

Ashland

Vol. 14 No. 5

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

March 1, 2026

Our Town Publishing Changes Hands, Celebrates Relocation

Tri-County Regional Chamber Facilitates Milford Ribbon-Cutting Event



Front row at ribbon-cutting, from left, Laura O'Callaghan, President & CEO of Tri-County Regional Chamber, Our Town Publishing new owners Jen and Marty Schofield, and Mass. Rep. Brian W. Murray of the 10th Worcester District.

BY JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

On Friday, Jan. 23, Jen and Marty Schofield, new owners of Our Town Publishing, cel-

ebrated a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new location at 9 Industrial Road, Ste. 107, Milford,

Mass. The full-service print-

OUR TOWN
continued on page 2

Ashland Human Services Department Marks New Era of Growth and Stability

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

When Araya Landry stepped into her role as Director of Prevention & Human Services, she faced a significant challenge: assessing what was working, reinforcing existing programs, and building greater stability across the department. The work required balancing immediate community needs with long-term stability. Human Services departments often operate in a constant state of urgency, with high demand for support and limited resources. Establishing structure while maintaining services became an early priority.

“Supporting staff starts with



Ashland Community Center. Photo supplied by Araya Landry

being intentional,” Landry said. “That means giving employees realistic workloads and making sure they feel supported. We’re a team,

NEW ERA

continued on page 13

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OUR TOWN

continued from page 1

ing company provides a range of marketing services for all clients, from consumer to business, as well as publishes community newspapers reaching 28 Massachusetts towns from MetroWest. The reception drew many local professionals, along with Rep. Brian W. Murray of the 10th Worcester District and Laura O’Callaghan, President & CEO of the Tri-County Regional Chamber of Commerce, who was “thrilled” to help facilitate the ribbon-cutting event.

Our Town Co-President & CEO Jen Schofield expressed her gratitude to all who attended for their support.



“As both the owner and publisher of 16 area newspapers and a full-service print shop, Marty and I are incredibly proud of the work we do—and even more proud of the relationships that have built this business brick by brick,” Schofield added, “This event is more than just show-

casng our print shop, newspapers, products and services; it’s about building lasting connections. Printing has always been a collaborative craft, and today is a perfect opportunity to share ideas and build new partnerships in a community we are so fortunate to be part of.”

“It was wonderful to see such a strong turnout from the newspaper’s clients and supporters,” said O’Callaghan. “The energy in the room and the enthusiasm for networking really spoke to the respect and support Jennifer and Marty have already earned as the new owners. And of course, nothing makes it official quite like oversized red scissors and a bright red ribbon!”

“I’m pleased to have Our Town Publishing in Milford and very impressed with the number of local community newspapers (it) publishes,” said Rep. Murray, who recognized Our Town Publishing with an official citation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the celebration. Murray continued, “Today, it is so difficult to try to get current local information, and the papers that Our town puts together does just a great job of getting that information out to residents in the community. I was also very pleased to learn of the extent of



(L to R) Nicole and Charles Tashjian, former owners of Our Town Publishing, chat with attorney Laurie Fowles.

full-service printing services Our Town offers to businesses and residents in the community. It’s very important for folks who have printing needs to know they’ll be done locally, professionally and cost-effectively.”

Rep. Murray also gave a nod to the Tri-County Chamber for helping to bring exposure and attention to local businesses such as Our Town Publishing.

Tri-County Regional Chamber’s O’Callaghan extended her well wishes “to former owner Nicole and her husband, Charles, on their retirement - hopefully they are enjoying their free time somewhere sunny and warm.”

The Tashjians said they could not be happier to entrust the

company they built to Jennifer and Marty.

“With Jennifer’s 26 years in the industry and Marty’s technical experience, we know our employees, and the continuation of what has been established, will have a long life for the years ahead,” said Nicole Tashjian.

For more information on Our Town Publishing’s full-service printing, publishing and graphic design services, visit www.our-townpublishing.com.

To learn more about Local Town Pages’ community newspapers, visit www.localtownpages.com.

For more information on the Tri-County Regional Chamber, visit tricountychamberma.org.



Our Town Publishing’s celebration afforded local professionals an opportunity to make connections with area businesses.

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Community Policing in Action!

On Tuesday, Officers Sousa, Toscano, and our four-legged superstar K9 Jack traded in traffic stops for a visit to our friends at Kinder-Care!

The 2- to 5-year-olds are learning about different occupations, so naturally, they had to learn what it takes to be a police officer.

We talked about helping people, staying safe, being kind, and, of course, how important teamwork is (Jack made sure to demonstrate the “good boy” part of the job).



The kids had some GREAT questions and even better listening skills. Future officers in the making? We think so.

We’re incredibly proud to be part of a community where we can connect with our youngest residents and help build trust, understanding, and maybe even inspire a few future badges along the way.

Thank you, KinderCare, for having us!



Article and photo courtesy of the Ashland Police Department Facebook Page

Ashland Local Updates

Annual Town Election May 19
Office seats are available for the May 19, 2026 Annual Town Election. The ballot will include one Select Board seat for a three-year term, one Assessor seat for a three-year term, one School Committee seat for a three-year term, two Library Trustee seats for three-year terms, two Board of Health seats for three-year terms, one Housing Authority seat for a five-year term, one Planning Board seat for a five-year term, and one Planning Board seat for a four-year term.

The deadline to return nomination papers to the Town Clerk’s Office is Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 5 p.m. Please con-

tact the Town Clerk’s office for further information.

Town Meeting & Town Election
The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. All voting is held at the Ashland High School, 65 East Union Street. If you would like information on Vote-By-Mail or In-Person Early Voting, please visit the Town Clerk’s website.

Please remember to visit our website at www.AshlandMass.com for frequent updates. We try to keep you informed as rules

and or regulations change. As always, you may contact the Town Clerk’s office with questions at 508-881-0100, ext. 7127, or e-mail us at TownClerkOffice@AshlandMass.com.

Dog tags 2026
Don’t forget to license your dog BEFORE April 15 to avoid a \$50 fine. Fee for intact dog(s) is \$20. The fee for spayed or neutered dog(s) is \$15, but if you (the owner) are seventy (70) years of age or older, then the tag is no charge. Don’t forget to bring an updated rabies certificate with you. Sorry kennel owners, the free license does not apply to kennels. You may also license

online through our new licensing portal. <https://ashlandma.portal.opengov.com/>

Ashland Recreation
Ashland Recreation offers many different programs, including on days when there is no school or early release days. Check out a sample of what they offer below. Visit ashlandma.myrec.com to see all programs and to register.

Half Day Explorers: The ARC Half Day Explorers program meets on K-5 early-release days. Students are picked up directly from their school at dismissal by Recreation Staff. After picking

up from both schools, everyone will head out together on an exciting adventure for the afternoon. We will return to the Community Center by 5 p.m. Pick up is from 5 - 6 p.m. at the Ashland Community Center.

Here are the March 2026 half-day field trips:
March 24 - Franklin Children's Museum
March 25 - The Beach House
March 26 - EcoTarium

No School, No Problem! Friday, March 20, is a no-school day, and we are ready for some fun.

UPDATES
continued on page 17

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Ashland Music Students Earn District and All-State Honors

BY THE ASHLAND MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Ashland continues to distinguish itself as a community rich in musical talent!

Twenty-eight outstanding band and vocal music students from Ashland Middle and High Schools have been selected to participate in the prestigious Central District Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA) Festival Concerts, with two students also earning selection to the All-State Festival. These events bring together top student musicians from across the region and state to work with renowned conductors and experience the excitement of performing in high-level ensembles. Auditioning for and being selected to these festivals reflects not only the students' dedication and hard work, but also the strength of Ashland's music edu-

cation programs.

For both the Senior and Junior Central District Music Festivals, Ashland students were selected through a rigorous audition process involving over 70 schools across the region. Vocal music students were selected to the Chorus ensemble, while band students were placed in either the Concert Band (primarily consisting of woodwind and brass instruments) or the Orchestra (including a full string section alongside woodwinds and brass).

Senior District Festival Concert Participants

Auditions for the Senior District Festival Concert were held in mid-November, and the concert took place on January 17th at the historic Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Congratulations to the following students who represented Ashland at the Central District Senior Festival Concert:

Concert Band: Jonah Bloom (French Horn), Millie Jaiswal (Bass Clarinet)*, Rebecca Kriegsmann (French Horn), Daniel Lee (Clarinet)*, Sabrina Lin (Clarinet), Hasani Reddy (Tuba), Neha Ruthramoorthy (Bass Clarinet)*, Kaiya Smits (Oboe) Ashland High School band students prepare to take the stage at the Se-

nior District Festival Concert.

Orchestra: Andrew Martin (Bassoon)*

Chorus: Erick Almeida (Tenor), Caroline Diamond (Soprano)*, Gabby Ilin (Alto)*

From this group, six students (marked with an asterisk*) earned an All-State recommendation based on their audition scores, qualifying them to audition for the MMEA All-State Festival.

All-State Festival Selections

Following highly competitive auditions with the state's most talented student musicians, two Ashland High School students earned acceptance into the MMEA All-State Festival, an all-day event that will be held at the Hanover Theater in Worcester on March 21. Senior alto Gabby Ilin returns to the All-State Festival for the second consecutive year and will perform in the All-State SSAA (Soprano, Soprano, Alto, Alto) Chorus. She is joined by talented bass clarinetist Neha Ruthramoorthy, who earned placement in the All-State Orchestra. Congratulations to Gabby and Neha on these outstanding accomplishments!

Junior District Festival Concert Participants

Auditions for the Junior Dis-



Photo submitted by Ashland Music Association

trict Festival Concert were held on Feb. 7. This year, 28 students from Ashland Middle School (grades 7-8) and Ashland High School (grade 9) participated in the audition process, including—for the first time in many years—a chorus student from Ashland Middle School. Sixteen students were selected to perform in the Central District Junior Festival Concert, which will be held on May 2nd at Whitcomb Middle School in Marlborough. Congratulations to the following students:

Concert Band: Daniel Achiliev (Alto Saxophone), Sam Apostola (Clarinet), Marcus Coombs (Tuba), Ben Deibler (Bassoon), Nathan Follett French Horn), Alex Gonzales (Trumpet), Lily Hutter (Clarinet), Inesh

Kanakaraju (Trumpet), Elisha Marfil (Trumpet), Avyukt Sairam (Bass Clarinet), Samantha Yung (Clarinet)

Orchestra: Viraj Harish (Violin), Mark Mayatskikh (French Horn)

Chorus: Charlotte Dowd (Soprano), Torsha Maji (Soprano), Kyleigh Vento (Soprano)

The Ashland Music Association (AMA) is proud to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our students! We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Ashland Select Board for its generous BAA Grant that has helped support our students' participation in District and All-State auditions and concerts, as well as

MUSIC

continued on page 7

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Financial Advisor Mark Freeman Focuses on Clients' Success

Financial advisor Mark Freeman enjoys getting to know his clients. His aim is to help them clarify their objectives and then, working as partners, to create a financial plan that achieves their goals.

"I love this career because I love helping people," said Freeman. "I work for my clients because I care about them."

A Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) working for Edward Jones at his 77 West Main St., Hopkinton office, Freeman offers financial advice to business owners and individuals.

I spend a lot of time getting to know my clients. We talk about their financial challenges, and their proposed solutions. Many times I find people are focused on the wrong problem," Freeman said.

A frequent problem is minimizing taxes. He noted many clients, while saving for retirement, inadvertently create, "a tax time bomb." Freeman explained, "If you invest in a diversified portfolio year after year and don't deal with taxes while saving, it could come back to bite you in retirement," in the form of large tax bills. For other clients, "once you establish some type of wealth, taxes become an important part

of the discussion since the best way to increase wealth is by keeping more of it," said Freeman. He added, "Helping people avoid tax issues is a primary focus. I work hard to keep a client's money in their pockets and out of Uncle Sam's.

Another issue faced by many of Freeman's clients is being in a "job prison," working in a position they dislike because they feel they need the income. "But after reviewing their finances, we often find they can change careers or do something else," he said. Freeman noted he was in that same situation himself until he realized he could afford to change careers.

Freeman added, "I am also trying to make sure that my clients' money outlasts them." One of his first tasks when meeting a new client is to run an analysis of their finances to make sure their funds will support them for their lifetime.

With a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Freeman worked in two other industries before establishing his finance career in 2017. Even though his first two jobs were outside his training, Freeman said he was hired by Edward Jones, "one, because I have the ability to analyze data quickly



and, two, because I always try to figure out a better way to do things. I bring those skills to my finance clients."

Freeman also tries to understand his clients' motivations. "When I propose a plan, I ask 'how do you feel about it.' If there is something bothering you, I need to fix that," he said.

Much as he partners with his clients, Freeman has developed relationships with the towns where he works and lives. Part of the Hopkinton business community, he has supported many local organizations and nonprofits.

Making their home in Holliston since 2005, he and his wife have raised their now college-aged twins in the town. Freeman currently volunteers as a business advisor for the Holliston High DECA Club, an international nonprofit organization that prepares emerging leaders



The team of Financial Advisor Mark Freeman and Office Administrator MaryKate Morin of Edward Jones in Hopkinton helps clients define their objectives and develop a plan to achieve those goals.

and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

Summing up his work objective and the relationship he has with clients, Freeman said, "My job is to understand what is important to you and figure out how to make it happen."

For more information call Freeman at 508-293-4017 or email him at Mark.Freeman@EdwardJones.com.

I think you already have the correct photo and caption but here is the caption again: The team of financial advisor Mark Freeman and office administrator MaryKate Morin of Edward Jones in Hopkinton helps clients define their objectives and develop a plan to achieve those goals.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Behind the Chair: How We Prepare for You

You've booked your appointment and gathered your inspiration. But have you ever wondered what happens on our end before you even walk through the door? At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio, the magic doesn't begin when you sit in the chair. It starts long before that.

We asked some of our team to share how they prepare for each guest, and their answers were a beautiful reminder of why our clients keep coming back.

Madison: The Researcher



For Madison, preparation goes far beyond checking the appointment schedule.

"I always review the client's history and notes. If I can, I reach out to previous stylists who have worked with the client and check on formulas, hair type, length, texture, anything I need to know about their hair or them personally."

"Sometimes I ask about their interests or their vibe so the appointment feels more comfortable and less like meeting a stranger for the first time. I even do this with my longtime clients. I still check and update their notes every time."

— Madison Elliott, Stylist

For first-time guests, Madison also explains the salon layout so you never feel out of place asking for water or finding the restroom. It's a small detail that helps turn a first visit into a lasting relationship.

Sam: The Organizer

For Sam, a great appointment starts with thoughtful preparation before you arrive.

"I prep my station with all my tools before you walk in, and I check your service history so I can suggest little extras that'll make your hair even better. I also double-check if you're new

to me or returning so I can greet you the right way."

— Sam Dutton, Junior Stylist



That preparation means you're stepping into a chair that's already ready for you, with a stylist who's ideas you'll love.

Sandra: The Curator



Sandra arrives with a vision already forming, supported by deep product knowledge.

"Before a client's appointment, I'll save reference photos that might be a great fit for them. I also decide on retail products I'd recommend, so I'm ready to talk through what will keep their hair looking its best between visits."

— Sandra Wilkey, Senior Stylist

The goal is simple: you leave feeling great about your hair and confident keeping it that way between visits.

Heidi: The Connector



Heidi believes the best appointments begin with comfort and connection.

"I like to think of a funny story about myself before I start

with a client so she knows she can relate to me. I think it's very important to be relatable and to have fun so the comfort level is there from the start."

"I also make sure I have plenty of options saved on my Pinterest, new trends, upcoming colors, and cuts that are on point right now, especially if someone comes in with no idea what they're looking for."

— Heidi McDade, Senior Stylist

Her mix of fun and inspiration keeps the vibe easygoing and helps clients step outside their comfort zone in the best way.

Emma: The Hostess



Emma's preparation blends technical readiness with genuine warmth.

"Before you even walk through the door, I've already done a little homework. I check who's coming in so your color formula is prepped and I'm ready to hear the latest about your trips, pets, and life updates. Then I make sure my station is fresh and clean so you can sit down, relax, and have the best time in my chair."

— Emma Ford, Junior Stylist

That attention to detail makes every visit feel like catching up with a trusted friend who also happens to do incredible hair.

Monique & Corinn: The Sanctuary Keepers



Our estheticians know that skincare is as much about the



experience as it is about the results, which begins long before a facial ever starts.

"Before you even come in, I turn on the bed warmer, heat up the oils and stones for your hand and foot treatment, and adjust the lighting so it's calm and comfortable. And I always put out a call button so you can take your time getting settled and ring me when you're ready."

— Monique Laquerre, Master Esthetician

"I get the space ready with soft music, the sound machine, and a light room spray so everything feels clean and peaceful. I want the room to feel like a total escape the second you walk in."

— Corinn Bradford, Master Esthetician

Corinn is also certified in Reiki and Oncology Facial care, supporting clients with specialized skin needs and creating a truly inclusive experience.

MaryAnn: The Welcome

Before you even reach the



styling chair, your experience at b.LUXE has already begun.

"My greeting helps set the tone for the entire appointment: friendly, upbeat, and very welcoming. We take pride in our part of the service cycle."

— MaryAnn McNally, Front Desk

The front desk isn't just a check-in point. It's the first moment guests feel the warmth and intention behind every visit.

Beauty is our Business!



SCAN TO VISIT b.LUXE

Heather: The Owner



"I started b.LUXE because I wanted a place where everyone feels taken care of, plain and simple. We are a full hair, makeup, skincare and wig studio with an incredibly talented team, and that makes me so proud every day. We learn together, we grow together, and we show up for every single client," Heather shares.

For Heather, that sense of care extends beyond beauty services and into supporting clients through life's more personal moments.

"And for anyone going through hair loss, I want them to know we have a safe, judgment-free, compassionate space here where we truly get it. We just want people to feel good."

— Heather Cohen, Owner & Wig Specialist

Your Visit, Our Priority

The truth is, we love what we do and we love our clients. When you walk through our doors, you're not just another appointment. You're the reason behind every detail we prepare. At b.LUXE, luxury isn't just in the décor, it's in the care, the creativity, and the experience created just for you.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Homebuying in 2026: Smart Moves To Plan Your Purchase



Glenn Brown, CFP

Before scrolling Zillow, open houses, and finding a real estate agent, let's discuss things you need to prepare.

Define your priorities

Start by listing what matters most in a home, then prioritize #1-25, as not everything can be #1 or 1A. Consider location, bedrooms, outdoor space, remote work offices and play areas. Decide between move-in ready versus fixer-upper, quiet streets versus active neighborhoods, and public versus private schools. Don't let innovative listing photos sway your lifestyle goals and long-term needs.

Understand the local market

Research pricing trends in your desired neighborhoods. Check school ratings, public safety, property taxes, and local infrastructure plans. Also, if you don't want to live on a busy road, know the existing commercial and industrial zones.

Get pre-approved for a mortgage

Pre-approval signals to sellers that you're serious and can af-

ford the property. Don't confuse pre-approval with ability to pay, as an underwriter is viewing your financial situation today - not what you have planned.

Explore mortgage options

Mortgage type matters more than ever in 2026:

Conventional Loans - Not backed by the government, these are offered by banks or private lenders. Down payments are 5-20% with required credit scores higher than 620, best rates for scores 780+. Benefits include competitive rates and flexible terms, however, there are limits on the amount borrowed.

FHA Loans - Government-backed Federal Housing Administration loans are designed to help first-time homebuyers or those with lower credit scores qualify for a mortgage. Down payments are as low as 3.5% for credit scores of 580 or higher. Keep in mind, Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) is required, which increases overall costs.

Jumbo Loans - A type of mortgage that exceeds the conforming loan limits set by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). Down payments are

often 20%+ with higher credit scores, incomes, and investment assets.

Adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs): Lower initial rates for five, seven or 10 years, then adjust with market conditions. Good if you plan to refinance or move within that time frame.

Tip for 2026 buyers: Consider an ARM with the intention of refinancing in two to five years if rates drop. Locking a lower rate now with a plan to refinance later could save thousands, but ensure your budget can handle potential adjustments.

Plan for full costs

Beyond the down payment, budget for closing costs such as escrow, prepaid interest and other fees. These can add \$5,000-\$15,000. Some costs can be rolled into the mortgage, but get a detailed lender breakdown to avoid surprises.

Factor in future refinancing if you plan to take advantage of rate drops. This can positively affect monthly affordability and long-term planning.

Align homebuying with your financial plan

The real peace of mind comes after moving in. Planning ahead helps ensure your new home supports your financial goals.

- Adjust your monthly budget for mortgage, insurance and taxes
- Plan short-term renovations or upgrades
- Build contingencies for unexpected expenses or family changes

With a clear plan, you can confidently buy a home that aligns with both lifestyle and long-term financial independence.

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

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

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MUSIC

continued from page 4

other enrichment opportunities.

Spring Concert Season

Come see these talented students—and many others from our schools—bring their music to the stage this spring at the Ashland Public Schools' Spring Band and Vocal Music Concert Series. This season's lineup promises to be an unforgettable celebration of musical excellence, featuring a variety of performances, including:

MICCA Festival Preview Concert – As part of another exciting spring festival, this concert gives the community a sneak peek at the exceptional music our band students are preparing for the Massachusetts Instrumental & Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) competition. Come see our award-winning ensembles—all of which earned Gold and Silver Medals at last year's MICCA Festival! You can

continue to support our students, including the AHS Chorus, by attending the MICCA Festival later in the spring.

AHS Choral Concert – *Dividing Through the Decades: Celebrating 100 Years of Song* – Join the Ashland High School Chorus as they take the audience on a musical journey through the past century, showcasing the skill, versatility, and passion of our student vocalists.

Mindess Choral Concert – Thanks to Mindess Elementary's expanded chorus program this year, we are excited to announce this new concert to the spring season! Come enjoy the music of the Mindess Chorus (grades 4-5) as they showcase the voices of our youngest student singers.

Whether you've been following our music programs for years or are attending a concert for the first time, these performances are sure to entertain. Mark your calendars, gather your friends and family, and come experience the power of music in our community. We can't wait to see you in the audience!

Community Support for Music Education

The AMA is a volunteer-run non-profit organization that provides financial and volunteer assistance to music per-

formance groups in Ashland Public Schools.

Visit AshlandMusic.org to learn more and sign up for Clocker Beats, our newsletter that keeps the community

connected to Ashland's school music programs—featuring student achievements, concert information, updates on important issues impacting music education, and more!

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Living Healthy

The Blurry Truth: Understanding and Addressing the Rise of Refractive Errors

BY: ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE
CENTER

Have you noticed more people wearing glasses these days? It's not just a feeling. Refractive errors, those eye conditions that blur our vision, are becoming increasingly common, particularly nearsightedness (myopia). This article explores what these errors are, why they're on the rise, and what we can do about it.

What are Refractive Errors?

Our eyes are intricate organs, acting like sophisticated cameras. Light enters, is bent (refracted) by the cornea and lens, and ideally focuses perfectly on the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This focused image is then sent to the brain, allowing us to see clearly.

Refractive errors occur when the eye's shape prevents light from focusing correctly on the retina, resulting in blurry vision. Common types include:

- **Myopia (Nearsightedness):** Close objects are clear, but distant objects are blurry. This happens when the eye is too long, or the cornea is too curved, causing light to focus in front of the retina.
- **Hyperopia (Farsightedness):** Distant objects are clear, but close objects are blurry. This occurs when the eye is too short, or the cornea isn't curved enough, causing light to focus behind the retina.
- **Astigmatism:** Vision is blurry or distorted at all distances. This happens when the cornea or lens is irregularly shaped, preventing proper light focus.
- **Presbyopia:** This age-related condition makes focusing on close objects difficult. As we age, the lens loses flexibility, hindering its ability to change shape and focus up close. This is why many over

40 need reading glasses.

Why the Rise?

The increasing prevalence of refractive errors, especially myopia, is a global concern. While the exact causes are still being researched, several factors are believed to contribute:

- **The Screen Time Surge:** Our modern lives involve significant screen time – smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. This constant close-up focus strains the eyes and may contribute to myopia development and progression.
- **The Great Outdoors:** Studies suggest that spending time outdoors, especially in childhood, has a protective effect against myopia. The wider range of distances the eyes focus on outdoors, along with increased natural light exposure, may be beneficial.
- **The Genetic Factor:** Genet-



ics play a significant role. If your parents or siblings have myopia, you're more likely to develop it.

- **The Urban Influence:** Urban environments often have limited green spaces and encourage indoor activities, potentially contributing to the myopia rise.
- **Lifestyle Shifts:** Changes in diet, like increased processed food consumption, and reduced physical activity may also play a role, though more research is needed.

- **Myopia Control:** For children with progressive myopia, doctors may recommend treatments like atropine eye drops, multifocal contact lenses, or orthokeratology.
- **Surgery:** Refractive surgery like LASIK or PRK may be an option for some, but consult with an eye doctor to discuss risks and benefits.

The Future of Vision Care:

Researchers are actively exploring new prevention and treatment methods, investigating the roles of genetics, environment, and lifestyle. New technologies, such as advanced lens designs and drug therapies, are also being developed.

The increasing prevalence of refractive errors is a significant public health issue. By understanding the causes and taking proactive steps, we can protect our vision. Remember, regular eye exams are essential. If you have any concerns, consult an eye care professional.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center: Your Partner in Eye Health

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, our dedicated team of ophthalmologists and optometrists, supported by highly trained staff, are available to treat various eye problems, including refractive errors. We offer a dedicated optical shop with a children's boutique, providing quality glasses and contacts. We also provide world-class cataract surgery and advanced treatments, including procedures that can eliminate the need for glasses in select cases. All surgeries are performed in our accredited surgical facility. Our in-house optical shop crafts glasses while you wait, and new patients receive a complimentary pair of select frames. We offer after-hours, same-day emergency appointments and Saturday availability. With over four decades of dedicated service, Milford-Franklin Eye Center is committed to delivering advanced eye care close to home.

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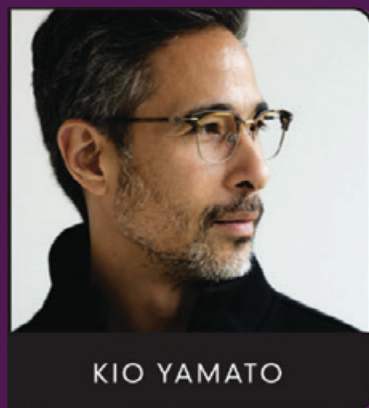
What Can We Do?

While we can't entirely eliminate the risk, we can take steps to minimize the impact and potentially slow myopia progression:

- **Limit Screen Time:** Encourage children and adults to take regular breaks. A helpful tool is the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This allows the eye muscles to relax and refocus, reducing strain.
- **Embrace the Outdoors:** Aim for at least 1-2 hours of daily outdoor activity, especially for children.
- **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** A balanced diet and regular physical activity are crucial.
- **Regular Eye Exams:** Comprehensive eye exams are essential, especially for children. Early detection and treatment are key.
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Ease the Squeeze on Your Retirement Income Plan



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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Rising prices may not dominate headlines the way they did a year or two ago, but if you're retired, you're probably still feeling them. Even when overall inflation cools, the costliest expenses — like health care, utilities, insurance and property taxes — tend to rise faster than broad inflation numbers sug-

gest. That creates a squeeze that can make you question whether your income plan is built to last.

Fortunately, you often can adjust without drastic cuts that affect your lifestyle. Start by understanding where the pressure comes from and how to build more flexibility into your plan.

Inflation hits retirees differently. You've likely noticed your grocery bill, prescription drug costs and heating expenses haven't returned to "normal." Even small increases compound over time and can chip away at your buying power.

If your income plan was created years ago, it may assume lower inflation or relatively stable price increases over time. Recent years have shown that's not always the case.

Why some income plans feel strained. Any plan relying on fixed withdrawals or rigid budgets can feel tight when living costs rise. If you're drawing from

investments, you may hesitate to increase your withdrawals because of market volatility. And if you depend on fixed income sources like Social Security or a pension, yearly cost of living increases may not keep pace with your expenses. You might live 25 to 35 years in retirement, giving small annual cost increases decades to add up.

What you can do without sacrificing stability. A few adjustments can help you stay ahead of rising costs and maintain your financial confidence.

First, review your withdrawal strategy. Ask your financial advisor about flexible approaches that increase income when markets and portfolios perform well and pull back during tougher times. This protects your long-term plan with room to respond to rising prices.

Next, rebalance your portfolio. You may uncover opportunities to shift toward investments with more consistent income or

better tax efficiency. Sometimes a small tweak can generate extra cash flow without increasing overall risk.

Finally, look at your income sources. You may be less affected by rising costs if you delay taking Social Security, work a part-time job, add inflation-protected bonds or create predictable lifetime income with annuities, if they're appropriate for your situation.

Don't overlook health care: Health care costs often grow faster than general inflation. Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket expenses can rise annually, and the need for long-term care remains a big financial uncertainty for retirees. Building health care-specific inflation into your plan now can help prevent surprises later. Any savings you have in a health savings account can help you cover health care costs. And many pharmaceutical companies offer financial assistance programs to help pay

for costlier medications.

Stay flexible and informed: Today's retirements look different from those of even a decade ago. The key is staying flexible, reviewing your plan regularly and making small adjustments before pressure builds. A financial advisor can help you find the right approach to navigating rising costs without disrupting the life you've worked hard to build.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Hopkinton, MA (508) 293-4017
Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

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University of New England's Dean's List Fall 2025

BIDDEFORD AND PORTLAND, MAINE | TANGIER, MOROCCO (January 26, 2026) - The following students have been named to the University of New England's Dean's List for the fall semester 2025. Dean's List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

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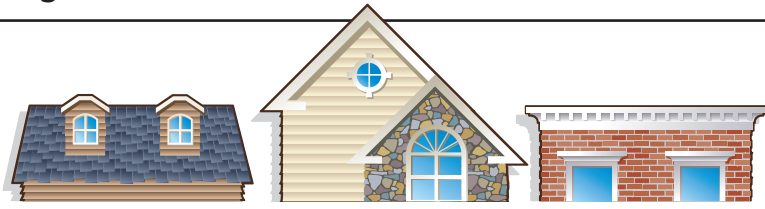
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How Much Home Can I Afford?

By the third quarter of 2025, the tide seemingly began to turn in regard to a housing market that had been marked by limited inventory since the onset of the



COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. According to market indicators from Redfin, the National Association of REALTORS® and Homes for Heroes, by the summer of 2025 things began to shift in regard to inventory (9.4 percent increase year-over-year). Prices also began to level

off, as the median existing home price in the United States was \$435,300 in June 2025, which marked a 2 percent increase from the previous year. Price reductions also became more common compared to 2024, signaling a cooldown in some segments.

Although affordability concerns still persist, many people may finally be ready to enter the home-buying arena. When doing so, it's essential prospective home buyers recognize how much they can comfortably spend on a home. Most experts suggest buyers combine lender affordability guidelines with an assessment of one's personal budget. These factors can help individuals determine a reliable budget when shopping for homes.

- Debt-to-income ratio: Lenders use various parameters to identify a borrower's creditworthiness. That includes figuring out a person's debt-

to-income ratio (DTI). Wells Fargo says DTI can be calculated by adding up all of a person's monthly debt payments and dividing them by gross monthly income. That number is multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. The lower the DTI, the less risky one is to lenders.

- The 28/36 rule: Part of the DTI equation may include the 28/36 rule utilized by many mortgage lenders. This is a standard guideline that can help one see if it's possible to afford a home loan. The 28 percent is allotted housing costs. The monthly housing expenses (principal, interest, taxes, homeowners insurance, private mortgage association fees) should be no more than 28 percent of one's gross monthly income. One's total monthly debt

payments, including housing, car, loans, student loans, and credit cards, should be no more than 36 percent of the gross monthly income. So if a prospective home buyer earns \$10,000 per month, or \$120,000 per year, the housing costs should not exceed \$2,800. Total debt payments, including housing, should not exceed \$3,600 per month.

- Personal budget considerations: Lenders may allow borrowers to borrow a certain amount of money, and buyers then go out and spend that much on a home. But to avoid living paycheck to paycheck and having all of one's money go toward a home, it is best to account for personal spending habits and savings goals. It's important to have an emergency funds account to pay for unexpected things like home repairs, or to account for instances when income may decline. Ongoing costs to manage the home also merit consideration, as do utilities and future renovations.
- Income-to-home price ratio: Some people abide by another general guideline to

shop for a home that costs no more than three to five times their annual household income. That means with an annual income of \$100,000, one should aim for a home priced between \$300,000 and \$500,000. The specific range will also depend on a person's existing debt.

- Interest rates and other factors: The interest rate on home mortgages as well as down payment also must be considered. Resources like Bankrate and Zillow provide home affordability calculators that will factor in interest rates, terms of a loan, down payment, and property taxes. Buying a home when interest rates are high means spending more over the life of the loan. Also, how much one puts toward a down payment has a big impact. Aiming for 20 percent means avoiding paying for private mortgage insurance (PMI).

There is no fail-safe way to determine how much home you can afford. Many factors are in play and are exclusive to buyers in the market for a new home.



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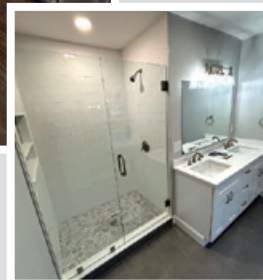
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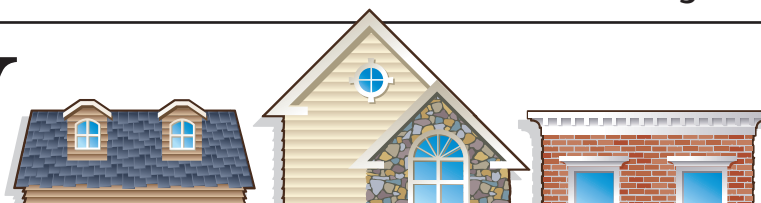
The market research experts at Business Research Insights report that the three-season sunroom market size is projected to nearly double between 2025 and 2035. BRI reports that 65 percent of homeowners prefer cost-effective sunrooms when seeking to extend their living space. The popularity of sunrooms can be traced to a number of variables, including year-round access to a home's surrounding landscape. That access might be hindered if the only spaces to experience nature is a patio, deck or another traditional type of outdoor living space. But sunrooms, particularly those equipped with heating and cooling, can bring homeowners in touch with nature during times of year when they might otherwise be compelled to steer clear of their outdoor living spaces due to less welcoming weather.

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HOME REVIEW



Planning for the Future with Flexible Living

BY TRACY LAROSA

The way we think about housing is changing—and flexibility is at the heart of it. Today’s buyers are no longer focused on the biggest home possible. Instead, they’re thinking ahead: how they want to live now, and how their needs may evolve over the next 10, 20, or even 30 years.

Less space, but better

One of the most noticeable shifts is a desire for less space, but better space. Many homeowners are intentionally downsizing or choosing homes with smaller footprints that are easier to maintain. One-level living is especially popular, offering convenience, accessibility, and long-term comfort without the need for stairs. Ranch-style homes, first-floor primary suites, and layouts with minimal level changes are in high

demand—and for good reason. They support aging in place while remaining functional for all stages of life.

Equally important is the rise of multi-purpose rooms. Homes no longer need a formal dining room that’s used twice a year or a dedicated guest room that sits empty most of the time.

Instead, buyers are looking for rooms that can adapt:

- A guest bedroom that doubles as a home office
- A dining area that functions as a workspace or homework zone
- A den or bonus room that can serve as a playroom for young children now and a media room for teens later

This flexibility allows homeowners to make the most of every square foot, adjusting how

they use their space as their lifestyle changes.

ADUs

Another major trend shaping future-focused housing is the growing interest in Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). An ADU offers incredible versatility. For many families, it’s a smart way to plan across generations. An ADU can house young adult children just starting out, potentially provide rental income to offset rising homeownership costs, and/or serve as a comfortable space for aging parents who want independence while remaining close to family.

Over time, the roles can reverse. Adult children may transition into the main home while older parents downsize into the ADU, maintaining proximity without sacrificing privacy. This kind of multigenerational



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) offer incredible versatility – for many families, it’s a smart way to plan across generations.

living is becoming increasingly common, especially as Massachusetts ranks in the top 10% of the most expensive states in the country. With the cost of living continuing to rise, families are rethinking traditional housing models and embracing solutions that offer financial flexibility and long-term stability.

Ultimately, these housing

trends reflect a smarter approach to homeownership—one that prioritizes adaptability, efficiency, and thoughtful planning. Flexible layouts, multi-purpose rooms, one-level living, and ADUs aren’t just trends; they’re practical tools for building a home that works for you now, and well into the future.

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Senior Community Center Activities for March

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

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

Weather Cancellation Policy: The Community Center will follow the public school system's snow cancellation and delay policy. If schools are closed, the Center is closed and there will be no services – including transportation. If schools are delayed 2 hours, the Center will not open until 11 a.m. All morning programs starting before 11 a.m. will be canceled, including any transportation services. Cancellation and delay announcements will be televised. Please be safe and use your own judgment.

American Red Cross Blood Drive at Ashland Senior Center Tuesday, March 17, from 12 - p.m. Donors can schedule an appointment directly at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSpon>

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Donor Promo: donate blood, A1C testing available and \$15 Amazon Gift Card.

BINGO Hosted by Ashland High School Leo's Club at Ashland Community Center Thursday, March 26 from 4 - 5 p.m. Cards and Markers provided. Prizes for winners! Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 ext. 1

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Transportation FREE transportation for older adults 60+ in Ashland and bordering towns only. Curb-to-curb service and wheelchair accessible. Monday and Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - Noon. 48-hour advance notice required. Call 508-881-0140 ext. 1 to schedule.

AARP Free Income Tax Preparation March 3 - April 7 Tuesdays 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. and Fridays 9 - 10:30 a.m. To schedule an appointment, you must pick up an intake packet at 162 West Union Street, Ashland. AARP will prepare Simple Returns. No Rental Properties-Depreciations.

Computer Lab: Our newly updated computer lab offers ADA-accessible computers,

printing accessibility, and independent learning opportunities such as learning a new language, listening to podcasts or music, or using a quiet space for a virtual meeting with our NEW lending headsets.

Legal Phone Consultation Friday, March 13, from 10 - 11:30 a.m. with Arthur P. Bergeron, Mirick Law. Call to schedule an appointment.

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

Veterans Office Hours with Richard Sabounjian Wednesday, March 11 and 18 from 9 - 11:30 a.m. Appointments recommended. Call 508-429-0629 to schedule.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

All Programs and Activities require registration unless noted in the specific event description. To register for any of our programs, call 508-881-0140 ext. 1 or stop by the Senior Center at 162 West Union Street, Ashland.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENTERTAINMENT

APOLLO 11 Mission with Eric Spahl. Wednesday, March 4 from

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. This presentation focuses on the origins of the space race, the Cold War, and the history of NASA, and culminates in the U.S. astronauts reaching the moon first.

Downton Abbey Viewing: Season 4, Episode 6 Thursday, March 5 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Tea and coffee provided.

Digital Literacy Class: Overview of Windows 11 with Jonathan Baron. Tuesday, March 17, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Gardening! with Mary Ann Gibbons. Thursday, March 19, from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Pots, soil and seeds will be provided!

Movie with Popcorn: Darkest Hour (2017) PG-13 Tuesday, March 17, from 1 - 3:10 p.m. In May 1940, the fate of World War II hangs on Winston Churchill, who must decide whether to negotiate with Adolf Hitler, or fight on, knowing that it could mean the end of the British Empire.

NAVROZ Celebrate Spring and the Persian New Year Social with Chef Prabir Chandra. Thursday, March 19, from 10 - 11 a.m. Come and enjoy some traditional appetizers.

"The Rule of Law"-Understanding Our Federal & State Constitutions with Retired Judge Michael Fabbri (Part 3 of 3-Part series) Thursday, March

12, from 10:30 - 12 p.m. Topics to be covered include: the history and development of our constitutional system of law, the structure of and changes to the Federal Constitution over time, how our court and Justice system function, and "landmark" court decisions.

BOARDS, COMMITTEE & COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Ashland Council on Aging (COA) Meeting Thursday, March 5, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Open to the Public.

Friends of the Ashland Council on Aging (FOACOA) Meeting Thursday, March 5, from 12 - 1:30 p.m. Open to the Public.

Town Manager's Coffee Hour Wednesday, March 18, from 10 - 11 a.m. All are welcome

Dull Men's Club with Doc Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. on March 3, 10 and 24. Field Trip on Tuesday, March 17. Information and location to come. Coffee and Conversation. Drop Ins Welcome

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SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 14

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Struggling With Acne?

BY LISA MASSIMIANO,
LICENSED ESTHETICIAN AND
CERTIFIED ACNE SPECIALIST

If you have been diagnosed with acne and haven't been satisfied with drug store products or the suggested treatment from your doctor, consider seeing an Acne Specialist.

What is an Acne Specialist?

An Acne Specialist is a licensed skin care professional who is specially trained to treat acne using a combination of clinical treatments, home care protocols and regular follow-up during the process of clearing acne prone skin.

Most physicians don't have the time to spend educating patients on the root cause of their acne. They often prescribe oral

antibiotics and strong topical retinoids that can leave skin dry, red and irritated. Patients get frustrated with these side effects and stop using the products.

How an Acne Specialist Can Help You.

An Acne Specialist will assess your individual skin type, and the type of acne you have, to develop a plan of action specifically for you. They will take the time to teach you about the root cause of acne and provide information on lifestyle, diet, medications, and ingredients in makeup and skin care products that exacerbate acne. They help you to get your skin clear and teach you how to keep your acne under control.

For people struggling with

acne, it can be frustrating to try and communicate with their doctor on a timely basis. My clients tell me that the best part of working with an Acne Specialist is that we are there for them to answer their questions and provide support while they go through the process of getting their skin clear.

Questions about acne? Email Lisa Massimiano, owner Skin Smart Salon and Acne Clinic at skinsmartsalon@aol.com or call 508-881-1180. Visit the website skinsmartsalon.com for information about Skin Smart's acne program and other services.

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NEW ERA

continued from page 1

and that sense of teamwork is essential.”

Landry emphasized that collaboration has been central to navigating competing priorities. Rather than attempting to address every need at once, the department focused on assessing impact, urgency, and available resources. “Collaboration is essential,” Landry explained. “I rely heavily on my team. Together, we prioritize based on impact and urgency, which helps us stay focused even when everything feels urgent.”

Clear communication, she said, has also been critical in building trust during a period of transition. Transparency about challenges and goals helped create stability within a largely new team. “Trust is built through transparency,” Landry continued. “We make sure staff understand what we’re facing and where we’re headed. The best teamwork comes from navigating challenges together and coming out stronger on the other side.”

Landry and the team have been maintaining existing programs while also guiding the department through expansion efforts shaped largely by community input. They listen to residents and evaluate past success, which leads to the department’s evolving priorities. She commented, “A big part of expanding programs is hearing directly from our community. We pay close attention to residents, look at what has worked well in the past, and bring in programming that reflects current needs.”

That approach has driven a growing emphasis on prevention, education, and support services. Programs focused on parent education, mental health resources, caregiver support, and broader community well-being now reflect the department’s vision.

“Programs that focus on prevention and education best reflect where we’re going,” Landry continued. “We’re always assessing community needs and evaluating what resonates with residents.”

Although participation trends are still being assessed, Landry noted that the department remains committed to expanding services across all age groups.

“Our focus is continuing to expand programs for everyone — not just students, but parents and caregivers as well,” she said. “Mental health and basic needs resources, like housing support, remain ongoing priorities.”

Like any rebuilding effort, progress has not been without obstacles. Landry acknowledged that setbacks are an inevitable part of organizational change. “Setbacks require patience and perspective,” Landry said, eloquently. “Progress isn’t always linear. Challenges often provide opportunities to reassess, adapt, and improve. And challenges make you a better leader.”

Landry measures success not by milestones but by stability and impact. With many staff members new to the department, creating a community of transparency and collaboration has become the most prominent feature. “A successful department becomes clearer over time,” she said. “That means being fully staffed and meaningfully meeting the needs

of residents. Everyone across departments has been so helpful and willing to jump in at every turn.”

Assistant Town Manager Katherine Bird emphasized Landry’s leadership and how it has strengthened the department’s services and internal workings. “We did have a foundation,” Bird said. “But Araya came in and really built up the department. She consistently builds her team and works exceptionally well with them. She’s done an amazing job not only maintaining but also expanding our programs and crucial care services for residents, while prioritizing her employees’ health and safety.”

Landry is quick to redirect praise to her staff, which includes Social Worker, Julie Tokarowski, Case Manager, Devin Lopes, Youth Coordinator, Berlin Awach, BU MSW Social Worker Intern, Morgan Foley, and Food Pantry Coordinator, Yucchi Cote.

“Our team has been incredible,” Landry said. “Across departments, people are willing to pitch in and help. That shared commitment is what makes this work meaningful.”

Landry concluded by saying that the best part of this job is working with a team. She says that working with people who share similar values within her team and across all departments makes this work meaningful. Everyone is always willing to jump in and help out, and that is how a successful Human Resources Department runs. Between Araya Landry and her team, Ashland’s Human Resources Department is in excellent hands, and the community is excited for what’s to come.

'No Kings 3' Rally March 28



Oct. 18 'No Kings 2' rally in Holliston. Source Holliston Democratic Town Committee

Holliston and Ashland area activists welcome the public to No Kings 3, a series of peaceful demonstrations on Saturday, March 28. We gather in support of our democratic ideals and the safety and well-being of our

neighbors. The Holliston stand-out will be held on Washington Street in front of Town Hall at 1:30 p.m. The Ashland time is to be determined. For details, see mnwactionhub.blogspot.com. Register at www.nokings.org.

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SENIOR CENTER*continued from page 12***Clocktown Memory Cafe with Musical Memories by John and Linda**

Tuesday, March 24, from 1 - 2:30 p.m. Clocktown Cafe provides a welcoming place for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or a cognitive impairment accompanied by a caregiver. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Susan McNulty, smcnulty@ashlandmass.com, or 508-532-7945. Registration: due by Thursday, March 19.

Early Cognitive Decline: What to Do Wednesday, March 25 from 11 - 12 p.m. with Anne Fitzgerald, RN. Signs, Causes, Prevention, and Treatment.

Hearing Aid Cleaning with Hopkinton Audiology Monday, March 16, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Appointment recommended.

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

Mindfulness & Meditation with Mary Green Thursdays at 11 a.m. \$4 pp suggested donation per class.

Parkinson's Boxing First and third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 pm.

Sound Meditation Journey with Sonia Stingo Thursday, March 26 at 10:30 a.m.

ARTS, CRAFTS, SEWING & COOKING Reservations required. Call 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Cook with Chef Lee: Cajun Shrimp Taco Tuesday, March 3, from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost \$5 pp. Reservations due by Thursday, Feb. 26.

Craft Class with Milly: Vases Made from Books and Bookmarks Tuesday, March 10, from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Supplies provided. Reservations due by Thursday, March 5.

Craft Class with Elissa: Hummingbird Feeder Friday, March 20, from 10 - 11:00 a.m. Supplies provided. Reservations due by Thursday, March 12.

DROP-IN Knitting & Crocheting Group Second and fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 a.m. Bring your current project and enjoy knitting with our group

Knit Along with Nancy Second and fourth Thursdays at 1 - 2:30 p.m. Beginners Knitting Project: Slippers. Reservations: due by Thursday, March 5 and/or March 19.

Intermediate & Advanced Watercolor Class Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Some openings. See the instructor for details and costs.

Sew with Tobi: Fabric Napkins Friday, March 13, from 10 - 11:30 a.m. All levels of skill welcome. Bring your own sewing machine. Reservations due by Thursday, March 5.

Sew with Tobi: Vegetable Shopping Bag Friday, March 27, from 10 - 11:30 a.m. All levels of skill welcome. Bring your own sewing machine. Reservations due by Thursday, March 19.

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

Bowling - Ryan's Amusement, Millis Tuesdays at 9 a.m. Check the cost with the Bowling Alley.

Chair Yoga Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

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

Line Dancing with Lisa Thursdays at 1 p.m. New time!

Ping Pong Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

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

Zumba Gold with Kelli Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

GAMES Reservations required. Call 508-881-0140 ext. 1.

Canasta Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

Chess Mondays at 1 p.m.

Cribbage Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

Mahjong Fridays at 9:30 a.m., Beginners call to register and learn how to play. Fridays at 10:30 a.m. for all levels.

Pitch Card Game Mondays at 1 p.m.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS Reservations required. In collaboration with the Ashland Public Library.

Register at <https://tinyuri.com/apl-calendars>

Romance Book Club: Omegaverse! Thursday, March 5, from 7 - 8 p.m.

Historic Fiction Book Recommendations with Best-selling Author, Jane Healey Tuesday, March 10, from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers: Thomas Jefferson Friday, March 13 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Inclusive & Diverse Book Recommendations Thursday, March 19, from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

Mystery & Thriller Book Recommendations with Best-selling Author, Hank Phillippi Ryan Thursday, March 19, from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

DINING PROGRAMS Reservations required

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

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

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

Birthday Lunch: Celebrations are held on the FIRST MONDAY of the month. Only members of the Friends of the Council on Aging (FOACO) will receive a FREE lunch, a cupcake, and a scratch ticket. You MUST SPECIFY on your reservation that it is your birthday lunch. All Lunches served with an accompanying dessert. All reservations must be made by

NOON on the Thursday before the scheduled dining program.

Birthday Lunch Monday, March 2 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Half a Grilled Cheese Sandwich and Cup of Minestrone Soup. \$7 per person.

Ashland Lions Club FREE Breakfast Thursday, March 5, from 9:30 - 11 a.m. Reservations: Call 508-881-0140 ext. 1 by Thursday, Feb. 26.

Lunch & Learn: Homeshare Programs with Jewish Family Services Monday, March 9 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Half a Mayflower Wrap (turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, side of Mayo) \$7 per person.

Lunch Prepared by Culinary Students from Keefe Tech Tuesday, March 10 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Chicken Picatta. \$8 per person.

Lunch Prepared by June Weiner, The Casual Gourmet Wednesday, March 11 at 11:45 a.m. Entrée: Corned Beef and Cabbage. \$7 per person.

Saint Patrick's Day Lunch with Celtic Music by Tim Van Egmond, Folksinger & Storyteller. Monday, March 16 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Shepard's Pie. \$8 per person. Entertainment Only Reservations: \$4 per person. Call 508-881-0140 ext.1 by Thursday, March 12.

Lunch & Learn: Springwell Caregiver Support with Jennifer Murray Monday, March 23 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Gobbler Sandwich (turkey breast, lettuce, tomato on a bulky roll) \$7 per person.

Lunch Prepared by Culinary Students from Keefe Tech Tuesday, March 24 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Tuscan Chicken. \$8 per person.

Lunch with Trivia Monday, March 30 at 12 p.m. Entrée: Chicken Cordon Bleu. \$8 per person.

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University of Wisconsin-Madison's Dean's List Fall 2025

MADISON, WISCONSIN (January 8, 2026) - The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2025-2026 academic year.

Students who achieve at a high

level academically are recognized by the dean at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Each university school or college sets its own GPA requirements

for students to be eligible to receive the distinction.

To view an online listing, visit <https://registrar.wisc.edu/deanslist/>.

Ashland, MA:

Ashley Sachs, College of Letters and Science, Dean's List

March 2026 at the Ashland Library

Visit the Ashland Library website Calendar for additional info and registration links: <https://tinyurl.com/apl-calendars>

SPECIAL EVENTS

In Person:

Second Annual Ashland Library Young Artists Comics Fest! Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Second Annual Young Artists Comics Fest features young artists - kids 8-18 who are making their own comics and, now, will have the opportunity to sell them. Comics workshops, headliners, and book sales, and signings.

"MockTails and Mini-Golf"

Friends of the Ashland Library Fundraising Event for Adults. Saturday, March 28, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Play Mini Golf in the Ashland Library - Friends of the Ashland Library Fundraising Event Sunday, March 29, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Get ready for an un-fore-gettable weekend, March 28 and 29, when you can play 18 holes of mini golf INSIDE the Ashland Library. The Friends of the Ashland Public Library is teaming up with local business sponsors for this tee-riffic fundraising event.

ADULT

In Person:

Front Street Readers Book Club Tuesday, March 3 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Read *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

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

Card Making with Jan Poppendieck Monday, March 9 at 6:30 p.m. Jan will teach embossing, die cutting, proper stamping, and the use of equipment, individually and group techniques of creating unique cards.

Historical Fiction Book Club Tuesday, March 10 at 11 a.m. Read *The Tiffany Girls* by Shelley Noble.

Women's Wisdom Circle Thursday, March 12 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. For this session, Paula Topliffe will lead a discussion on: Building a sisterhood

Mystery Book Club Friday, March 13 at 12 p.m. Read *Win* by Harlan Coben.

Cook Book Club Tuesday,

March 17 at 5 p.m. Cook from *My America: Recipes From a Young Black Chef* by Kwame Onwuachi.

Bio/Memoir Book Club Wednesday, March 18 at 11 a.m. Read *It's How We Play the Game* by Ed Stack.

Hybrid:

Ask a Master Gardener Panel with the Ashland Garden Club on Wednesday, March 25 at 6 p.m. Spend an evening with three local Master Gardeners (either in person or online!) who will be available to answer your questions about a wide range of gardening topics.

Virtual:

Author Heather Wolf Discusses: Bird Feathers & Their Fascinating Functions. Monday, March 2 at 7 p.m. Join Heather Wolf, author of *Find More Birds: 111 Surprising Ways to Spot Birds Wherever You Are and Birding at the Bridge: In Search of Every Bird on the Brooklyn Waterfront*

Queen Boudica of the Celts with Bill Thierfelder Tuesday, March 3 from 7 - 8:30 p.m. But to many on this side of The Pond, Boudica's story is still unknown. This program attempts to correct that. Boudica remains one of the most remarkable leaders in Western History.

A Conversation with Romance Author E.H. Lupton Tuesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. E. H. Lupton joins us for a conversation about the Wisconsin Gothic series. We're huge fans of *Dionysus in Wisconsin* and are thrilled that *Renaissance* was released on March 2.

Environmental Book Club Wednesday, March 4 at 6:30 p.m. *Ruin Their Crops on the Ground: The Politics of Food in the United States, from the Trail of Tears to School Lunch* by Andrea Freeman.

Launching a Passion Project with local author Anita Saville Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m. Join Chelmsford author Anita Saville to learn best practices for getting your project off

the ground. Her recent book, *With a Passion: Seeing Good Ideas Through*, uses the compelling story of Budget Buddies, an award-winning nonprofit, to help others make meaningful change in their communities.

Romance Book Club Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m. Topic: Omegaverse!

"Vacations Can Be Murder: The Mid Atlantic States" with True Crime Author, Dawn M. Barclay Monday, March 9 at 7 p.m. Dawn M. Barclay will be chatting about her new book (the 2nd in the series), *Vacations Can Be Murder: A True Crime Lover's Travel Guide to the Mid-Atlantic States*.

Historical Fiction Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Jane Healey Tuesday, March 10, from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

Stories from the Nature Conservancy's Work on Elm, Chestnut, and Other Trees in Peril Tuesday, March 10 at 7 p.m.

Thriller/Horror Book Recs with Bookstagrammer at re-dreadreviews Tuesday, March 10 from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

Job Search Help - AMA (Ask Me Anything) with Resume and LinkedIn Coach Virginia Franco. Wednesday, March 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Declutter series with Jamie Novak Thursday, March 12, from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Presidential Series with Doodler Heather Rogers: Thomas Jefferson Friday, March 13 at 10:30 a.m.

Friday Night Film Discussion Friday, March 13 at 7 p.m.

Shannon McKenna Schmidt Discusses You Can't Catch Us Monday, March 16 at 7 p.m.

Iconic Entertainers: Sammy Davis, Jr. with Clint Edwards Tuesday, March 17, from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Bill Gette: Arizona's Natural Beauty Thursday, March 19, from 1 - 2:15 p.m.

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

Sarah Miriam Peale - America's First Female Professional Painter Thursday, March 19 at 2 p.m.

Mystery/Thriller Book Recs with Bestselling Author, Hank Phillippi Ryan Thursday, March 19, from 6:30 - 7 p.m.

"Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr: A Legacy in Landscapes" with Bruce Magnuson Thursday, March 19, from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Inclusive and Diverse Book Recs with Bookstagrammer at sometimesleelynnreads Thursday, March 19, from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

Author Matthew Algeo Discusses New York's Secret Subway Monday, March 23 at 7 p.m.

Old Growth Forests of New England with David Govatski Tuesday, March 24 at 7 p.m.

Bridgerton Discussion: Season Four - Benophie Tuesday, March 24 at 7 p.m.

From Pixels to Personality with Deborah Tual Thursday, March 26 at 7 p.m.

Art on Thursday: Fierce Females: Women in Art Thursday, March 26, from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion Friday, March 27 at 7 p.m.

"The Girl Bandits of the Warsaw Ghetto" Monday, March 30 at 7 p.m.

In Conversation with Hor-

ror Author Lindy Ryan Tuesday, March 31 at 7 p.m.

When We Spoke to the Dead with Ilise Carter Tuesday, March 31 at 7 p.m.

ADULT WEEKLY:

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

Gentle Yoga Tuesdays at 6 p.m. Registration required.

CHILDREN:

Special Programs

Dungeons & Dragons: The Next Campaign Ages 8-12

Wednesday, March 4, from 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 11, from 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 18, from 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 25, from 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Join the next campaign of Dungeons & Dragons and embark on an exciting journey into the world of role-playing games. With the guidance of an experienced Dungeon Master, beginners will continue to learn the basics of character creation, storytelling, and gameplay.

Little Picassos Club Grades K-2. Tuesday, March 10, from 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. Join Miss Kayla

LIBRARY

continued on page 16

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Ashland Historical Society Presents: Myths and Miracles of Victorian Medicine



Historical Portrayals by Lady J- Janet Parnes will be held at the Ashland Historical Society, 2 Myrtle Street, Ashland on March 15 at 2 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

If a surgeon dropped his scalpel on the floor, he picked up the instrument and continued to use it; on the other hand, that same surgeon had access to X-ray equipment. Such is the paradoxical nature of late-Victorian medicine.

Prepare to gasp, cringe, and chuckle, as you discover the horrifying practices and milestone discoveries that characterize turn-of-the-century medicine! Proper Victorian lady, Miss Myrtle Mills will re-

veal both its primitive nature and its life-saving advancements.

Learn about topics that include disease prevention, homemade medicines, and patented “remedies”; pregnancy protocols; and scientific discoveries such as aspirin and the X-ray. As March is Women’s History Month; it is significant that the portrayal will also include information on Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. Dr. Blackwell was the first woman to graduate from an American medical college.

Join us for this exploration of practices that defy today’s medical sense and discoveries that helped shape the roots of 21st-century medicine.

LIBRARY

continued from page 15

for Little Picassos—revamped! Perfect for kids who love to get their hands messy. Registration required.

Art Club Grades 3-6. Thursday, March 12 at 4:30 p.m. Young artists in grades are invited to join Miss Lindsay to make awesome creations through a variety of different mediums. Registration required.

Minecraft Bobbleheads Ages 8-12. Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Don't miss this unique art class to make your own Minecraft Bobblehead with Pop-Up Art School! This program is 90 minutes long. Registration is required.

Coding Class for Kids Grades K-5. Saturday, March 14 at 12:15 p.m. and Saturday, March 28 at 12:15 p.m. Join us for a coding journey that's out of this world! Space is limited, and registration is required.

LEGO Club! Monday, March 23 at 4:30 p.m. Registration is required, and space is limited.

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

Rainbow Crafternoon Grades K-5. Wednesday, March 25, from - 4 p.m. Drop in anytime between 2 and 4 p.m. to make a craft.

Off the Page Movie Club: Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs For Families. Saturday, March 28, from 1 - 3 p.m. This month, we'll be highlight-

ing *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett and its 2009 movie adaptation.

Little Crafters Thursday, March 26 at 10:30 a.m. Come join the Ashland Moms Club for this storytime, where little hands get to explore big ideas! For families with children ages 0-5.

Juntos en la Biblioteca: Actividades en Español en Familia For Families. Para Familias. Monday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. Los invitamos a disfrutar en familia de una sesión de actividades en español en la biblioteca. En “Juntos en la Biblioteca,” ofreceremos la oportunidad de crear lazos fuertes en comunidad, ¡todo en español! | Join us for family activities in Spanish at the library! Through “Juntos en la Biblioteca” (Together at the Library), we're creating a space to strengthen community ties and connect, entirely in Spanish!

Family Paint Night For Families. Tuesday, March 31, from 6 - 7 p.m. Come join us for our first-ever Family Paint Night! We'll provide the canvases, paint, and light refreshments. Kids can paint whatever they'd like instead of following a set design! Space is limited, registration required.

Weekly Storytimes (no registration):

Tuesday Clocktown Rockers! For ages 2-5 with a caregiver. Tuesdays from 10:30 - 11 a.m. We'll dance to favorite kids' tunes, have fun with instruments and other props, and read a story, all while building your child's early literacy and executive function skills.

Baby Time For ages 0-3 with

a caregiver. Wednesdays from 10:30 - 11 a.m. Join Miss Lindsay for Baby Time.

ABC Adventures For ages 3-6 with a caregiver. Fridays from 10:30 - 11 a.m. Join Miss Kayla for this new literacy-focused storytime! Each week, we'll focus on different letters of the alphabet and letter sounds as a cornerstone of building early reading skills.

Saturday Stories

For families with young children. Saturdays from 10:30 - 11 a.m. Join Miss Kayla for our weekly Saturday morning storytime! We'll read lively stories, do fun rhymes and movement activities, and sometimes work on simple crafts.

Recurring Weekly Programs:

Project ABC: Play, Learn & Grow Ages 0-5. Mondays from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Join the Metrowest YMCA in partnership with the Early Childhood Alliance of Ashland & Framingham for a fun and interactive experience designed just for little ones. Registration is required, and is found on their website: <https://www.projectabc.org/>

Teen:

March Madness All month. Kids can vote online for their favorite books. Who will come up on top? Visit our calendar or the teen room for more information.

Game Day Saturday, March 14, from 1 - 3 p.m. For teens 12-18. The name says it all. Come play with us! No registration needed.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for New Ashland Business

On Feb 5, Talento Futbol Development was officially welcomed to Ashland, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by owners Mike Abasciano, Manny Nunes, and Nick Brown.

Jack Lewis and Susan Nicholl, representing Senate President Karen Spilks, joined the celebration recognizing Talento's mission to build skills, confidence, and accessibility through soccer.

Post and photo courtesy of Ashland, Massachusetts Facebook page



localtownpages

Ashland

Welcomes these
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- **Base Coat Nail Spa**
32 Pond Street
- **La Pupusa Loca**
33 Pond Street
- **Core Cove Fitness & Wellness**
12 Pond Street
- **Talento Futbol Development**
200 Homer Avenue
- **Texas Meat Market**
6 Chestnut Street

Come in We're
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UPDATES

continued from page 3

Join us for an adventure to Sloomoo Boston if you are a slime enthusiast.

ACC FY2026 Grantees

Congratulations to the Ashland Cultural Council FY2026 Grantees! Great programming is coming this year because of all the hard work of contributors. The Ashland Cultural Council was created to promote the arts and to develop programs for the local community. A volunteer-run organization, the goal of the Ashland Cultural Council is to encourage arts and arts education in the town of Ashland.

Ice Dam Prevention

After years of mild winters we are now buried in snow. With snow comes ice dams on roofs. Ice dams can lead to a lot of damage including exterior damage, molding and mildew, and safety concerns of falling large icicles. If you have not had MassSave come to your home in the last 5 years you can have MassSave come in for a FREE home energy audit. They will show you the areas that heat is escaping and where insulation is needed. If you have any questions about ice dams or home energy efficiency projects contact the Ashland Sustainability Office sriley@ashlandmass.com.

Mini-Golf in the Library Returns to the APL March 28-29

The 4th annual Putts4Pages Mini-Golf in the Library is once again on course to raise thousands of dollars in support of Ashland Public Library programs. Ashland businesses have generously stepped up to sponsor all 18 holes and then some. And, thanks to a generous grant from the Boston Athletic Association and the Ashland Select Board that covers the bulk of expenses, the proceeds raised through hole sponsorships, our ride-to-school and gift card raffles, and ticket sales will go directly to support the programs the library puts on for all ages at no charge for participants.

The event, sponsored by the Friends of the APL, will take place after hours at the library March 28 and 29. Saturday evening, March 28, is for adults only and features 18 holes of mini-golf plus "Mocktails and Munchies" on the 19th hole from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Mocktails will be provided by Ashland Ale House with a sweet

and savory selection of munchies prepared by Dulce D Leche. Ticket price for this night of fun is \$25 per person.

The excitement continues on Sunday, March 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. when the whole family can play through 18 holes set up throughout the stacks and inner spaces of the library. A goodie bag awaits the kids at the 19th hole. Tickets are \$5 per person, with a cap of \$25 per family.

Win a Ride to School in a Fire Truck!

Imagine the thrill of arriving at school in a fire truck, a police car, or maybe one of those cool DPW trucks! Your child's dream can come true just by entering our exciting raffle. The winning Ashland K-5 students will win a ride from home to school on an Ashland fire truck, police cruiser, or a DPW truck. Tickets for a chance to show up to school in an official town vehicle are just \$5 each. New this year is a chance for a ride around town for a winning ADULT! Fulfill your childhood fantasy for just \$10 per raffle ticket.

Win a Gift Card to Try a New Place or Revisit an Old Favorite

For the grownups, we're featuring \$1 raffle tickets to win great gift cards to 2 Mauro's, Anthony's Barber Stylist, Ashland REIKI & Wellness Center, Blush Bouquets, Cherry Blossom Chinese Cuisine, Dr. Greens, Dulce D Leche, Honey Dew Donuts, La Pupusa Loca Grill, Marathon Deli, Nick's Pizza and Grill, Shaw's, Sub Zero Nitrogen Ice Cream, Sunnyside Café, Tarot Readings by Paula, The Bagel Table, and Town House Pizza.

Raffle tickets are available during the March Book Sale (March 6-7), plus every Saturday in March from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the library. Or, you can buy tickets and enter to win while you golf on March 28 or 29. Winners will be contacted during the first week in April.

Thank you to the Community businesses making the event possible which include Middlesex Savings Bank (Flagship Sponsor), Needham Bank (1st hole sponsor), 126 Self Storage, Abbey Carpet & Floor, Annemarie's Dance Centre, AnyFence, Appleseed Landscape, Ashland Animal Hospital, Ashland Community Acupuncture LLC, Ashland Lumber, Ashland Mini-Storage Experts, AT&R Insurance, Bill Gath of Realty Executives

Boston West, Clock Tower Pickleball, Mathnasium of Southborough, Mike's Collision, Platinum PT, Richard Francis Salon and Spa, Stumpy's Tree Service, The Residence at Valley Farm, Tom's Auto Body, and Worcester Air Conditioning. "Friends of the Green" include Ashland Lumber, Lunkers, Minucci Auto Body Inc, Modelville Hobby, Oak Realty, and TJ's Fine Food & Spirits. We still have room for additional businesses to step up to sponsor the 19th hole or become a Friend of the Green. Contact president@friendsoftheapl.org for information on how YOU can support the Ashland Public Library.

Proceeds from this fundraising event will go to pay for all of the in-person and virtual library programs, as well as 15 different Museum Passes, stocking Little Libraries all over town, supplementing classroom shelves in Ashland Public Schools, and much, much more. Order tickets here or go to www.friendsoftheapl.org

Boy Scout Troop 232 Pancake Breakfast

On March 22, Ashland Boy Scouts Troop 232 of the Mayflower Council will be holding our annual pancake breakfast at VFW Hall in Ashland. The purpose of this event is to raise money to help support the Troop during the coming year. Although each Scout contributes funds regularly through the payment of monthly dues, this is not enough to pay for the annual charter fee, troop equipment, and camping trips for the boys. This is our one major fundraiser for the year, and we expect between 200-250 attendees. We are seeking donations for our Silent Auction, where we will auction off donated goods and services from local businesses. Recommended items for donation are: Gift Cards - Goods - Event Tickets - Gift Baskets - Services - Experiences - Collectibles.

Businesses contributing donations valued at \$25 or greater will receive the following:

- Your business logo on every placemat
- Recognition on our troop Facebook page

Donations must be received no later than March 1, 2026. Please send any questions and business logos for the placemat to pancakebreakfast@troop232ashland.org

Greater Ashland Lions Club

Happy Saint Patrick's Day, March 17!

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

Our annual Quiz/Trivia Night will be held on April 17 at the VFW Hall on Pleasant Street (6:30 p.m. start time). Form a team (8 people maximum) for this fun and friendly trivia competition and win a Cash Prize. There will also be raffles, a dessert table, and a cash bar. Contact Lion Ro at 508-881-4743 for tickets (\$20/per person). Tickets will not be sold at the door. Here is a sample of a General Knowledge answer and question: "This planet has 274 confirmed moons." See the answer below.

World Water Day is an international United Nations holiday (and a Lions Focus Area), observed every year on March 22. Clean and safe water is something that is still not accessible to many people around the globe, and even in some parts of the United States! World Water Day raises awareness of this issue and the importance of making freshwater accessible to everyone for drinking and san-

itation. There are currently 2.2 billion people living with no access to clean and safe water, which means this is a global water crisis that we need to take action against.

Do you have any used eyeglasses hanging around? We'll take them! Please bring them to the Police Station (located in the Public Safety Building at 12 Union St), Market Basket (Pond Street/Rte. 126), the VFW (at 311 Pleasant Street), or the Town Hall (Main Street).

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

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

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

*Submitted: Lion Rosalie Porter, 2nd VP
Trivia Answer: Saturn*

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Sports

Ava Vitti: An Ashland Basketball Star Scorer

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

As a junior playing for the Ashland Girls Varsity Team, basketball has been part of Ava Vitti's life since the fourth grade, but it was not something that she intended on pursuing herself; it was something that was involuntarily required of her to take part in.

"Basically, my dad forced me to play basketball because I was scared to try new things," the Ashland athlete said. "I found that I really liked it, and I felt comfortable playing the sport. At that stage, I joined a club team, the Bay State Jaguars, and I've been with them since."

Vitti, who only plays basketball, went on to say that she feels basketball is unlike any other sport, and she finds it simple — just put the ball in the net, and that comes easily for her. She had tried lacrosse, swimming, and gymnastics, but stopped all of them by the time she entered high school and focused strictly on basketball.

As she got ready to enter the high school, she remembered that the Clockers had a new coach that year, and that they usually reached out to get to know their team, but nothing ever materialized.

"The coach my freshman year didn't seem to know any of us, and our team was a bit of a mess,

having only won one game," Vitti said. "For some reason, we didn't get along, and after the season ended, I thought about transferring to a private school, but then coach Leslie was taking over the program and decided to stay."

Under Coach Patrick Leslie's new guidance, Vitti felt the team was in much better shape and was playing at a much higher level. It was this, her sophomore campaign, that she realized that she could reach the 1000-point plateau for the Clockers.

Following her second year with Ashland, she was over halfway to the magical number of 1000. By the end of her junior season, she should be very close to 900 career points, and she is looking at the beginning of her senior season when she finally eclipses the mark. Every time the junior takes to the gym, she looks at the 1000-point scorer board, where no one has been added to over the last thirteen years.

It was also during her sophomore season that she received her first college offer from Southern Maine to play basketball for them after she graduated. With the offer, Vitti decided to tour a Division 3 school. There, she found that the school not only had a strong basketball program but also offered the two majors she was considering (nursing or business). Although Southern

Maine reached out to the young hoopster, Vitti has not yet accepted anything, as it was too early. After the season, she will sit down and start touring other schools.

Before this year began, Vitti knew she wanted to continue improving her scoring while helping the team make the playoffs, something Ashland hasn't done in a while.

"She demands intensity from her teammates," said Coach Leslie. "As a junior, I expected her to have a good year, especially after being named All-Conference last year. I was looking for more efficiency at finishing at the hoop and she definitely came in much better than I expected."

Vitti brought intensity to the team's practices and improved their focus on the court. The junior captain, who is saddled with defending the opposition's big scorers, has been scoring herself. Currently, Vitti is averaging 17.8 points per game, while adding 6.2 rebounds, 1 block, and 2 steals. She is second in conference scoring and dropped 41 points against Dover-Sherborn earlier in the year.

As a captain, she is looking to help the Clockers win.

"We are a young team and not one that wins a lot of games, although we do have more this year than we did last year," she



Ava Vitti. Photo supplied by Christopher Tremblay

said. "We have played competitive basketball with most teams, but we need to beat the teams that we should. It seems like we play up to the tougher teams and sink down to the other teams' level."

With three games remaining on their schedule, the Clockers have won six games this year and are still hoping to make the State Tournament. However, if Ashland is denied the opportu-

nity, Vitti and her teammate will have another chance next season, a season the coach expects his team to play better.

"With a year under our belts, we should be more successful next year, and that all starts with Ava," Leslie said. "I am expecting her to make a bigger jump from her junior to senior year while leading us. She will also start to see more and more college offers coming her way."



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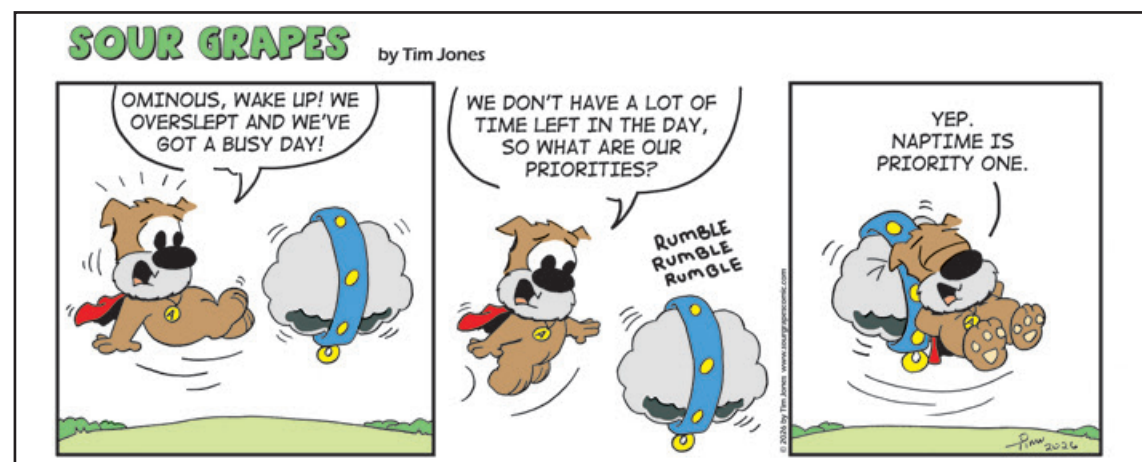
Worcester State University Fall 2025 Dean's List

The Worcester State University Fall 2025 Dean's List honors 1,611 undergraduate students who achieved a high level of academic excellence, typically

requiring a minimum 3.5 GPA, by completing at least 12 credits (or 6 for part-time) during the semester. The official, comprehensive list is available at worcester.

edu/deans-list

Ashland, MA: Kristina R Dennis, Anna D Kaufman, Kayleigh A Masiello, Danielle R Mas-sauro, Daniel R Ryan



Real Estate Corner

What to Know About Solar



Kim Foemmel, REALTOR®
Real Estate Broker

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Societal focus on sustainable practices along with the rising cost of living has led to a growing interest in alternative resources. Many homeowners

have considered utilizing solar power to save on electric bills, increase property value, lessen environmental impact or a combination thereof. But is going solar really the answer, or even an asset? Here are things to consider before flipping the switch.

Putting solar panels on your home can be a huge cost savings. You can choose to lease them, which requires no upfront investment, or buy them. Depending on whether you plan to supply part or all of your power needs, most homes require between 15-25 panels and will be in the ballpark of \$15,000-\$35,000 (before incentives, such as the 30% federal tax credit). Oftentimes with a purchase, it includes a low interest rate and the loan is transferable to the next homeowner.

A custom calculation will consider your average consumption, panel wattage, roof characteristics and sunlight hours. A good Q&A can be found on the U.S. Department of Energy website at energy.gov/eere/solar/homeowners-guide-solar.

Solar panels last an average of 25-30 years, which is about the same as the average roof, so timing is important: Your roof should be less than 10-15 years old and in good condition to avoid costly panel removal and reinstallation later. Many companies offer combined roof replacement and solar installation to save time and money. Note that factors like panel type, climate and installation quality will affect the life span of the panels.

For example, a recent home purchase with heat pumps re-

vealed an average monthly electric bill of \$1,200. The homeowner is now installing leased solar, which is estimated to reduce the electric cost to approximately \$205 per month for 25 years at a 0% APR, with a lower rate of 16 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) and no upfront or out-of-pocket costs. The solar lease can be transferred to a future homeowner, pending a credit check. The solar company also offered to replace the home's nine-year-old roof at no cost; however, that option would have increased the monthly payment to approximately \$450-\$500. This example highlights why negotiation is key to securing the best long-term energy solution for your family.

Owning or leasing solar panels is typically a strong invest-

ment. Most homeowners who purchase solar recoup their costs within about 10 years and can save tens of thousands of dollars over the system's lifetime, depending on energy usage, system size and electricity rates. Solar also offers added energy independence and the option for battery backup — an especially reassuring benefit during harsh New England winters.

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Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
02/12/2026	49 Braeburn Ln.	\$755,000
02/09/2026	60 Frankland Rd.	\$495,000
02/06/2026	12 Alfred Rd.	\$625,000
02/06/2026	373 Eliot St.	\$338,000
02/06/2026	277 Meeting House Path	\$445,000
02/02/2026	638 Main St.	\$640,000
02/02/2026	67 Spyglass Hill Dr.	\$460,000
01/30/2026	117 Metropolitan Ave.	\$513,000
01/30/2026	63 Trailside Way	\$410,000
01/29/2026	343 Captain Eames Cir. #38C	\$620,000
01/26/2026	13 Washington Ave.	\$530,000
01/21/2026	72 Meeting House Path	\$440,000
01/21/2026	97 Meeting House Path	\$399,900
01/16/2026	72 Pond St.	\$525,000



The 2-bed, 1-bath, 1,228-square-foot home at 72 Pond Street in Ashland recently sold for \$525,000.
Image credit: www.zillow.com



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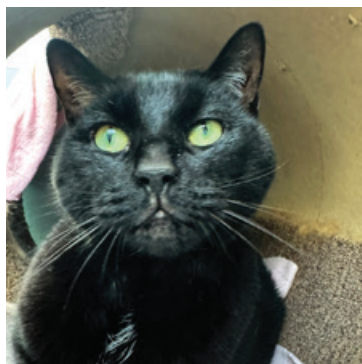
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Meet Carlos

Your Quiet Cuddly Companion

Carlos Despacito Meowiguez (aka Carlos) is an 8-year-old sweetheart with a calm, gentle soul who's ready to settle into a peaceful home of his own. He has an extremely easygoing nature, making him the kind of companion who seamlessly fits into your life.



A little more about Carlos: Carlos has a heart condition (cardiomyopathy) that is currently stable and not affecting his day-to-day happiness. He doesn't need medication at this time and continues to enjoy a comfortable, good quality of life, though this will need to be monitored with a veterinarian. He also has a history of stress-related urinary issues, which are currently well managed with a special diet and a calm environment. Carlos will thrive with someone who understands that peace, routine, and consistency mean everything to him. With proper care, he continues to enjoy life at his own relaxed pace. We're happy to talk more about his needs when you

come to meet this sweet boy.

He would do best as the only pet in the home, where he can soak up all the attention without competition. Carlos is looking for a calm, loving home that will appreciate his gentle heart and cherish the quiet bond he offers. If you're searching for a devoted lap cat who will provide plenty of affection and quiet companionship, Carlos may be the perfect match.

Adoptions are by appointment only. If you are interested in meeting Carlos, please complete our online adoption application (<https://www.shelterluv.com/matchme/adopt/MWHS/Cat>).

Honoring Larry DeJong and his 20 Years of Volunteer Work for the Ashland Library

By CAROLYN BELL, ASHLAND LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Saturday afternoon at the Ashland Public Library, the Friends and Trustees honored Lawrence De Jong for his contributions to the library's cultural life and, thus, to the town. When invited to choose a piece of art to commemorate his thousands of hours of volunteer work over twenty years, he selected a painting by local artist Louis Risoli. Louis, who grew up in Ashland, studied at Tufts University, with a junior year abroad in Hong Kong. After three decades in Boston, he returned and now paints the woods in town where he walks on an almost daily basis.

Lawrence De Jong taught art at Ashland High School for many years and is an artist. When the library was finally renovated and opened in 2005, he started the library's exhibition program and brought many local artists, some nationally known, to the library in monthly shows. He held annual exhibitions of Ashland se-



Larry DeJong (right) and Louis Risoli (left) stand next to one of Risoli's paintings at the event on Jan. 24, 2026.

niors' and high school students' art. He aided the donor committee in the library's collection of local art and has archived the library's art resources.

Louis Risoli's paintings are in the collections of The Rose Art Museum, the DeCordova Museum, and many corporate and private collections. He has exhibited for many years at Gallery NAGA in Boston, where he will have a show this coming

June and July.

Trustee Carolyn Bell paid tribute not only to Larry and Louis, but to the many volunteers over the years who early on supported the library with bake and book sales on the front lawn and then pushed to bring the library that was underfunded and neglected to a renovated, modern library with its own collection of fine local artists and one that provides in-house programs and virtual programs.

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