



Bellingham BULLETIN

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Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

March 1, 2026

Bellingham's Tyler Campbell Reaches 100th Win Milestone

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Wrestling captain Tyler Campbell clinched the 100th

victory of his high school career last month, with the milestone capping a remarkable four-year

run on the mat for one of the area's most consistent competitors.

Securing his 100th career win over Kyle Tedstone of Hopkinton, Tyler came out to the mat with confidence, succumbing to being taken down first, but fighting for a quick reversal and forcing his opponent into a cradle for a pin in the first period (1 min., 23 seconds). He was met with cheers from his team, his family, and other spectators and handed a commemorative banner, which he proudly held up for photos. His name will hang on a banner in the high school



Tyler Campbell proudly holds up a banner commemorating his 100th career win, which he received on January 28th.

MILESTONE

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Our Town Publishing Changes Hands, Celebrates Relocation

Tri-County Regional Chamber Facilitates Milford Ribbon-Cutting Event

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

On Friday, January 23rd, Jen and Marty Schofield, new owners of Our Town Publishing, celebrated a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at

their new location at 9 Industrial Road, Ste. 107, Milford, Mass. The full-service printing com-

CEREMONY

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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.

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MILESTONE

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gym as one of only two BHS wrestlers to hit the milestone to date.

“Reaching my 100th win feels incredibly rewarding. When I first started wrestling, I never imagined I would reach this milestone. It represents all the hard work, setbacks, and dedication that went into getting here, and it motivates me to keep pushing forward and continue improving,” shared Tyler.

Tyler’s mom, Joanne, couldn’t be prouder of her son’s achievement. Recording each match so he can review them, identify improvements, and make adjustments is something she happily does to contribute to his success. She describes him as tenacious, disciplined, and relentlessly driven.

“I’ve always loved being a sports mom, so I fully supported him trying something new. I’m definitely not the quiet-on-the-sidelines type — you can hear me

cheering from the next town over. After his first match, I knew wrestling was his calling. He pinned his opponent in just 18 seconds, and it’s been a wild ride ever since,” she says.

Campbell, a senior at Bellingham High, has been a fixture on the varsity lineup since his freshman year, compiling a strong winning record season after season, wrestling in the lower weight classes. According to his recruiting profile, he’s posted impressive win totals for multiple seasons (27-5 in 2023 and 31-5 in 2024), and he was recently named as a “wrestler to watch” in an article posted by Metrowest Daily News. Spending part of the off-season maintaining his fitness and sharpening his skills with the New England Gold club team, and with a high number of pins that speak to his aggressiveness on the mat, Tyler is truly a force to be reckoned with. He also volunteers before varsity practice to help coach the middle school program.

Tyler, who also played Varsity volleyball for BHS, credits Coach Tom Forbes with first encouraging him to step onto the mat, a decision that quickly sparked



BHS senior, Tyler Campbell, pins Hopkinton’s Kyle Tedstone to secure his 100th wrestling career win.

a passion not only for the sport but also for the close-knit sense of family and belonging he felt within the team.

Coach Tom Forbes praised Campbell’s competitive spirit and work ethic, saying, “Wrestling is the toughest sport there is—the day-to-day physical and mental exhaustion of balancing weight, schoolwork, and competition. It’s not for everyone, but I tell my wrestlers that once you’ve done this, there’s nothing else in life you can’t do. Building a successful program takes all types of athletes: those who just want

to be part of a team, those who want to make varsity, and those who want to be champions. Tyler wants to be a champion. We’ve coached many athletes in the 24 years since this program started, and he is a standout.”

He went on to say, “On top of that, Tyler is coachable, with no selfishness or cockiness. He has all the tools a wrestler needs to be successful. He is focused, tenacious, vicious, and determined. When a wrestler has these attributes—or can find them when he needs them—he’s unstoppable. He brings out the best in other

people, so the team loves being around him. He really is the living embodiment of what we preach, and it’s been an absolute pleasure coaching him.”

As someone who values both athletics and academics, Tyler will bring his talents to Roger Williams University in Rhode Island in the fall, where he intends to major in electrical engineering and wrestle at the collegiate level.

“I hope that he continues to grow both as an athlete and as a person, carrying with him the leadership, discipline, and dedication that have shaped his success as he begins the next four years of his journey,” says Joanne.

As for those who have just started wrestling or who are thinking of giving the sport a try, Tyler has some excellent advice.

“The great thing about wrestling is that it makes everything else in life easier. The sport teaches you to work hard to achieve your goals, and that mindset carries over into every other area of your life.”

Congratulations, Tyler, on your 100th win, and we wish you much future success!

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Bellingham Hunger Relief Coalition Calls All “Hunger Heroes”

Assemble for a Day of Fun and Games on March 21st

Bellingham, MA — The Bellingham Hunger Relief Coalition is calling on the community to activate their inner superheroes

for “Hunger Heroes Assemble,” a family friendly fun filled day of games and activities dedicated to fighting local food insecurity.

This family-friendly afternoon is designed to combine the

power of play with the mission of providing essential resources to those in need. With food insecurity affecting approximately 1 in 3 families with children in Massachusetts, the Coalition is inviting residents of all ages to join the fight against hunger through interactive challenges, games, and community spirit.

There will also be snacks for purchase and other surprises.

Bellingham High School Gym, 60 Blackstone St.

Saturday, March 21, 2026, 1-4 p.m. \$5 per person; \$25 for a group of 6. Proceeds support Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry at St. Blaise in Bellingham.

Here’s the Facebook event link <https://www.facebook.com/share/1G5vZY2hLV/>

As well as the Donation and Volunteer sign up link SPECIAL EVENT: Hunger Heroes Assemble

Looking forward to seeing all the superheroes, feel free to even dress up!!

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A Few Bellingham Senior Center Upcoming Events

The Bellingham Senior Center is located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Reach them at (508) 966-0398 or online at www.bellinghamma.org

Vietnam War Veterans Recognition: March 30, at 1 p.m. We invite veterans to bring up to five photos of their tours of duty in Vietnam and display them. We'll have guest speakers and a raffle with prizes. Free lunch to all who sign up and attend. Call to register.

Wanted: Pen Pals: 14 third graders who are members of The Kindness Club at Stall Brook Elementary School in Bellingham would like to become pen pals with seniors. If interested, contact Ms. Monica Rigamonti, mrigamonti@bpsdk12.org or (508) 353-1937.

Senior Mobility Workshop: Tuesday, March 24, at 1 p.m. Please call ahead.

Upper Charles Rail Trail in Holliston Walk: Join Lisa Loo on Thursday, March 19th at 12 p.m. Plan on having lunch at Coffee Haven. Dress warm, with winter boots. Meet at the Cross Street Parking lot in Holliston. Please call to register.

St. Patrick's Dinner: Corned beef and cabbage at Coachmen's Lodge Wednesday, March 11, 11:30 a.m., sponsored by

Bellingham Police. Call Center to reserve.

Irish Music with Roger Tincknell: Friday, March 20, at 1 p.m. Made possible by a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council. Please call ahead.

Paint Pouring: Wednesday, March 4, at 1 p.m. Call to reserve spot.

Learn To Paint: With Amy Adams, includes supplies, Wednesday, March 11 at 1 p.m. Call ahead. Class is FREE and made possible by a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council.

Make a Joyful Noise: Join us on Mondays at 9 a.m.

Weight Management through Healthy Lifestyle: Tuesday, March 24, at 1 p.m. Call ahead.

Tech Connect: March 3, 1 p.m., bring your tech questions!

Coffee & Conversation: Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. Town Manager Joe Laydon will attend the first Tuesday of each month.

Spiritual Book Club: The Club meets via Zoom on Mondays at 9 a.m. *The Girl Who Baptised Herself* by Meggan Waterson. Call host Josie Dutil (508) 657-2705.

From the Town Clerk's Office...

We're looking forward to spring, and our annual Local Election on June 2nd!

Dates and positions have been finalized and are as follows. Nomination papers will be available starting March 2nd at the Town Clerk's office during normal business hours. To ease the process of running for local office, we've created a "how to" guide which can be found on our website. We hope this simplifies the process of getting signatures, filling out campaign finance paperwork, and important times and dates for those interested in positions. It can be a daunting process, but we're here to help. While incumbents are listed with an (I) next to their name below, all positions are considered open, and papers may be taken out for any of them.

Following the Local Election, our next election is the State Primary, which will be held September 1st, then the State Election on November 3rd. Please note, Primary Elections are party specific. If you are enrolled in a party, you will receive that party's ballot. If you are unenrolled in a party (commonly known as "independent"), you may request either party's ballot without enrolling in that party. More information on those elections will be forthcoming.

As always, please contact us at the Town Clerk's office at (508) 657-2830 or townclerk@bellinghamma.org with any questions, and make sure you're registered to vote by May 22nd for the Local Election!

Select Board, 2 positions, 3-year terms.

- Ann L. Odabashian (I)
- Michael J. Hennessey (I)

Planning Board, 1 position, 3-year term

- William F. O'Connell, Jr. (I)

Planning Board, 1 Position, 1-year term

-

Library Trustee, 2 Positions, 3-year terms

- Laura M. Howard (I)
- Macala Lamour (I)

School Committee, 1 Position, 3-year term

- Beverly Pierce

Housing Authority, 1 Position, 5-year term

- Debra K. Sacco

Constable, 2 positions, 2-year terms

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CEREMONY

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pany provides a range of marketing services for all clients, from consumer to business, as well as publishes community newspapers reaching 28 Massachusetts towns. 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 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 showcasing 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 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 tricitychamberma.org.



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

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Talent Abounds at 2026 Bellingham Annual Art & Photography Show

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

On Sunday, February 15, 2026, the Bellingham Public Library held its Annual Art & Photography show in the library's community room. Those who attended enjoyed an exhibit of artwork from a variety of Bellingham artists as well as an acoustic concert with singer, songwriter Ric Allendorf. Music and refreshments were provided courtesy of the Friends of the Bellingham Library.

Library Director Bernadette Rivard explained that this was the third year for the event, which actually began back in 2019 for Bellingham's 300th anniversary but was stalled a bit after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The judges are all people from Bellingham, with first, second and third in each category," said Rivard. Judges included Mass Art instructor Ric Allendorf, Children's book author and illustrator and Bellingham resident Renée Kurilla, Bellingham High Graduate and professional photographer Amanda Leeland, and Worcester Art Museum instructor and Bellingham resident Randy Lesage.

The Art & Photography Show's popularity has risen, says Rivard.



People's Choice Award went to "Joy," by Eileen Bailey



"She Created Herself," by Suzanne Reynolds-Alpert

"Last year, we had 69 entries, and this year 96," she said, "It's a significant increase in participation, and the artwork is just amazing, that there's this much local talent." Judges, she said, spent two-and-a-half hours the day before judging the competition, not an easy task with so many excellent submissions.



Kiera Finnegan's piece, "Fox in the Snow," which was chosen as first place winner among children's entries, was also named Best of Show among all first-place winners.



"Friendly Owl," by Adam Staples

Allendorf chose a child's drawing, created by Kiera Finnegan, as this year's Best of Show among first-place entries in each category. Allendorf explained his thought process in the choice.



"The One Stone Church, A New England Scene," by Bharadhwaj Harihara Subramanian



"Sunlit Planting," by Susan Fleischman

"I've been obsessed with mid-century children's book illustrators lately, just the expressiveness and real organic colors and shades and text," said Allendorf, "so when I saw that piece, I just really felt there was something that connected me to thinking about those illustrations, and even though it was a small child that did it, that's the mindset – just this whimsical, untainted mindset of just being able to be free with color, free with lines, and it was a complex piece. It was an interesting composition for a child that age. It's got story to it, built into the image. I was encouraging her to think about what would come before it and what would come next and maybe draw those panels and

try to turn it into a fuller story that we could all see."

At the end of the event, the People's Choice Award was named for the whimsical artwork entitled, "Joy," by Eileen Bailey.



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Municipal Spotlight

From Prevention to Protection: Bellingham Fire Department

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Knowing that someone is ready to respond to your emergency, at any hour of the day or night, is a huge weight off anyone's shoulders. Serving the community of Bellingham, our Fire Department does far more than respond to alarms and flashing lights, though. They are our own neighbors who roll out of the station dedicated to helping their community.

From structure fires and vehicle accidents to medical emergencies and weather-related incidents, the department's highly trained firefighters and EMTs are prepared for just about anything. They are trained to respond quickly, calmly, and professionally, serving the town and ensuring the safety of its residents.

"The number of requests for services has grown dramatically in the last 8-10 years," shares Fire Chief Bill Miller, who has been working in fire service for the last 40 years. "Our town has grown its population overall,

and we also have a segment of the population that is aging and needs more help. We track all of this carefully, so that we can ensure we have adequate staffing and budget for the things we need to serve the town in the best possible way."

As a uniquely shaped town that is three miles wide and fourteen miles long, Bellingham is also a major cut-through community, with people coming to and from Woonsocket, Milford, Medway, Franklin, and the 4-5 other towns that share our borders. This means our Fire Department often gets calls for those traveling through the town and responds to calls for assistance from neighboring towns when needed. Given the town's long, narrow footprint and periods of heavy traffic, response times can occasionally be impacted, particularly when crews are dispatched from one end of town to the other during peak travel hours.

"Last year was a very busy year for us," says Chief Miller. "We closed out at 3,654 requests

for services. That's almost an 8% total increase from 2024. Narrowing that down to our South Station alone, which has become much busier in the last year, there was a 12% increase."

"We believe it will continue to grow and then eventually level off, but what that number looks like will depend on the next year or two of data. With that, we will be able to predict much more. We do have mutual aid here in town where other municipal services (police, public health, etc.) support each other, but we do expect that the Fire Department will need to consider increased staffing. The last thing we want is for anyone to have to wait for services."

Chief Miller shared that they are in the process of running feasibility studies, which will be brought to the Select Board once complete, so they can determine what resources will be needed to



best support the town in the coming years.

The impact of the Bellingham Fire Department extends well beyond emergency calls. Prevention and education are major parts of their mission. Throughout

the year, firefighters visit local schools to teach fire safety basics and home escape planning. They participate in Touch-a-Truck events to support local charities,

"I live in town too, and I am very proud of the department and the services we offer to Bellingham," shares Chief Miller. "I have a great Deputy and excellent staff who are all very dedicated to what they do. I am also so grateful for this community. We were able to secure two new engines and a ladder truck recently, which made a huge difference. The town really has been very good to us, and we can't thank them enough."

Prevention is also key. With another month or two of winter ahead of us, Chief Miller cautions residents to focus on heater safety (at least 3 feet of clearance around any space heaters), checking that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working, that power vents are cleaned, and that your driveway, sidewalks, and hydrants near your home are cleared after snowstorms.

"Please be there for others – check on your neighbors who may be in need or less fortunate, and especially those who may be aging," he says. "Do they need help shoveling to clear a path? Do they need a wellness check? Let's be sure to help and take care of each other."

At the end of the day, the Bellingham Fire Department represents dedication, courage, and heart. They are there for life's most frightening moments, offering skill and reassurance when it matters most, and perhaps the greatest comfort of all is knowing that help is never far away.

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Ease the Squeeze on Your Retirement Income Plan



Todd Miller, CFP®

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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 suggest. 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 hesi-

tate 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 pharmaceuti-

cal 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.

For more information contact:

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1. Brooks and Kathryn are part of a 10-unit condo association. On St. Patrick's Day, Everett the leprechaun slips in the association's parking lot and is injured. Everett sues the condo association and is granted \$100,000. The association assesses each condo owner \$10,000 to pay for the damages. Would Brooks and Kathryn's condo policy help pay for the assessment?

2. Bryan and Kristen hear a loud bang in their garage. When they open the door, they see water spewing everywhere from a burst pipe. Bryan must have left the garage door open overnight! Would this be a covered claim even if the pipe froze because Bryan forgot to close the garage door?

Question 1 Answer:
Yes, if they have loss assessment coverage

Question 2 Answer: Yes

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Friendly First-Responder Rivalry with 1st Annual Chili Cook-Off

By DAVID DUNBAR

Too sweet? Too spicy? At the first Annual Chili Cook-Off between the fire department and the police department last month, sweet was the winner by two to one. And so were the police! The fire department came in second.

Eighty people attended the Cook-Off held at the Bellingham Senior Center.

Folks were given two small cups of chili, which were marked

so nobody but the counters at the end could tell which department cooked them up. Forty voted for sweet police; twenty for spicy fire. Great effort and sportsmanship!

Both departments rallied their cooks/chefs and worked with homemade chili recipes. Police and fire department members came to the Center to serve the chili. The winner – the Police Department – received a small trophy and huge bragging rights!



Bellingham Police and Fire Departments cooked and served up their best chilis to discerning judges in their first annual Chili Cookoff at Bellingham Senior Center last month.

Planet Aid Bins in Town Generate Revenue for Bellingham

By DAVID DUNBAR

“Picture 45,500 18-wheeler trucks lined up from downtown Washington DC to downtown Atlanta carrying more than two million 1,000-pound bales of donated clothing, shoes, and other textiles,” explains Michael Barys of Planet Aid. “Over the past 30 years, that is the amount of textiles we have collected.”

Barys is the northeast sales manager, based in Milford, and explains the haul would be worth over \$100-million dollars - the amount collected by the worldwide Planet Aid since it has been in business. The company collects used textiles that have been loaded into its big, yellow bins. There are seven of these drop-off locations in Bellingham

(and more are in neighboring Mendon, Blackstone, Medway, Hopedale and Milford).

“And Bellingham collects a small payment each quarter,” according to town Health Agent Dylan Labonte. “The money goes right into the town’s general fund,” he adds. The town is paid for every pound of donations.

Bellingham is responsible for permitting, and to some extent policing, the bins. Recently, Planet Aid began offering at-home-pickups to town residents on the first and third Saturdays of each month.

The Saturday pickups help enable residents who can’t (or won’t) make the trip to a nearby donation bin. On average, says Barys, people donate 81 pounds of clothing every year. Bins are located at Bellingham Commons (pictured), BP Mart, the Recycling Center, Flooring Solutions, Rosewood Restaurant, Vohn’s Restaurant, and Sav More Gas. In addition to clothing and shoes, you can also donate coats, jackets, purses, hats, sleeping bags, towels, books, and small toys.

One Bellingham donor delivered 25 bags of vintage clothing and shoes. Another donor in Southboro actually left a grand piano at a Planet Aid bin... “We had to bring hammers and break the thing down,” says Barys.



The Town of Bellingham receives a modest payout each month from money earned from donations to these Planet Aid bins around town.

Planet Aid offers donated items (no more pianos, please) to re-sellers. Revenue is then shared with “partners,” including schools, local government, businesses, shopping centers, and non-profit organizations, including Children’s Hospital in Boston, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and the Milford Food Pantry.

According to the Planet Aid website, “You’re not just cleaning out your closet; you’re also reducing landfill waste, preserving precious resources like water, reducing pollution and pesticides and helping raise funds for community-led programs that promote education, health and wellness, agricultural sustain-

ability and community development.”

And Health Agent Labonte adds, “Donors can get a receipt from Planet Aid that they can use to get a tax deduction.”

On a different, but environmentally related note, LaBonte mentioned the upcoming Earth Day on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. You can bring textiles to town hall for recycling. You can volunteer to help in a town-wide clean up operation. More about Earth Day is on the town website: www.bellinghamma.org

If you’d like to know more about Planet Aid, please call (508) 893-0644 or visit www.PlanetAid.org.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Homebuying in 2026: Smart Moves to Plan Your Purchase



Glenn Brown, CFP

March marks the start of the spring homebuying season. Sellers who waited out the slower winter months are listing homes, and some buyers wait until summer to align closings with the school year.

With mortgage rates slightly lower than 2025 peaks, timing and strategy remain critical. The Fed's latest dot plot signals gradual easing in 2026 and 2027, which could create refinancing opportunities. However, waiting for rates to drop carries trade-offs, as falling rates often coincide with rising home prices.

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 afford 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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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 mo-

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SCAN TO VISIT b.LUXE

ment guests feel the warmth and intention behind every visit.

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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Vietnam Veterans Invited to Share Memories, Be Honored March 30 at Senior Center

It has been 50 years since the end of the Vietnam War. Almost 2.7-million Americans served in the war. 58,220 died. And 1,570 remain unaccounted for still today.

The Bellingham Senior Center will honor them on Monday, March 30 at 1 p.m. Veterans who had “boots on the ground” are invited to bring up to five photos or memorabilia to display at the gathering. In addition, four or five Vietnam era veterans will be on hand to deliver brief comments about the things they experienced during their tours of duty including sounds, feel-

ings, sights. National Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Day is coming on March 29.

The high school art department is creating a three-by-five-foot mural in honor of the vets. (High school history students are likely to attend.) There will be a large map of Vietnam so vets can stick pins into the locations where they served. And there will be a free raffle with prizes.

A free lunch will be offered to everyone who signs up and shows up. Please call the Senior Center at (508) 966-0398 and claim your spot!

Businesses! Sign Up Now for the 2026 Bellingham Business Expo, April 11th

4rd Annual Bellingham Business Expo Vendor Application

Here's the link to sign up: <https://forms.gle/sPhqynQ9YkdYTUYp8>

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026
Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Bellingham Library, 100 Blackstone Street, Bellingham MA 02019

- At this time, we are only accepting applications from Bellingham businesses and organizations and members of the Bellingham Business Association.
- This event is FREE for vendors and the general public!
- We reserve the right to limit the number of vendors based on available space at the venue.

- Vendors will be assigned space for a 6-foot table and are encouraged to bring their own table.
- Vendor set up time will start at 9 am
- Vendor applications accepted through March 22nd or until all spaces are full, so please apply early!
- You'll receive a formal email that your application has been accepted within 2 weeks of applying.
- Email questions to Sue Grady, BBA Secretary/Treasurer: contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org



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BHS Operation Graduation Plans Spring Craft Fair

The parents who comprise the Bellingham High School Operation Graduation 2026 committee will be adding a new event this year, a Spring Vendor & Craft Fair in May! Funds from this event will support a safe, all-

night party on graduation night for graduating seniors.

Date: Saturday, May 2nd

Time: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Location: Bellingham Memorial School Athletic Fields
100 Blackstone Street, Bell-

ingham, MA 02019

*Please note that there is a scheduled rain date in the case of inclement weather for May 3rd .

Interested in being a vendor? Contact us via email at bhsvendorfair@gmail.com.

Indivisible Bellingham Plans ‘No Kings’ Peaceful Protest March 28

Indivisible Bellingham (MA) and Beyond invites residents of Bellingham and the surrounding towns to attend a ‘No Kings’ peaceful protest on Saturday March 28th. Participants will gather from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

in front of the Bellingham Town Hall. Additional protests will be held on the same day in many surrounding towns including Milford, Mendon, and Franklin. Those interested are also encouraged to attend the Boston march

in the afternoon. Register on mobilize.us and email bellinghamindivisible@gmail.com for more information.

Save the Date!

Bellingham Town Earth Day Cleanup:

Saturday, April 11th, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Rain date April 18th)

Check the town website and the Bellingham Board of Health Facebook page for updates.



Do Your Part. Be SepticSmart!

Shield Your Field
Divert rain and surface water away and avoid parking vehicles and planting trees on your drainfield.

Don't Overload the Commode
Don't flush diapers, wipes or other items meant for a trashcan down the toilet.
Toilet paper only

Think at the Sink
Limit use of your garbage disposal and avoid pouring fats, grease, solids and harsh chemicals down the drain.

Don't Strain Your Drain
Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances, such as your washing machine or dishwasher.

Pump Your Tank
Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regular intervals as recommended by a professional.

Keep It Clean
If you are on a well, test your drinking water regularly to ensure it remains clean and free of contamination.

Protect It and Inspect It
A typical septic system should be serviced every one to three years by a septic service professional.

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



commend 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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- **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.

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.
- **Corrective Lenses:** Glasses or contacts are the most common and effective correction.
- **Myopia Control:** For children with progressive myopia, doctors may rec-

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BWOT Muffins with Easter Bunny March 21st

Bellingham Women Of Today will again be hosting Muffins with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, March 21 from 9-11:30 a.m. at Saint Blaise Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham. The cost is \$5 per child with a family max of \$15, including crafts and a visit with the Easter Bunny. Families may take pictures with the Easter Bunny with their own camera. There will be muffins & breakfast treats, and beverages available for purchase.

The Annual Peeps Diorama Contest.

Grab a shoe box and some Peeps and start creating! Applications for children, individuals, or groups are available by emailing us at or you can pick one up at the library. Drop off your Peeps diorama at the Bellingham

Public Library starting at 11 a.m. on Friday April 17th or Saturday April 18th until 3 p.m. Tables will be set up for the displays in the library's Cafe area, with application forms.

We are requesting a donation of a non-perishable item for Loaves & Fishes, our local food pantry.

Voting will begin the next week and end at noon on Saturday, April 25th.

Our next Bellingham Women of Today meeting will be on Monday March 9th starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Bellingham Police Dept conference room. We are always happy to welcome new members.

For more information on any of the above, email bellingham-womenoftoday@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Bellingham Republican Town Committee 2026 Candidates' Breakfast March 7

Bellingham, MA - The Bellingham Republican Town Committee (RTC) will host its 2026 Candidates' Breakfast on Saturday, March 7th, at PJ's Bar & Grille (191 Mechanic St, Bellingham, MA) from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

The program will open with a welcome address by State Rep. Mike Soter of the 8th Worcester District. A buffet breakfast will be served.

Confirmed state-wide candidate attendees include Gubernatorial candidates Mike Kennealy and Brian Shortsleeve, as well as candidate for Treasurer, Elizabeth Dionne. Additional state-wide candidates are expected to attend as the event approaches.

Tickets can be purchased at BellinghamRTC.com.

The Bellingham Republican Town Committee is led by Chair Lenny Holden and Vice Chair Dan Ranieri.

Bellingham Democrats Prepare for Annual Caucus March 14th

The Bellingham Democratic Town Committee has announced the date for its upcoming caucus, an annual meeting in which each town committee charts its course for the coming year. This year's caucus will be held on Saturday, March 14, in the Arcand Room in Bellingham Town Hall. Doors will open at 10 a.m. and the meeting itself will begin at 11 a.m.. All registered Democrats in town are invited to attend. It is not necessary to be an official member of the town committee or to pre-register in order to participate.

This year's caucus is especially important, because it will involve the selection of Bellingham's delegates to the State Democratic Convention, which will be held in the DCU Center in Worcester on May 30. Because this is an election year, the convention will be voting on official endorsements of candidates for statewide offices. The convention will feature speeches, free and purchased merchandise, and information about Democratic political opportunities in the upcoming year. The local caucus will also provide opportunities to meet candidates

and their representatives, to sign petitions, and to network with other Democratic activists.

The Bellingham Democratic Town committee meets most months during the school year. Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are generally held in the town hall, usually on the lower level. Both the time and the place have recently been changed, so please note the new time and place. For more information, please see our Facebook Page or call Patricia Keppler at (508) 966-0003 for more information.

Bellingham Students Make Dean's List at Worcester State

The following local students have been named to the Worcester State University Dean's List for Fall 2025. Dean's list honors are awarded to matriculated undergraduate students who have earned a 3.5 GPA or higher. Full-

time students must have earned a minimum of 12 credits and part-time students must have earned a minimum of 6 credits.

BELLINGHAM, MA: Courtney A Barros, Katherine A Barros, Lily K Bartelloni, Jack A

Hildred, Brigid A Howland, Karlie E Jandrow, Aiden M Keane, Mykyta Kocherha, Charlotte M MacGregor, Isabella G Musiak, Jake R Silvestri

KEVIN J. TAGLIAFERRI

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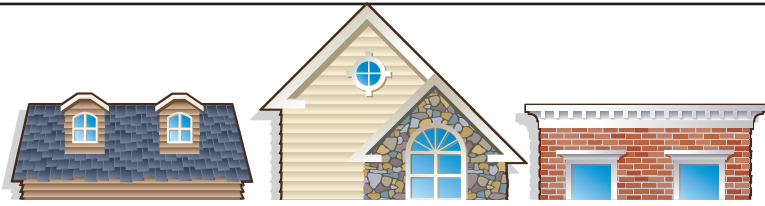
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SPRING HO

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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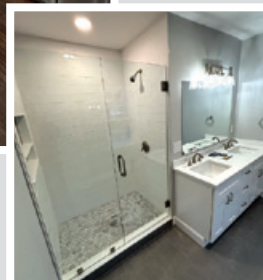
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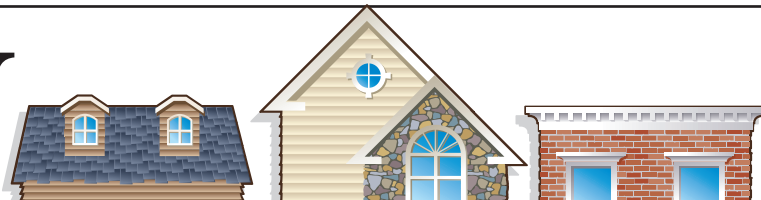
The market research experts at Business Research Insights report that the three-season sunroom market size is projected to nearly double between 2025 and 2035. BRI reports that 65 percent of homeowners prefer cost-effective sunrooms when seeking to extend their living space. The popularity of sunrooms 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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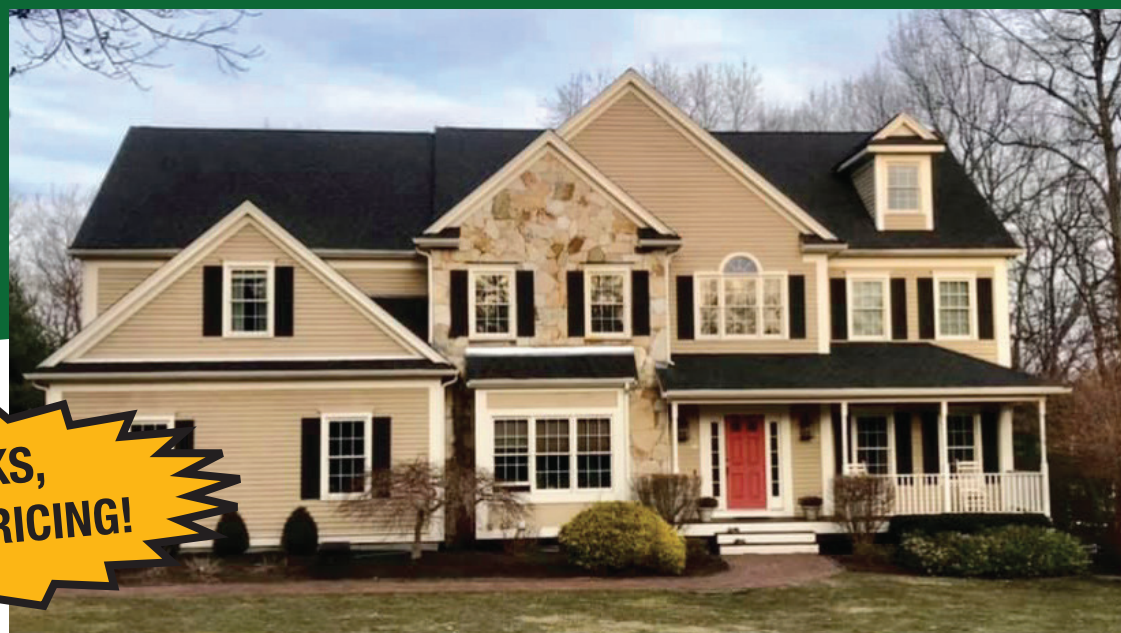
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Harlem Wizards Return to Bellingham for a Third Time

After over three years, the Harlem Wizards are coming back to Bellingham!

On Thursday, April 2nd, these legendary professional basketball players will once again take their ball-spinning showmanship to Bellingham High School, at 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham, for a good-natured matchup with members of Bellingham Public Schools staff.

All funds raised will go directly to support the Bellingham Educational Foundation's (BEF) Grant Program. Its purpose is to establish a permanent fund to support grant awards for exceptional educational activities that address Bellingham Public School's priorities but fall outside the scope of the school system's budget.

"It's a special thing seeing the entire community come together for this event. It's probably my favorite fundraiser that we've ever hosted. The program is so well run by the Wizards organization, and it continues to create lasting memories for families," says Kristina Mounsey, BEF President.

Thanks to the support of generous donors, the BEF has awarded approximately \$300,000 to fund innovative initiatives, including robotics programs, equipment to support children with special needs, Chromebooks, iPads, literacy programs, music education, STEM programs and much more. Grants are currently open to Bellingham teachers and staff. The BEF board will meet in April to decide on funding for this year's proposals.

Last year, the organization awarded \$9,430 for such classroom innovations as iPads for students who have difficulty communicating, mobile TVs to increase student engagement, classroom ukeleles and a fine motor library.

The Harlem Wizards fundraiser was a sold-out event last time that delighted attendees and participants, and increased BEF's capacity to support Bellingham schools.

"I LOVED playing in the Harlem Wizards game! The energy in that room was dynamic! It was so much fun to have fun



The Harlem Wizards vs. Bellingham Public Schools game delighted the community in 2019 and in 2022, while funding grants to support schools. They'll be back April 2nd. Photos used courtesy of Bellingham Educational Foundation.

and be silly for a great cause! The Harlem Wizards were so hysterical and ULTRA talented!" says Mandy Michaude, 3rd grade



The dazzling game pits Bellingham school staff against Harlem Wizards.

teacher at DiPietro Elementary. She added, "I was also fortunate enough to have a grant funded through the BEF that wouldn't have been possible without amazing fundraisers like this. I am so excited to play again this year!"

Bellingham Memorial fourth grade teacher Amanda Ghostlaw says students, families and staff look forward to a wonderful time at this Harlem Wizards game. She says she is "especially thankful for events like this, having been a recipient of a BEF grant for flexible seating in my 4th grade classroom. The BEF plays a vital role in enriching the educational experience for all students."

Tickets to the April 2nd event are expected to sell out fast. Ad-

mission is \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the gate, with reserved seating available for \$30 in advance and \$35 at the gate. Limited Courtside Plus Seating is available for \$50, and that includes courtside seating, a pregame meet & greet with Wizards players, and Wizards souvenirs including a Courtside Plus pass and team photo.

Tickets can be purchased at belledfound.org. You can also visit the event Facebook page by searching Harlem Wizards are coming to Bellingham, MA.

To learn more about the Bellingham Educational Foundation, visit www.belledfound.org. We are actively looking for volunteers and sponsors for this event! If you are interested, please reach out to Kristina at belledfound@gmail.com



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Tri-County Regional Chamber Annual Family Fest & Home Show March 21st

The Tri-County Regional Chamber is thrilled to announce its highly anticipated Family Fest & Home Show, taking place on Saturday, March 21st, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School in Upton. This FREE, high-energy community event brings together local businesses, families, food, and fun — all under one roof.

The Family Fest & Home Show is more than just an expo — it's a celebration of the local community. Each year, thousands of attendees come out to explore vendor booths, discover new products and services, and

connect directly with area businesses. For exhibitors, it's a powerful opportunity to build visibility, strengthen relationships, and showcase what makes their business unique.

There truly is something for everyone:

- Meet the Easter Bunny and enjoy free photos
- Balloon artistry and entertainment
- Face painting, games, and interactive activities for kids
- Giveaways and family-friendly fun throughout the event

One of the most popular highlights of the day is the **Mac & Cheese Championship**. Local restaurants and chefs go head-to-head, serving up their best mac and cheese creations. Attendees taste and vote for their favorites at no cost — making it a delicious and competitive crowd favorite.

According to Chamber President & CEO Laura O'Callaghan, events like Family Fest & Home Show are more important than ever.

"In today's economic climate, creating opportunities for local businesses to connect directly with local customers is essential.

This event gives our members an affordable, high-impact way to grow their visibility while celebrating the strength of our community."

Attendees can explore home improvement resources, shop local vendors, and enjoy a lively, welcoming atmosphere designed for families and professionals alike.

Whether you're a business owner looking to expand your reach or a family looking for a fun Saturday outing, the Family Fest & Home Show promises a day full of connection, opportunity, and community spirit.

For more information or to register as a vendor, visit: www.tricountychamberma.org/family-fest

The Tri-County Regional Chamber currently represents members from the towns of Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Medway, Milford, Mendon, Millis, and Upton but is committed to doing business throughout Norfolk County and beyond. Visit them at www.tricountychamberma.org.

BBA to Hold Membership Drive Luncheon at Grumpy's March 11

The Bellingham Business Association will hold its annual membership drive luncheon from 12-1:30 p.m. at Grumpy's, 190 Pulaski Blvd., Bellingham on Wednesday, March 11th. The cost is \$25 members, and potential members are free. Nominations for BBA board members will also be accepted that day.

Attention Class of 2026!

The BBA Scholarship has been open. The application is pinned to the top of our Facebook page. Two \$1,500 scholarships are available to any Bellingham residents who are graduating seniors attending any high school. Deadline is April 15, 2026.

Bellingham Business Expo: Saturday, April 11, 2026

Bellingham businesses and organizations, including BBA

members, may sign up. Free for vendors and general public. Vendors, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/4thBellBusExpo>

For more information about the Bellingham Business Association, find the group on Facebook or email contact@bellingham-businessassociation.org.



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Stony Brook Camera Club March Events

The Stony Brook Camera Club meets in person and/or virtually on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. September to June. In-person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin. Our meetings feature speakers, competitions and discussions of general photography interest, and we conduct photography activities, workshops, and field trips all year. SBCC includes and welcomes photographers of all abilities.

Our program for March:

- March 5: In person and Zoom. Member competition
- March 12: Zoom. "Photojournalism" by Peter Pereira
- March 19: Zoom. Image Study
- March 26: Zoom. New Member Showcase

Visit stonybrookcc.com for more information.

Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation Brings Back Gala

The Benjamin Franklin Educational Foundation, which supports educational initiatives at the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, is planning a fundraising gala at Lake Pearl in Wrentham on May 9th, 2026. For more information on the 21+ event, email info@bfeffoundation.org.

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Bellingham Public March News & Events

For updates please visit, www.bellinghamlibrary.org and click on Library Calendar & Events.

Special Programs

Ask an Expert: Job Exploration for Homeschoolers – Tuesday, March 3rd at 11:30 am, Registration preferred

A monthly, family-oriented program where professionals from different fields of work will answer your questions about their job! Check library calendar for this month's profession!

Music from Memphis with Dave Polatin & Jill Goldman – Friday, March 6th at 5:30-6:30 p.m., Registration preferred but not necessary

Memphis is known as the birthplace of rock and roll and a major center for blues and soul music. Music will be played live by Dave Polatin and Jill Goldman, who play together in the band Retro Polatin Duo. This program is sponsored through a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council.

Getting Started in Genealogy with Rhonda R. McClure – Monday, March 9th at 6 pm, Registration required

This online program is offered by American Ancestors, a national nonprofit center for family history, heritage & culture based in Boston. Library attendees can view the Zoom together, or you can participate by Zoom at home. Email questions to Molly Garten at mgarten@cwmares.org. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Bellingham Library.

Virtual Job Search Help – Ask Me Anything with Resumé and LinkedIn Coach Virginia Franco, Wednesday, March 11th at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom, Registration required, <https://bit.ly/4qqUDsW>, with Virginia Franco, founder of Virginia Franco Resumés. RECORDING NOTE: This program will be recorded. All registrants will receive the recording via email within 48 hours of program.

Cardboard Cars Drive-in – Friday, March 13th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Registration preferred

For families. We're bringing the drive-in indoors! Come decorate your own cardboard car and then settle in for a movie. Bring a box big enough for you to sit inside.

NEW! Bilingual Story Time (English/Portuguese)

Saturdays, March 14th and March 28th at 11 a.m., Registration preferred but not necessary, Geared toward children ages 2-5; siblings welcome! This event features movement, songs, dancing, and the reading of children's books in English and Portuguese, along with simple interactive activities.

Participe da Hora da História Bilingue conosco, um momento especial para crianças e famílias! Indicado para crianças de 2 a 5 anos. Irmãos são bem-vindos! O evento inclui músicas com movimento, dança, leitura de histórias infantis e atividades interativas em português e inglês.

Build a Bird Feeder – Friday, March 20th, 10 a.m., Registration preferred, not required

Celebrate Spring by making your own bird feeder! Bring a recyclable bottle, carton, or container you would like to repurpose, and we'll provide the rest!

NEW! America's 250th Anniversary Book Club – Tuesday, March 24th from 6-7:45 p.m., Registration required

Participants will read books about American History. This meeting: Part One of David McCullough's *1776*. Library Conference Room and on Zoom. Email Molly Garten at mgarten@cwmares.org with any questions. All registrants will receive Zoom link.

Ongoing Children's Programs

The Baby Bunch – Mondays from 9-10 a.m., for infants 0-18 months and their caregivers

Ring a Ding – Mondays & Thursdays at 10:15 a.m., For ages 0-5.

Lego Builders – Mondays at 4:30 p.m., for Grades K-3.

Read to Freedom the Reading Dog – Mondays from 5:30-7 p.m. Check the calendar to sign up for a 15-minute time slot!

Sensory Story Time – Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m., For n ages 2-5 of all abilities (younger siblings always welcome). Please register for each session.

Adult/Child Book Clubs – Meets monthly. Grades 2-4, Melissa Denham, mdenham@cwmares.org, grades 5-7, Amanda Maclure, amaclure@cwmares.org, grades 8-11, Diane Nelson, dnelson@cwmares.org. Check the library calendar for details.

After School Programs – ASK for grades 4-6, registration required. Teen Room from grades 7-12, drop in.

STEAM Saturday – Saturday, March 7th at 11 a.m. STEAM activities for families

Adult Programs

Book Discussion Group – 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. In-person or on Zoom. On March 2nd, we will discuss *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. Contact Suzanne at salpert@cwmares.org, for more information. April: *All the Colors of the Dark* by Chris Whitaker

English Conversation Circles, No Registration necessary

- Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m.
- Thursdays at 6 p.m.
- Saturdays, March 14th & March 28th at 10 a.m.

With Thienne Rissatto, our Multilingual Learners Coordinator and native Portuguese speaker. This is a place to practice your English language skills.

Tuesday Fiber Arts & Other Crafts – alternating Tuesdays, March 3rd and 17th, from 6-7:45 p.m. Drop in, all levels.

A Novel Idea: Book Club for Adults – Tuesday, March 3rd, from 6:30-8 p.m. Includes light refreshments. *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*, by Nadia Hashimi. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmares.org

Needlecraft Night – Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. All skill levels. Please bring your own materials. No registration!

Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting – Tuesday, March 10th at 7 p.m. Monthly Friends of the Library meeting on Zoom. To attend, email library@bellinghamlibrary.org.

Library Board of Trustees Meeting – Thursday, March 12th at 7 p.m. Conference Room.

Virtual Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://library.org/bellingham>. Recordings of these talks are also available on the library website in the days following the event.

- Humor, Heart, & Reflective Rural Stories w/ Michael Perry. March 4th. 2 pm
- Book Portals & Journeys of Literary Magic with Kate Quinn. March 12th, 7 p.m.

• America's Failed Response to the Opioid Crisis with Author Shoshana Walter. March 24th, 2 p.m.

Yoga Winter Sessions Ending, Spring Session Beginning, Registration required

Yoga meets Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. First session of the month March 10th. Register on library calendar.

Writing Group for Adults – Tuesday, March 17th at 6:30 p.m.

Hybrid meeting at library or on Zoom! Writers, readers, listeners – come join us! Local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman welcome the public to an evening of reading and listening. Contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at atmarjorie@marjorieturner.com.

Chat & Craft for Adults – Wednesday, March 18th at 6:30 p.m., Registration required

Create a custom, one-of-a-kind flower pot using a decoupage technique! All materials provided, and guidance will be available. This program is supported by the Friends of the Bellingham Library.

March is Judicial Outreach Month
March is Judicial Outreach Month. The library will host a virtual visit with a Judge as part

of Judicial Outreach Month (JOM) in Massachusetts. Visit our calendar to see the day, time, and details!

Multicultural Festival Committee Members Wanted

The library is planning to host Bellingham's first Multicultural Festival. With community assistance, we hope to turn this into an annual event. We have a group of people assembled to plan this event but are open to adding a few more members. If you are interested, please contact Library Director Bernadette Rivard at brivard@bellinghamma.org or (508) 657-2776.

Friends of the Library Program Supply Wish List – Will you purchase one of these items? Many items are under \$10! <http://bit.ly/3KJiV2i>



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CALENDAR

March 2

Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. Contact Suzanne, salpert@cw-mars.org.

March 3

A Novel Idea: Book Club for Adults, 6:30-8 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*, by Nadia Hashimi. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cw-mars.org.

Ask an Expert: Job Exploration for Homeschoolers, 11:30 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Registration preferred. www.bellinghamlibrary.org Family-oriented program where professionals from different fields of work will come answer your questions about their job!

March 4

Virtual Author Talks: Humor, Heart, & Reflective Rural Stories w/ Michael Perry, 2 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellingham> . Recordings of these talks are also available on Bellingham Public Library website in days following the event.

March 5

ValleyCAST 13th Annual Art Palette Contest opening reception, 5-7 p.m., Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery, 50 Douglas Rd., Whitinsville, exhibit through April 17

March 6

Music from Memphis with Dave Polatin & Jill Goldman, 5:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Registration preferred but not necessary, www.bellinghamlibrary.org, sponsored by Bellingham Cultural Council

March 7

Bellingham Republican Town Committee 2026 Candidates' Breakfast, 8-11 a.m., PJ's Bar & Grille (191 Mechanic St, Bellingham. Tickets can be purchased at BellinghamRTC.com

March 8

An Invitation to a Conversation with, Ali Coakley, Proprietor of Night Owl Farm, Franklin, 12:30 p.m. Free Admission, Potluck Lunch, 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. info@fusf.org, (508) 528-5348.

Temple Etz Chaim wine tasting event, 4-6 p.m., Pour Richards, 835 West Central St., Franklin, portion of sales will benefit the temple, all welcome

March 9

Getting Started in Genealogy with Rhonda R. McClure, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Registration required, online program will be viewed in a group at library or on home on Zoom, www.bellinghamlibrary.org

Bellingham Women of Today, 7:30 p.m. Bellingham Police Dept conference room, 30 Blackstone St., Bellingham. New members always welcome, email bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

March 11

Virtual Job Search Help – Ask Me Anything with Resumé and LinkedIn Coach Virginia Franco, 9:30 a.m. on Zoom, Registration required though Bellingham Public Library, www.bellinghamlibrary.org

Bellingham Business Association lunch, 12-1:30 p.m., Grumpy's, 190 Pulasaki Blvd., Bellingham, \$25 members contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org

March 12

Virtual Author Talks: Book Portals & Journeys of Literary Magic with Kate Quinn, 7 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellingham> . Recordings of these talks are also available on Bellingham Public Library website in days following the event.

March 13

Cardboard Cars Drive-in, 10 a.m.-noon, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Registration

preferred, bring a box big enough to turn into your own car and enjoy an indoor drive-in movie.

March 14

Bellingham Democratic Town Committee Annual Caucus, doors open 10 a.m., meeting at 11 a.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham Town Hall, for more info., visit the group's Facebook Page or call Patricia Keppler at (508) 966-0003.

NEW! Bilingual Story Time (English/Portuguese) , 11 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, geared toward children 2-5, siblings welcome. Registration preferred but not necessary

March 15

Free Children's Magic Show for Children of First Responders, Veterans and Those Currently in Uniform, 12 p.m., doors open 11:30 a.m., The Italian Vets, Milford, tickets required, email info@thankstoyanks.org, sponsored by Thanks to Yanks and Milford Federal

March 17

Writing Group for Adults, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, or on Zoom, to participate contact Marjorie Turner Hollman atmarjorie@marjorieturner.com.

March 18

Chat & Craft for Adults, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Registration required, www.bellinghamlibrary.org

March 20

Build a Bird Feeder, 10 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Registration preferred but not required. Bring a recyclable bottle, carton, or container that you would like to repurpose into the base of the bird feeder.

March 21

Bellingham Hunger Relief "Hunger Heroes Assemble," 1-4 p.m., Bellingham High School Gym, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham, \$5 pp, \$25 group of 6, fam-

ily friendly , <https://www.facebook.com/share/1G5vZY2hLV/>, to volunteer, go to link SPECIAL EVENT: Hunger Heroes Assemble

Muffins with the Easter Bunny, 9-11:30 a.m., Saint Blaise Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham. \$5 per child, family max of \$15, crafts and a visit with the Easter Bunny. Families are welcome to take pics. Includes muffins & breakfast treats, beverages for purchase

Tri-County Chamber Family Fest & Home Show, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 65 Pleasant St., Upton, free, showcases local businesses, free pics with Easter Bunny, balloon artist, facepainting, games and interactive activities for families, giveaways, more info. at www.tricountychamberma.org/family-fest

March 24

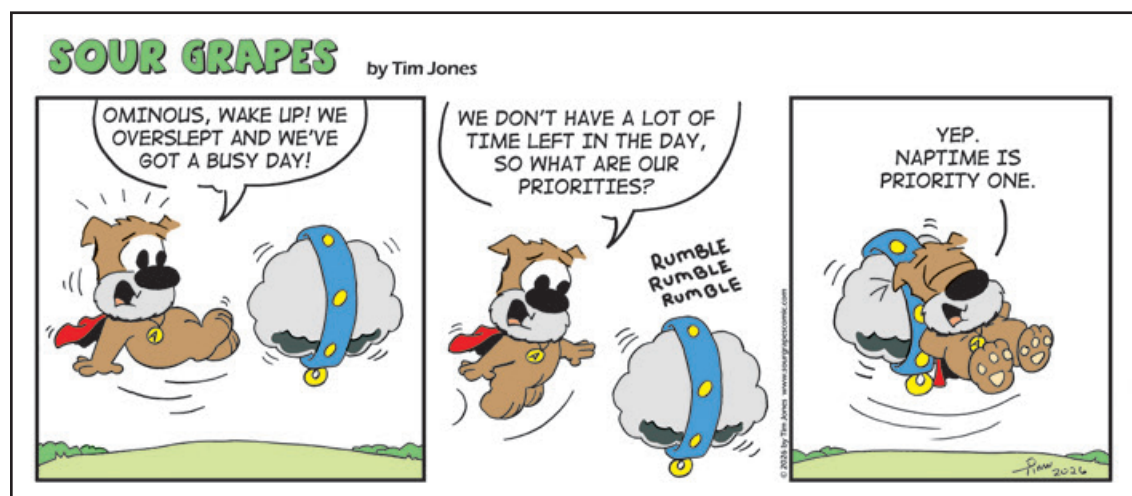
Virtual Author Talks: America's Failed Response to the Opioid Crisis with Author Shoshana Walter, 2 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellingham> . Recordings of these talks are also available on Bellingham Public Library website in days following the event.

America's 250th Anniversary Book Club, 6-7:45 pm, Bellingham Public Library Conference Room, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, and on Zoom, Registration required, Part One of David McCullough's *1776*. We will be meeting in the Conference Room and on Zoom. Email Molly Garten at mgarten@cw-mars.org with questions.

March 28

Indivisible Bellingham 'No Kings' Peaceful Protest, 9-10:30 a.m., Bellingham Town Hall

NEW! Bilingual Story Time (English/Portuguese), 11 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, geared toward children 2-5, siblings welcome. Registration preferred but not necessary



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BVT Celebrates 20 Graduates at Pinning Ceremony

Upton, MA –The Practical Nursing Graduation for the Class of 2026 was held at BVT on February 2. The ceremony, which signifies a rite of passage from novice student to practical nurse, opened with welcoming remarks from PN Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA. Monks praised the program’s strengths, its stakeholders, and the twenty graduates, noting that they have demonstrated readiness to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN). She also shared that the program’s previous graduating class achieved a 100 percent NCLEX-PN pass rate.

The Practical Nursing (PN) program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) is a 60-week program designed to prepare adult students with the foundational skills essential for a nursing career. Students navigate

rigorous coursework, develop hands-on clinical skills, and cultivate compassion and empathy required to care for patients, all while balancing family and work commitments.

The graduates proudly received their nursing certificates and were pinned during the ceremony. Milford graduates were presented with a citation from Rep. Murray; Whitinsville Whitinsville received citations from Rep. Muradian, and Uxbridge and Blackstone graduates received citations from Rep. Soter.

The Faculty Recognition Award was presented to Godfrey Mugerwa, Sybilla Osanya, and Jessika Schotten. The Outstanding Academic Achievement Award was presented to Kelcie Jones.

For more information on the program, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/community/practicalnursing.

BFCCPS to Undergo Integrated Monitoring Review Week of March 9th

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) will conduct an Integrated Monitoring Review of Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School during the week of March 9, 2026. Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes an Integrated Monitoring Review every three years. The areas addressed during an Integrated Monitoring Review are organized into two groups, known as Group A Universal Standards and Group B Universal Standards.

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School will be undergoing a Group A monitoring review that focuses on special education student identification and special education eligibility timelines; Individualized Education Program (IEP) development; programming and

support services; procedural requirements for suspensions and equal opportunity. For additional information please also see Integrated Monitoring Parent and Family Orientation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASjIE6jy9ak>).

The process includes interviews with district staff and administrators, a review of student records, policies and procedures, and school building visits. The process may also include parent/caregiver, student and teacher focus group meetings to gather additional information. Interpretation will be provided, if needed.

The Department will also send a parent survey, in multiple languages and formats, as needed, to parents /guardians of special education students to gather key information on the special education processes and procedures.

Parents/guardians and other stakeholders may call Charles Agong, Monitoring Review Chairperson, at (781) 338-3753 or Charles.O.Agong@mass.gov to request a telephone interview. If anyone requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the Department will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the charter school with a report that includes information on further actions that may be required. The public can access the report at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html>.

Bellingham’s Paturzo Named NEWMAC Men’s Lacrosse Offensive Athlete of Week

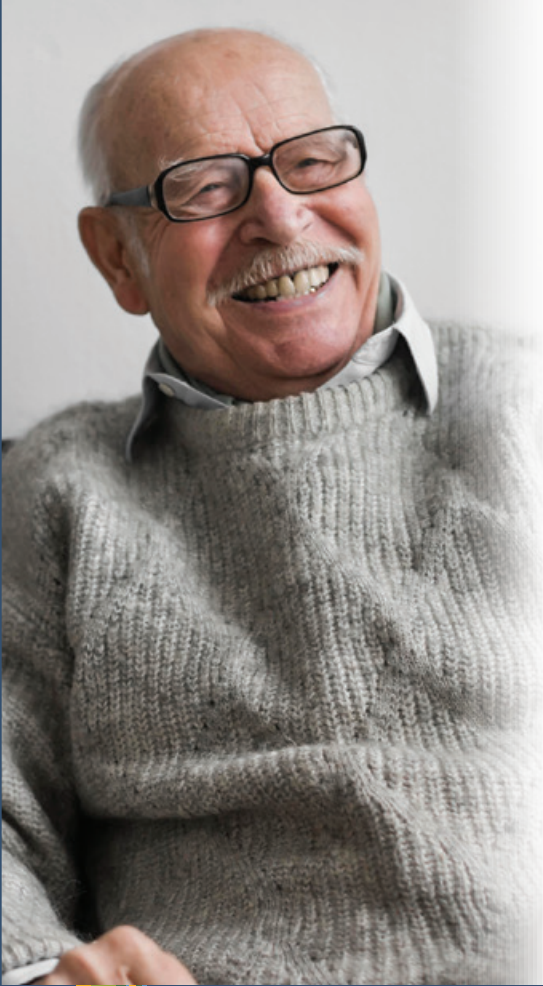
Marlborough, Mass. – Wheaton College (Mass.) men’s lacrosse player Evan Paturzo (Bellingham, Mass.) was named the New England Women’s & Men’s Athletic Conference Men’s Lacrosse Offensive Athlete of the Week for the week of February 9-15, it was last month.

Paturzo erupted for eight points, including a career-high seven goals to go with an assist and a caused turnover to lead the Lyons to a 12-9 victory over visiting University of Hartford in the season opener on February 14. The goal total was the seventh-most in a game in program history at Wheaton. The junior

connected on 63.6% of his shots (7-11).

The midfielder currently ranks third in the nation with 7.00 goals per game, while standing fifth with 8.00 points per outing. A graduate of Bishop Feehan High School, Paturzo’s 63.6% shot mark places him 37th among all players in NCAA Division III.


For his career, the Business major has seen time in 32 career matches, while racking up 51 points on 38 goals and 13 assists. In addition, Paturzo has 13 ground balls, six caused turnovers and a pair of game-winning goals.



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Sisterhood Action at Temple Etz Chaim

Tikkun Olam, repairing the world, is a value we all strive for, and Franklin's Temple Etz Chaim Sisterhood is putting it into action. Recently, the women of TEC supported the local community by collecting diapers for the SAFE Coalition and helping keep neighbors warm through a winter coat drive for the Franklin United Methodist Church's Community Closet program. Photos used courtesy of Temple Etz Chaim.



Jennifer DeLuca Named Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury CollectionSM Specialist

Medway, MA — Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty today announced that Jennifer DeLuca has earned the prestigious Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Collection Specialist designation.

DeLuca joins an elite group of real estate professionals known for their exceptional service, global reach, and commitment to excellence in the luxury marketplace. To achieve this designation, she demonstrated a proven track record of representing clients in luxury transactions and consistently delivering outstanding results for buyers and sellers in the high-end market.

Already a highly accomplished agent, DeLuca is an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®) and a three-time recipient of the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices President's Circle Award. In 2025, she sold the most resale homes in Bellingham, underscoring her deep local market expertise and strong client relationships. The Luxury Collection Specialist designation builds upon this foundation of success, expanding her access to exclusive marketing tools and global networking opportunities

designed specifically for distinguished properties.

"Earning the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Collection Specialist designation is truly an honor," said DeLuca. "I'm proud to continue elevating my service to clients in the luxury marketplace and look forward to helping buyers and sellers navigate high-end transactions with confidence and care."

Added Ellen Rao, Broker/Owner of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty, "We are thrilled Jennifer has received this designation. Her track record speaks for itself — from her President's Circle recognition to leading resale sales in Bellingham in 2025. This achievement reflects both her dedication to excellence and her continued commitment to growing professionally to better serve her clients."

DeLuca now gains exclusive access to premium marketing resources and elite networking opportunities available only to Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Collection Specialists. Through the Luxury Collection, agents can showcase their listings across a wide range of high-profile platforms, includ-



ing the globally distributed Prestige magazine, the networkwide Global Open House show, the Luxury Collection website and blog, social media channels, and

a variety of market reports released throughout the year. Visit BHHS LuxuryCollection.com for more information.

About Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty is a full-service real estate company specializing in residential sales since 1963. The company has two offices in Medway and Medfield, and dominant market share in the MetroWest area. For more information, please visit www.bhhspagerealty.com

About Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices is one of the world's fastest-growing residential real estate brokerage franchise networks, with more than 50,000 real estate professionals, nearly 1,500 offices throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe and the Middle East, and more than \$119 billion in real estate sales volume. The network, among the few organizations entrusted to use the world-renowned Berkshire Hathaway name, brings to the real estate market a mark of trust, integrity, stability and longevity.

Upcoming Events at First Universalist Society in Franklin

The Power of Positivity, March 8, 2026, 10 a.m.

Lay leader and longtime FUSF member Bo Kinney will lead a service entitled The Power of Positivity. Bo will share how his cancer journey has influenced his life, and how it exemplifies the Unitarian Universalist value of Transformation.

An Invitation to a Conversation with, Ali Coakley, Proprietor of Night Owl Farm, Franklin, March 8, 2026, 12:30 p.m. – Free Admission, Potluck Lunch

The First Universalist Society in Franklin's Food Justice Team invites you to join us and Ali Coakley for a conversation about how she uses regenerative agriculture techniques at Night Owl Farm and their application for the home gardener. Feel free to bring a lunch or partake of our potluck. Conversation starts at 12:30 p.m.

Please also bring seeds if you would like to participate in a Seed Swap. For more information on the Seed Swap, please contact Marian Szymanski, marianszymanski@verizon.net.

Cultivate Resilience: Our Faith Calls Us to Act and To Serve, March 22, 2026, 10 a.m.

Unitarian Universalism has a long and proud history of showing up and speaking out against injustice. We invite you to join members of the First Universalist Society in Franklin's (FUSF) Food Justice team as they share, via spoken word and special music, how they replenish their reserves in order to remain resilient so as to continue to fight to end food insecurity.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. Our Minister is Reverend Beverly Waring. For more information, visit fusf.org, email info@fusf.org or call (508) 528-5348.

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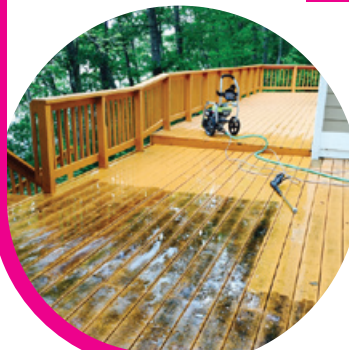
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Sports

Bellingham Basketball Updates

Girls Head to Tournament, Boys Finish 6-14



Shown are Bellingham girls' basketball captains, senior Maggie Kane and junior Debora Kalemi. Photo by Lorelai Grant

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Bellingham Girls Basketball hung onto its Division 3 ranking, finishing with a 22nd seed and heading to post-season play

at press time.

Prior to the final game, Coach Pingeton had told the Bulletin he expected the girls would see tournament play, "We play in the TVL, one of the toughest



BHS boys' basketball seniors Wyatt Callery and Sam Sullivan delivered this past season.

girls' basketball leagues in the state, so we should be headed to the State Tournament," he said.

Possessing a rather young team, it is a freshman that is leading the team. Guard Nicolette Hayes, who was a starter for the Blackhawks last year as an eighth grader, is currently averaging 13.8 points per game. Hayes is joined by sophomore guard Kaleigh Simpson, who also saw time last year for Bellingham, has been averaging 10 points a game while also being the team's top rebounder. The sophomore has already recorded four double-doubles this year.

Another sophomore, Liz Glynn began to start for the Blackhawks down the stretch last year and has been averaging eight points a game this year. Needless to say, Pingeton is getting a lot of contributions scoring from his younger players. Last winter, Bellingham had a few good seniors who accounted for the scoring, and the above-mentioned were not relied upon; this year is a different story.

While the younger athletes are picking up the scoring, senior captain Maggie Kane has been providing the leadership that the team needs. The small forward has been a good rebounder throughout the season and has shown that she can also score on occasion for the Blackhawks. According to the

Coach, Kane does a lot of the little things that allow the team to succeed.

The girls are coming along as the season progresses, and although they have lost a lot of close games because of the youth, down the stretch of games, Pingeton is optimistic.

"Losing those games in the final minutes have hurt us a bit, but the girls are learning how to win," the Coach said. "We play in a challenging TVL, but I still like our chances in the Division 3 State Tournament."

Thus far during the season, Bellingham has already beaten a few teams that are seeded 10-12 and have a matchup against number 11 Sandwich on the near schedule; it will be a good matchup to get the Blackhawks ready to play in the post-season.

Last winter, Bellingham, the 19th seed, defeated Dedham then had to go to number three Norwell, where they fell. Having to pack up and go home, it was an experience for the girls and one that Pingeton hopes they learned from and will be ready to take their skills deeper into the tournament this year.

TJ Chiappone's boys fell shy of post-season play this season, finishing with an overall 59 seed and a season record of 6-14.

Coming off an 0-20 season last year, the Blackhawks made a lot of progress this year play-

ing competitive basketball in 13 of their first 15 games.

Senior Wyatt Callery led the team in scoring with 12.4 points per game (at the time of the press interview) while adding 7.4 rebounds. Sam Sullivan sat right behind the senior with 8.7 points, 5 rebounds and 3 assists per contest for Bellingham. The two played consistently and gave the Blackhawks the opportunity to possibly get into the post-season.

"Wyatt and Sam are both returning players, and I had high expectations for them coming into the season and contributing to this team, and they've delivered," the Bellingham Coach said.

In addition to Callery and Sullivan, Bellingham had two sophomores, Stan Kiley and Nate Parmentier, who made an impact on the court for the Blackhawks. Kiley, a point guard, distributed the ball with precision and was able to score on occasion, while Parmentier gave the team a boost off the bench as a power forward, supplying energy and pulling down rebounds.

Bellingham also got important contributions from seniors Matt Marino from behind the three-point arc and Jason Greenberg on the defensive side of the ball.

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Sports

Bellingham 2026 Football Awards Honored Players' Contributions

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
SPORTS WRITER

On Sunday, February 1st, the Bellingham Football team held their awards banquet where they honored the players. The big winner on the night was Jacoby McCarthy. The Blackhawk lineman captured both the offensive and defensive lineman of the year award, so the coaches just called it the Lineman of the year. McCarthy also took home the Pancake Award for finishing his blocks and driving his opponent back. According to Coach Dan Haddad, it was the first time that a lineman had won both awards for Bellingham, and he did so in dominating fashion.

Kyle Connors was the BHS Coaches Award recipient. The defensive end/ tight end was the perfect player; very coachable and always looking to learn more. The Coaching staff got everything from Connors each time he took to the field.

The Blackhawk Award went to Jaxen Elder for all his sacrifice, hard work and commitment showing what it meant to be a Blackhawk. Jason Piselli was the team's Unsung Hero. The wide receiver put in all the hard work and never got the credit he deserved. He would continually run his routes to perfection but was usually covered by the best backs so he didn't see the ball as much as he should have,

The Workhorse Warrior was presented to William Lahousse as the Bellingham athlete who was consistently working in the weight room and giving everything and then some on the field; he was someone who never took plays off. Junior Colin Tran took home the Most Improved Player Award. Tran, who played as a freshman then took his sophomore year off, was the team's first year center. Although he had some issues in the beginning, he constantly worked at honing his craft so that his snaps were near perfect. Snapping is a critical part of the game, and the timing is of importance.



Jacoby McCarthy, left, shown with Coach Dan Haddad, Jr., right, earned both the offensive and defensive lineman of the year award.

Rehan Shah was the Iron Man; someone who continually gets back up after being knocked down. Although not a starter Shah would get some spot starts here and there but he was one who always volunteered to be the defensive and offensive scout in practices. Special Teams Player of The Year went to Anthony Barrasso for his extra points and kickoffs. The sophomore turned the team's special teams around with his kicking.

Defensive Lineman/ DB of the Year was awarded to sophomore Ryan Adams. According to the Coach, not only was his footwork incredible he was fully committed to the program. As a DB he was always tasked at covering the opposition's best receiver. Wyatt Callery took home the Defensive Player of the Year for his beast-like attitude on the field. Callery accounted for close to 100 tackles for Bellingham this season.

Bryson Nicholson was the Offensive Back/Receiver of the Year due to the fact that he possessed the best hands on the team as well as being an excellent route runner. Although not that big, Nicholson is a very difficult individual to cover. Offensive Player of the Year was given to junior running back Mason Alger who notched close to a 1000 yards on the ground,

with a 5.8 yards per carry while scoring 10 touchdowns on the season.

Rounding out the Awards was the Team MVP which was a tough battle and eventually gave to two athletes: Sam Sullivan and Callery (his second award



Sam Sullivan, left and Wyatt Callery, right, here with Coach Dan Haddad, center, shared the honor of MVP for the 2025-26 season.

on the evening. Coach Haddad noted that both recipients were well deserving of the award for the sacrifices they made for the

team. On the field, both athletes completely dominated on both sides of the ball..



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McGovern Introduces New Bill To Repeal U.S. Embargo Against Cuba

WASHINGTON—On February 12th, in response to the Trump Administration’s actions to impose a total oil embargo on Cuba, Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee and Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, has introduced legislation to repeal the statutory basis for the U.S. embargo on Cuba. H.R. 7521, the United States-Cuba Trade Act, would repeal or amend several laws codified over decades that restrict trade, exchange, telecommunications, and travel with Cuba. A similar bill, S. 136, has been introduced in the United States Senate by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR).

“America has had an embargo against Cuba for sixty years. And for sixty years, we have been waiting for that embargo to do what politicians in Washington claim it will do—deliver freedom or democracy to the people of Cuba. It has failed,” said McGovern. “It’s time to throw away the old, obsolete, failed policies of the past and try something different. Let’s focus on the people of Cuba—and let’s treat them like human beings who want to live their lives in dignity and freedom. The Cuban people—not politicians in Washington—ought to decide their own leaders and their own future.”

For the full text of the bill, visit https://mcgovern.house.gov/uploadedfiles/mc-gove_048_xml.pdf.



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Did You Know?

The Library Expands Museum Pass Offerings

You probably know that the library offers free or discounted passes to museums and other area attractions—but did you know we've recently added new passes?

Our new additions are:

- Children's Museum of Franklin
- Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence

Passes can be reserved in advance by Bellingham residents and members of the Friends of the Library. Some passes may be limited to Bellingham residents only. Reservations can be made online (see below), in person, or by phone. Residents of other towns who are members of the Friends of the Library must call or visit in person to reserve passes. Non-residents who

are not members of the Friends of the Bellingham Library may borrow passes on the day they wish to visit, provided the desired pass is available.

Some museum passes must be returned on the same day for which it was reserved, either to the Circulation desk if the library is open or placed in an envelope and dropped in the outside book deposit. An overdue charge of \$5 per day will be assessed for returnable passes that are not returned by the time the library opens the following library business day. Other passes are "coupons" that do not need to be returned.

To see all of the passes we have available or to reserve a pass, visit: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/338/Museum-Passes>

Representative Soter Joins Colleagues to Support Apprentices, Require Defibrillators

Boston, MA - State Representative Michael J. Soter, R-Bellingham, recently supported legislation designed to expand and strengthen the use of apprenticeship programs on large public works projects in Massachusetts.

House Bill 4994, *An Act relative to preparing apprentices in the Commonwealth*, would make contract eligibility for public works projects totaling \$10 million or more contingent upon construction managers, general contractors, and subcontractors agreeing to maintain or participate in state-approved apprenticeship programs for all "apprenticeable" occupations. The bill was given initial approval by the House of Representatives when it was engrossed on a vote of 154-1 on January 28.

Representative Soter noted that House Bill 4994 clarifies apprenticeship program standards and oversight requirements, including requiring contractors to register apprentices, comply with apprentice-to-journeyperson ratios, and meet certain reporting requirements. The bill provides for limited, trade-specific exemptions only when a good-faith solicitation yields no qualified bidder for the project. It also calls for increasing required apprentice work hours on covered projects and would also establish a special commission on apprenticeships comprised of senior state officials, labor and industry representatives, and workforce experts.

Rep. Soter also supported a bill requiring life-saving defibrillators at sporting events. House Bill 4993, which received initial approval from the House of Representatives on a vote of 154-1 on January 28, requires an AED to be available at any "public stadium, sports center, gymnasium or other facility hosting or providing athletic or sporting events" at all times, with at least one trained employee or volunteer capable of operating the device in attendance. The designated employee or volunteer must be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an AED in accordance with American Heart Association, Inc. or American National Red Cross standards.

An amendment Soter supported, however, filed by Representative Paul Frost (R-Auburn), to ensure the new AED requirements do not create an unfunded mandate, was defeated 26-130. Rep. Soter also supported a second Frost amendment to provide an exemption for communities and sporting events taking place at fields or facilities that do not have access to a permanent power supply. The amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

At press time, House Bills 4993 and 4994 were moving onto the Senate for its consideration.

My Pinnacle Network B2B Networking Meetings March 2026

My Pinnacle Network recently announced a full slate of business-to-business networking meetings for March 2026, as follows:

My Pinnacle Network - Westborough, Tuesday, March 3, from 8-9:30 a.m. Zoom only.

My Pinnacle Network-Mansfield - Wednesday, March 4, from 8:30-10 a.m. Zoom only.

My Pinnacle Network - Marshfield, Thursday, March 5, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Zoom only.

My Pinnacle Network - Newton, Thursday, March 12, 7:30-9 a.m. Zoom only:

If you would like to attend a My Pinnacle Network meeting, please email admin@mypinnaclenetwork.com. There is no charge to visit.

For more information, visit www.mypinnaclenetwork.com.

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SAFE Secures Funding to Expand Mental Health, Recovery Services & Announces Changes to Board

Thanks to recent grant funding from CHNA 6 (www.chna6.org) and the Community Foundation for MetroWest www.communityfoundationmw.org, SAFE is expanding our capacity to support individuals and families navigating substance use and mental health challenges across Massachusetts. These grants will allow SAFE to reach hundreds more residents by increasing prevention, recovery, and family support services in communities facing the greatest barriers to care.

A newly hired Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, partially funded by CHNA 6, will provide direct, compassionate support grounded in lived experience, offering peer-led guidance to help community members access the resources they need.

Funding from Community Foundation for MetroWest will



also strengthen SAFE's Collaborative Care program and increase the reach of the SAFE Mobile Outreach Van, bringing harm reduction supplies, essentials, and individualized navigation directly into local neighborhoods.

Board of Directors Announces New Leadership

SAFE is excited to announce changes to its Board of Direc-



tors. Dr. Wendy Cohen steps into the role of Board President, Mary Clermont takes on the Vice President position, and Dr. Monika Page assumes the role of Secretary, alongside returning Treasurer Brian Hamlin.

"SAFE is in a period of rapid expansion, with new partnerships and programs launching all the time," says CEO and co-founder Jennifer Levine. "Our board's combined strengths empower us to rise to the chal-

lenge, and I know they will help us keep our community-first values at the heart of everything we do."

Dr. Wendy Cohen has been a practicing primary care physician in Southeastern New England for 15 years. She has witnessed firsthand the impact of opioid addiction on patients, families, and communities and has been instrumental in helping SAFE lead the charge in increasing Narcan availability and

training across Massachusetts. Mary Clermont brings with her decades of experience serving in Human Resources across multiple industries. Clermont has built her career on fostering inclusive, supportive workplace cultures and connecting employee and community well-being. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Ber-non Family YMCA.

Dr. Monika Page is a partner at Pediatric Specialists of Fox-borough and Wrentham and a longstanding resident of Frank-lin. Through her medical career, she has gained deep insight into how substance use, addiction, and mental health challenges af-fect individuals and families.

For more information on SAFE, including its 10th anni-versary gala at Gillette Stadium April 17th, visit www.safecoalitionma.org.

To ADVERTISE in THIS PAPER Call Jen Schofield at 508-570-6544

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