was delivered.

Upton purchased the state-of-the-art Howe-Reo triple combination pumper for $5,000, which was placed into service in 1926 and served the town until 1952. The Howe-Reo triple combination pumper is an example of 20th century innovation to modernize firefighting. The fire engine was a combination of a commercially available Reo Speedwagon chassis with Howe Fire Apparatus mounted to the chassis. Howe was an innovator and built the first motor pumping engine in 1905. The term "triple combination" refers to the fire apparatus having a pump, water or chemical tank and a hose body making it very versatile. The fire dept. was no longer dependent upon watering holes, wells and streams to fight fires with their new triple combination pumper.

Compiled by the Upton Historical Society (Jan. 2026)

After a series of tragedies in 1925, the town purchased a new Howe-Reo Speedwagon triple combination pumper truck that went into service in 1926.

The1926 Upton High School Senior Class Trip to Washington, DC, when Calvin Coolidge was president, April 1926.

The 1926 7th grade class. *All photos provided by Upton Historical Society*

Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
01/30/2026	13 Blackstone St.	$645,000
01/30/2026	20 Thayer Rd.	$1.00 mil
01/21/2026	22 Washington St.	$700,000

Date	Upton	Amount
01/26/2026	3 Stoddard St.	$600,000
01/21/2026	127 Glenview St.	$560,000
01/21/2026	16 Boot Shop Rd. #39	$1.02 mil
01/15/2026	4 Jonathans Way	$715,000
01/14/2026	27 Fowler St.	$725,000
01/07/2026	84 High St.	$595,000

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

The 4-bed, 3-bath, 2,933 square-foot home at 13 Blackstone Street in Mendon recently sold for $645,000. *Photo source: www.zillow.com*

Powerful tools for Caregivers

Wednesdays, April 1 – May 6 1-2:30 p.m.

The Mendon Senior Center will be hosting a free six-week program this spring for caregivers, sponsored by Tri-Valley, Inc., designed to help caregivers take better care of themselves while caring for a friend or relative. Participants will learn to more effectively reduce stress, communicate effectively, make tough decisions, manage time and locate helpful resources.

To register or to request more information, contact Amy Wilson Kent at the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 or Dawna Salkiewicz, Caregiver Specialist with Tri-Valley Inc. at 1-800-286-6640 ext. 3157. Register early. Space is limited.

Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

9 Milford Street, Upton • 508-529-6272 • UptonLibrary.org

Discount Museum Passes

Planning winter activities? Don't forget that the Friends of the Upton Library fund discount museum passes for residents. Get up to 50% discount to nine different institutions, including New England Aquarium, Museum of Science, Boston Children's Museum, Museum of Fine Art, Worcester Art Museum, Ecotarium and the Mass State Parks pass! Passes must be reserved ahead for a specific date, reserve online at uptonlibrary.org or call us.

Trash Bags / Printing & Scanning / Passport Applications

Upton Library offers a variety of convenience services to our community! Visit the library to:

- Buy town trash bags: yellow and blue, cash or check only.
- Print / scan / fax documents: first 5 pages free, then charges may apply.
- Passport services: make an appointment for help with renewing or processing a passport application.

CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

Boston Bruins PJ Drive – Feb. 1 through March 15

This is our annual effort to support the Boston Bruins Pajama Drive, aiding local families in need. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and Cradles to Crayons, the library is collecting brand NEW pajamas, with tags, for babies through teens. Donations may be dropped off to our donation box in the lobby. If you are a family in need, please contact the Department of Children and Families at 508-929-1000.

Perler Bead Snakes – Feb. 21 at 11 a.m., ages 3+

Drop in anytime from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. to make our craft. We will use pipe cleaners, Perler beads, and googly eyes to make these slithery creatures! No registration required.

Movie Event – Feb. 17 at 1 p.m.

Join us during school vacation week for an afternoon at the movies in our Greatroom! This movie is suggested for ages 5+. Details for the movie title can be found on our website's Event Calendar or by calling the library. No registration required.

New England Animals in Winter – Feb. 20 at 1 p.m.

As the seasons change and we get ready for spring, we will learn all about New England Animals in Winter. Presenter Joy Marzolf, from The Joys of Nature, will share reptiles and amphibians local to our region and teach our audience what animals do to prepare before the spring season arrives. For ages 5 to 12. Registration required. Generously sponsored by the Upton Mosquito & Tick Control Board and the Upton Select Board.

AbriKidabra – March 14 at 10 a.m.

Join us for a fun magic show with professional magician, Mike Bent, of AbraKidabra!™ . Mike combines amazing magic, big laughs, audience participation and hilarious surprises for a one-of-a-kind, interactive experience. For ages 3 to 12. Registration required.

ADULT EVENTS

Chickenkeeping with Lauren Scheuer – Sat. Feb. 28, 1 - 3 p.m. For Adults and Families

Join us at the Upton Town Library to learn about chickenkeeping from seasoned chickenkeeper Lauren Scheuer! This presentation is packed with helpful information about chicken coops; flocks; training; enrichment; and chicken physiology, health, and first aid. Lauren will answer your chickenkeeping questions and offer reliable resources for your chickenkeeping adventures! This program is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Upton Town Library.

Drum Circle with Dave Curry – Sat., March 7, 7 - 9:30 p.m. Ages 8 - Adult. Join facilitator Dave Curry for an evening of freestyle drumming. Instruction and extra drums are provided, but you can also bring your own drums and percussion instruments. No prior experience is necessary, so the circle is suitable for beginners on up to experienced drummers. Registration is requested. *Now a monthly program on the first Saturday of each month, sponsored by Friends of the Upton Library.*

Tabletop Game Night for Adults – Thurs., Feb. 26, 5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Join our tabletop game series for adults! Meets every fourth Thursday of the month from 5:15 - 7:30 p.m. Beginners and experienced players welcome!

Virtual Author Talk Series

View free online author talks, either live or recorded. Register and get more information at the library website, or at www.libraryc.org/uptontownlibrary

Author Talk with Kate Quinn: Book Portals and Journeys of Literary Magic - Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m.

BOOK GROUPS

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

Upton Reads Book Group

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

Tuesday, March 10 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, March 12 at 6:45 p.m.: *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid.

Fic or No Fic Book Group

An adult book group led by Librarian Micaela that alternates fiction and non-fiction selections. Meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 6:45 p.m.: *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times* by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams.

Tween Book Club – Feb. 19 at 6:30 p.m. This club is especially for our middle grade patrons, ages 10 to 14. This group reads popular middle grade titles selected by our members. For our February meeting, we will be discussing the title *The Second Chance of Benjamin Waterfalls* by James Bird.

Kids' Book Club – March 4 at 4 p.m. Our book club members explore popular juvenile chapter books on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m. For our March meeting, we will be discussing the title *The Frindle Files* by Andrew Clements. This group is now for ages 6 to 9!

UPTON LIBRARY

continued on page 17

Food and fuel assistance

Help is just a call away

If you or someone you know is having trouble making ends meet this winter, please consider contacting the Mendon Senior Center.

Our helpful Outreach Coordinator Jenn Talamini is available to offer confidential assistance with fuel assistance applications and nutritional support to Mendon residents of all ages. The SMOC Fuel assistance program helps defray heating costs incurred between Nov. 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026 for eligible households (see household size/income guide below.) Please call for guidelines for larger households.

Additionally, the Mendon Food Pantry, housed at the senior center is well stocked and available to Mendon residents in need.

Household size	Income Limit(s)
1	$51,777
2	$67,709
3	$83,641
4	$99,573

UPTON LIBRARY

continued from page 16

MONTHLY LIBRARY EVENTS – REGISTER NOW!

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

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

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

Saturday Storytime – Feb. 21 at 9:30 a.m., ages birth to 5.

Drop-In Storytime –Feb. 23 at 9:30 a.m., ages 1 to 5.

Music & Movement – Feb. 9 & March 2 at 9:30 a.m., ages 1 to 5.

Storybook Art Club – 3rd Tuesday each month at 10 a.m., ages 3 to 5.

LEGO Club – 1st & 3rd Wednesdays each month at 4 p.m., ages 3 to 12.

Crafternoon – 3rd Thursday each month, 3 - 5 p.m., ages 3+.

Tween Book Club – 3rd Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m., ages 10 to 14.

Kids' Book Club – 1st Wednesday each month at 4 p.m., ages 6 to 9.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fic or No Fic Book Group – last Wednesday each month.

Virtual Author Talks – varies, see our website.

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

MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 13

Independence.

Technology Assistance

We would like to remind everyone that the Mendon Senior Center computer lab is available for your use during center hours. Check your emails and utilize the internet away from home. If you need assistance with your cell phone, laptop or ipad, consider attending one of the upcoming Tech Talk on March 2. Call to register.

Senior Van Transportation

Our van service is available Monday thru Thursday for trips to medical appointments, local shopping or just coming down to the Senior Center. Our friendly drivers are available to pick you up at your front door and take you where you need to go within a 15-mile radius. If you have any mobility issues, the van does include a lift, and our drivers are trained in wheelchair securement. Please make your ride reservations at least 48 hours in advance by calling the Senior Center, 508-478-6175. Rides are based on availability of the van; medical appointments get highest priority. Ride fees are $1 for local rides roundtrip and $4 for out-of-town rides. Vanbucks are available, get a 12-punch card for $10. Please inquire at the front desk.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

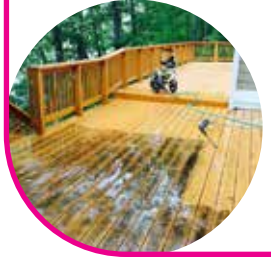
What's Cooking with Betsy and Dona

This new program will debut on March 27 at 12:30 p.m. Betsy and Donna will offer live cooking demonstrations featuring some of their favorite dishes, starting with a hearty, healthy soup paired with sandwich suggestions. They will also share tips on modifying recipes for portion size and health benefits. Guest cooks will join them throughout the series to demonstrate additional cooking and baking ideas. If you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share, please let us know. Advance sign-up by the Monday prior to the event is required, and a small fee will be charged to cover costs. Come ready to learn, taste, and enjoy a few surprises!

Ukulele Lessons

The Mendon Council on Aging is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Cultural Council has approved grant funding for a three-part instructional program. Learn the fundamentals of ukulele playing April 2, April 9 and April 16. No experience is necessary. Ukuleles are provided or bring your own. Participants will learn how to tune, strum, fret, read chord diagrams and play fun songs. Our instructor Julie Stepanek lives in Western Massachusetts and for the past 15 years she has been teaching and making music at libraries, schools and senior centers throughout New England. There is no fee for this program. We are grateful to the Mendon Cultural Council for its continued support of programming that enriches the lives of our residents. Call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register for this free program.

MOURA SERVICES
Call Tiago
857-236-3122
Painting & Carpentry ★ Power Washing
Deck Refinishing ★ Exterior & Interior
FULLY INSURED
Follow us on Social Media

COMING IN APRIL 2026!
Spring HOME & GARDEN
Promote your business to thousands of local readers focused on enhancing their indoor & outdoor living spaces when you advertise in our Spring Home & Garden Guide.
Reach nearly 183,000 with both zones
ZONE 1: REACH 77,681
Auburn, Charlton, Douglas, Dudley, Grafton, Holden, Millbury, Northbridge, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Sutton, Uxbridge and Webster
ZONE 2: REACH 104,764
Ashland, Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Natick, Norfolk, Norwood, Upton and Wrentham
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE
RESERVE YOUR SPACE BY MARCH 5TH!
Contact Susanne Odell Farber at 508-954-8148 or by email at sue@sodellconsult.com to book your space today!


localtownpages
FREE PRESS
The Yankee Xpress
BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

Pet of the Month: Sydney

Is seasonal affective disorder hitting you hard this winter? Come meet Sydney! This adorable, affectionate girl wants nothing more than to love and be loved! Sydney is always ready to give you a hug if you need one. It's okay with Sydney if you occasionally need some alone time, she is also totally fine entertaining herself. She likes to explore her surroundings and find fun toys to bat around.

Full disclosure. Sydney has a food allergy. It's very important that she be on a prescription diet. For this reason, Sydney should be the only pet in the home.

Sydney is such a happy girl. She is looking forward to spending her days with a family who loves her. Could it be yours?

For information on meeting Sydney or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society please visit www.milfordhumane.org

SPORTS

Valley Tech Hockey hitting its stride

Beavers have shown improvement throughout winter

The BVT hockey team took a shopping trip in December to buy holiday presents for children in need.
Courtesy photo

By Chris Villani

Blackstone Valley Tech's hockey team began the month of February with a winning record and a path to the postseason, something head coach Turk Chambliss was pleased to see with so many new players on the ice.

"We have 11 seniors, but only a few of them really played varsity minutes before this year, and we have a lot of underclassmen," Chambliss said. "We have some talent, we were just inexperienced."

BVT has showcased its work ethic all year, however, and put together several strong victories in the month of January.

Although many players are new, Valley Tech does have a strong group of veterans leading the way. The Beavers' offense has been driven by senior forwards Max Krauss and Maximus Pilkington, both of whom are captains. Ben Peshler, another four-year starter, has been a key contributor. In goal, captain Finn Lozeau is a mainstay, having started nearly every game of his high school career since his freshman year.

"They are the top four that have really stabilized everything," Chambliss said. "They are good kids, good leaders, and they care about their teammates. They have been huge."

The coach added, "I really couldn't be happier with how they conduct themselves on and off the ice, and how they are leaders for the younger kids."

Many of those newer players are already key cogs for the Beavers. Twins Jamus and Jake Greenstein, both sophomores, are contributing on the forward and defense lines, respectively.

"Both are high quality, tough kids," Chambliss said. "They play football, they play basketball, they are just good athletes, and we are lucky to have them."

Freshmen Jackson Giombetti and Devon Medeiros have also been playing big roles, Chambliss said.

BVT set several goals at the start of the season, including winning their division, getting to the tournament, and getting a home game in the tournament.

Valley Tech sat on the cusp of the top-16 as February began, but Chambliss said they will have a chance to rise with some rivalry games to close out the regular season.

"If we keep playing the way we are capable of playing," he said, "we have a chance to meet all of those goals."

FRED the FOOT GUY
Call Fred Gibson • Foot Care Nurse
508-844-7534
Providing in-home
Senior Toenail and
Foot Care Services for 13+ years.
Trust your feet to Fred!
Fully Insured / Flexible Schedule

FULLY LICENSED & INSURED SERVING METROWEST
SHAHOOD & Sons
PLUMBING • HEATING • COOLING • ELECTRICAL
EST. 1949
Family Owned & Operated for 3 Generations Since 1949
RESIDENTIAL ▪ COMMERCIAL ▪ INDUSTRIAL
Water Heaters ▪ Remodeling
Service Work ▪ Repairs ▪ Boilers
New Construction ▪ Air Conditioning
Heat Pumps ▪ Mini-Splits ▪ Electrical Services
0% INTEREST LOANS & REBATES OF UP TO $25,000 THROUGH MASS SAVE
Worried about your Heating or Cooling System?
CALL US TODAY TO SCHEDULE A
COMPLIMENTARY ESTIMATE
with our Comfort Specialist, Matt
508-875-3413
ShahoodPlumbing.com

BREMANN
HOME IMPROVEMENT
• New construction and additions
• Bathroom and kitchen remodeling
• Window and door replacement
• Wood flooring and refinishing
• Decks, siding and roofing
• Power washing, gutter repair
• Basement refinishing
• Carpentry and painting
• Masonry, stone patios and retention walls
• Handyman work
Detailed & Meticulous • Reasonable Rates
Call Mauricio
508.202.8602
FULLY INSURED
MA HIC.#169427

SPORTS

Nipmuc athletes stand out on the ice

NHRS students big contributors to Hopkinton hockey defense

By Chris Villani

First-year head coach Chuck Costello had his work cut out for him at the start of the season, with a brand-new team built with players from several different area schools. But his Hopkinton girls' hockey team, which includes several Nipmuc student athletes, started to gel after the New Year, and started the month of February with a .500 record after a slow start.

"I didn't know what to expect coming in, but they got right to work and I am having a great time," Costello said. "I feel like I look forward to practice every day."

Nipmuc senior Riley Collura has been a star for Hopkinton ice hockey this season. *Courtesy photo*

The Hopkinton Hillers Girls Varsity Co-op Team includes students from several area towns.

One of the things that has helped Hopkinton find its stride is its defense which is anchored by Nipmuc senior Riley Collura in goal.

"She is on a roll right now," Costello said. "I think she has been our best player."

The move to the net represented a position switch for Collura, who played on defense last season.

"Coming into the year, it was a little scary to have a goalie who had not played goal in some time, I don't know what to expect," Costello said. "But she got into a groove. She keeps making big saves and she has come up big for us all season."

Costello is also very proud of the Hopkinton defense in front of Collura, which has five players who cycle through regularly and combine to limit the opponent's chances. The quintet consists of Hopkinton seniors Callie Arthur and Katelyn Gaughan along with Olivia Heger and Adison Sobczak of Tri-County and Nipmuc's Jocelyn Lomnicki.

"I can't say enough good things about our defense," the coach said. "We rely on them to keep the puck out of the net, and they follow our system to a T."

Costello acknowledged that the mindset was challenge for the girls at the start of the year with a new coach and while trying to break into the win column during a three-game losing streak,

"We were trying to build up confidence, and we are in a good spot right now, the energy is high," he said. "We have four different schools, and that's new for me. We have a team of people who only see each other at the rink."

Costello said the team focused on building chemistry and culture as the season progressed. He has helped his team come together through the course of the year by trying to get them to shut out the outside world when they come to the rink for practice or a game and instead focus entirely on one another.

"Having these different schools come together, it's tough," he said. "But we are a family now."

RELIABLE PET SITTING
Professional Dog, Cat and Horse Care at Your Home
CALL MAGGIE
508-769-9634
Dependable • Year-Round Service
Excellent References
35 Years Professional Experience

GIULIANO
CONSTRUCTION & REMODELING
DECKS • KITCHEN REMODELS • ADDITIONS
BATH REMODELS • ROOFING
SIDING • WINDOWS • GUTTERS
ENTRY DOORS • DORMERS • AND MORE!
774-573-9811
FREE ESTIMATES • REFERENCES AVAILABLE • LICENSED & INSURED

TAFT LIBRARY

continued from page 11

different letter. We will read a couple of books, sing songs, and learn about the letter of the week. Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Please note there is no Alphabet Storytime the last Wednesday of the month.

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

Join Deb Hudgins on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 9:15 a.m. for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants and preschool). Coffee & Conversations is from 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. Join us for an informal playtime where families will be able to build social connections and learn about early childhood development and family-friendly resources. The library will supply Muffin House Muffins!

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins

Join Deb Hudgins for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants & preschool). Join us on Tuesday, Feb. 24. The program starts promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Book Clubs

Books are available for pick up at the upstairs circulation desk. Pizza and refreshments will be available.

6-9 Book Club: *Kung Pow Chicken* by Cyndi Marko will be our next book! Hope you can join us on Tues., Feb. 24 5 p.m.

Jungle Jim's Wizard Academy: A Magical Training Experience: Tues. Feb. 17 6 p.m.

Calling all young witches and wizards. If your child loves Harry Potter and spends their days practicing spells with a homemade wand, this interactive program is for them. Jungle Jim's Wizard Academy is fully interactive Hogwarts-style training where children become part of the magic. Led by Professor Jungle-Flick, participants are guided through a high-energy experience filled with comedy, imagination, and hands-on fun. Children learn simple magic skills, take part in Balloon Quidditch, and even train in Defense Against the Dark Arts. This is not a sit-and-watch show. More than a dozen volunteers are invited to participate throughout the program making every performance unique. The experience is designed to encourage creativity, confidence, and laughter while keeping children actively engaged from start to finish. Register today for this fun event!

Pickering & Son
Upton
FUNERAL HOME
David A. Pickering • Andrew D. Pickering
Funeral Directors
Offering dignified service to those of all faiths in Upton, Mendon and the surrounding communities since 1902
45 Main Street, Upton, MA 01568
508-529-6992 • uptonfunerals.com

Kevin Meehan
Owner

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT YOU CAN DRIVE IT!

IMPERIAL CARS.com

Ford | Chevrolet | Chrysler | Dodge | Ram | Jeep | Toyota | Subaru

2,000 VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES
FIVE DEALERSHIPS // EIGHT BRANDS

SALES: M-TH 9-9, FRI & SAT 9-6, SUN 12-6
SERVICE: M-F 7:30-6, SAT 7:30-5

508-488-2382

8-18 UXBRIDGE ROAD, MENDON, MA // 300 FORTUNE BLVD, MILFORD, MA // 551 SOUTH WASHINGTON ST, NORTH ATTLEBORO, MA

PRESIDENTS' DAY ★ MONTH-LONG

MILLION-DOLLAR CLEARANCE EVENT

"Keep Those Presidents In Your Wallet!"

OVER **75 MILLION DOLLARS** IN INVENTORY

NEARLY **10 MILLION DOLLARS** IN DISCOUNTS

OVER **2,000 VEHICLES DISCOUNTED** FOR THIS EVENT

DISCOUNTS UP TO $15,000 OR AS MUCH AS 15% OFF!!!

CARFAX 1 OWNER — JUST SAY SHOW ME THE CARFAX

CAR FAX ONE-OWNER VEHICLES

820 ONE-OWNER VEHICLES IN STOCK!

Vehicle	Stock	As Low As	New Retail Price	Wholesale Price
2022 CHEVY EQUINOX LT	#22P2284 • ALLOYS, AWD, TURBO	$67/WK	$35,190	$18,977
2023 KIA SPORTAGE	#48028 • EX TRIM, NAV, ALLOYS	$81/WK	$35,290	$22,977
2023 FORD F-150 XL 4x4	#C18503 • TURBO, NAV, STX PKG	$128/WK	$46,250	$35,977
2022 FORD EXPLORER 4x4	#P18451 • XLT, SUNROOF, NAV	$104/WK	$45,765	$28,977
2021 JEEP WRANGLER 4x4	#D15410 • UNLIMITED SPORT, 8" LCD	$107/WK	$49,810	$29,977
2024 CHRYSLER PACIFICA	#D15814 • HEATED SEATS, ALLOYS	$139/WK	$55,265	$38,977
2024 TOYOTA TACOMA 4x4	#TP6560 • SR TRIM, BEDLINER	$131/WK	$42,605	$34,977
2021 DODGE DURANGO GT	#D15590 • ALLOYS, AWD, V6	$104/WK	$48,595	$28,677
2024 SUBARU ASCENT	#24P7391 • PREMIUM, 18" ALLOYS	$114/WK	$44,700	$31,977
2023 TOYOTA CAMRY SE	#TP6430R • CPO, ALLOYS, SIRIUSXM	$85/WK	$38,625	$23,977
2023 CHEVY SILVERADO 4x4	#C48101 • CUSTOM, 2.7L TURBO	$120/WK	$54,180	$33,977
2023 NISSAN ROGUE AWD	#TP6206 • SL TRIM, 19" ALLOYS	$89/WK	$31,710	$24,977
2024 CHEVY TRAX SUV	#47621A • ACTIVE TRIM, TURBO	$74/WK	$28,565	$20,977
2024 TOYOTA TUNDRA 4x4	#TP6229 • SR5, ALLOYS, 3.4L V6	$150/WK	$58,405	$41,977
2022 JEEP COMPASS 4x4	#D15564 • LATITUDE, HEATED SEATS	$74/WK	$34,400	$20,977
2024 HYUNDAI TUCSON SEL	#TP6116 • AWD, HEATED SEATS	$78/WK	$36,750	$21,977
2023 TOYOTA COROLLA LE	#TP6071 • 32/41 MPG CITY/HWY	$74/WK	$26,589	$20,977
2023 SUBARU CROSSTREK	#STK265684 • ALLOYS, SPORT	$89/WK	$34,265	$24,977
2022 TOYOTA RAV4 XLE	#TM26-161A • MOONROOF, CPO	$110/WK	$36,160	$30,977
2022 FORD EDGE SEL	#P18572 • 2.0L TURBO, SUNROOF	$89/WK	$40,395	$24,977
2023 VW JETTA 1.5T SE	#D15267A • HEATED LEATHER	$68/WK	$29,550	$18,977
2021 LINCOLN CORSAIR	#P18546A • SUNROOF, LEATHER	$96/WK	$46,645	$26,977
2022 FORD BRONCO 4x4	#25460B • 2.3L TURBO, BASE TRIM	$138/WK	$46,995	$38,977
2023 SUBARU OUTBACK	#SDF2715A • LIMITED, LEATHER	$99/WK	$34,695	$27,977
2025 MERCEDES GLA 250 SUV	#TP5839 • 2.0L TURBO, LEATHER	$138/WK	$50,800	$38,977
2023 HYUNDAI ELANTRA	#P18301A • MOONROOF, NAV	$74/WK	$28,666	$20,977
2023 CHEVY COLORADO	#C47974 • TURBO, 4X4, ALLOYS	$124/WK	$44,290	$34,977
2024 HONDA CIVIC SPORT	#D15237 • 30/37 MPG CITY/HWY	$96/WK	$34,190	$26,377
2022 BUICK ENCORE AWD	#P18035A • GX PREFERRED, 1.3L	$81/WK	$32,225	$22,977
2022 MAZDA CX-5 2.5 S	#P17904 • AWD, ALLOYS, SPOILER	$81/WK	$29,899	$22,977
2024 BMW X1 xDrive28i	#TP5673 • AWD, TWIN TURBO, NAV	$124/WK	$51,595	$34,977
2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN	#TP6030 • 4X4, 3.6L V6, ALLOYS	$127/WK	$45,710	$35,977
2022 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER	#TP5646 • XLE TRIM, ALLOYS, CPO	$124/WK	$45,775	$34,977

WHY PAY THE DIFFERENCE IF YOU CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

BAD CREDIT? DON'T SWEAT IT!
We finance your future - not your past.

WE WORK WITH OVER 60 BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS TO GET YOU THE LOWEST RATE POSSIBLE!

"We sell more - so you save more!"

Mike Penner
General Manager

SEVEN-DAY VEHICLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

SALE ENDS 02/28/2026. SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY. THIS OFFER IS NOT VALID ON PRIOR SALES AND IS BASED ON THE MSRP, AND NOT COMBINABLE WITH ANY OTHER DISCOUNT, PROMOTIONS, OR INCENTIVES. PRICE LISTED INCLUDES ALL APPLICABLE MANUFACTURER REBATES (NOT EVERYONE WILL QUALIFY) AND IMPERIAL DISCOUNTS INCLUDING A $1,000 IMPERIAL TRADE ASSISTANCE BONUS FOR A QUALIFYING 2016 OR NEWER TRADE. SEE US FOR DETAILS. ADVERTISED PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE TAX, TITLE, REGISTRATION, DOCUMENTATION OR ACQUISITION FEES AND CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER DISCOUNTS OR PROMOTIONS. WEEKLY PAYMENTS CALCULATED WITH AN ESTIMATED DOWN PAYMENT OF $2,999 CASH OR TRADE. NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS. CALL 1-508-488-2382 TO SEE WHICH REBATES YOU QUALIFY FOR.