

Our Town Publishing changes hands, celebrates relocation

Tri-County Regional Chamber facilitates Milford ribbon-cutting event



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

By Judith Dorato O'Gara

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

at their new location at 9 Industrial Road, Ste. 107, Milford, Mass. The full-service printing company provides a range of marketing services for all clients, from consumer

to business, as well as publishes community newspapers reaching 28 Massachusetts

OUR TOWN

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Milford man lost at sea in Gloucester fishing boat incident

Select Board recognizes National Guard veteran who was aboard the Lily Jean



Former Milford resident Staff Sergeant Freeman Short was a member of the U.S. National Guard and a crewmember on the Lily Jean, a fishing vessel lost at sea in January. Source Facebook @MENationalGuard

By Nick Schofield

At the start of its meeting on Feb. 26, the Milford Select Board held a moment of silence for Staff Sergeant Freeman Short, one of

the crew members of the lost fishing vessel Lily Jean.

GLOUCESTER

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OURTOWN

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towns from MetroWest. The reception drew many local professionals, along with Rep. Brian W. Murray of the 10th Worcester District and Laura O’Callaghan, President & CEO of the Tri-County Regional Chamber of Commerce, who was “thrilled” to help facilitate the ribbon-cutting event.

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

“As both the owner and publisher of 16 area newspapers and a full-service print shop, Marty and I are incredibly



proud of the work we do—and even more proud of the relationships that have built this business brick by brick,” Schofield added, “This event is more than just 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



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

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 tricontycounty.org.



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

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Milford Scouting America Troop learns to sail 60-foot catamaran in Bahamas

Scouting America Troop 314 is based in Milford and recently returned from a six-day high adventure trip to Sea Base in the Bahamas, where they learned how to sail a 60-foot catamaran sailboat, The Adonai, around the Sea of Abaco. The crew consisted of 14 scouts and five adult leaders.

The troop is chartered by the Montgomery Freemasons' Lodge in Milford.

The scouts spent months preparing for this trip, learning nautical terms, snorkeling, sea navigation, plant and animal identification, and other important skills necessary to crew a tall ship. They were required to help sail the ship and do all the cooking and cleaning on board. Our captain, Captain Josh, awarded each of our scouts the Captain's Club Award. The Sea

Base Captain's Club Award is a prestigious recognition for crews in the Bahamas Tall Ship adventure, awarded for excellence in seamanship, teamwork, and adherence to the Scout Oath and Law.

Participants must demonstrate skills like snorkeling, vessel management, and leadership during their six-day voyage. The captain said he usually only awards this to one member of a crew, and sometimes no crew members earn the award. Because of our scouts' teamwork, positivity, and preparation, he chose to award all members of the crew.

To learn more about the troop and its activities, contact the troop Committee Chair Lynne Ross at therosfam4@gmail.com.

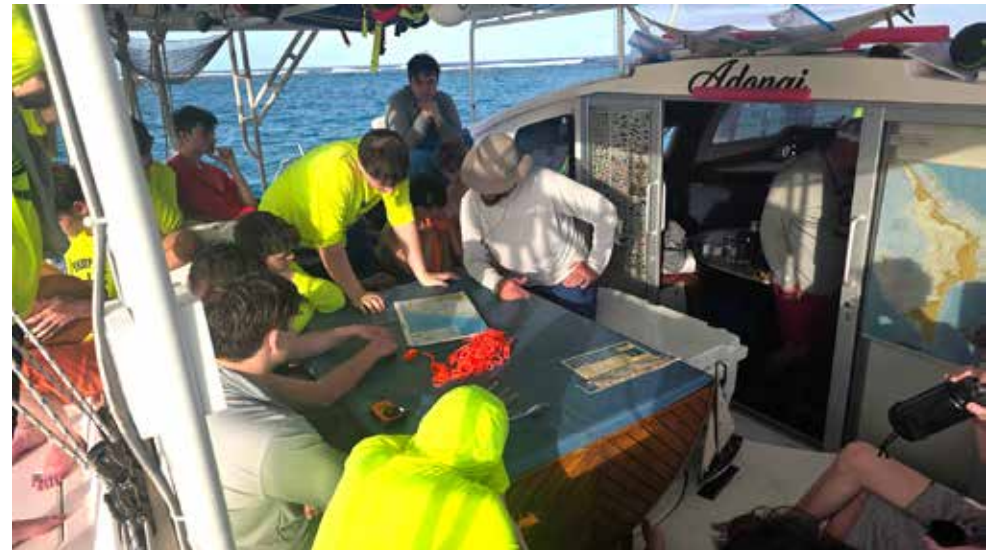
Submitted by Scouting America Troop 314 in Milford



(Front row L to R) Assistant Scoutmaster Patrick G. Holland, Patrick J. Holland, Matthew Naves, Ethan Smith, Assistant Scoutmaster Lenny Izzo, Assistant Scoutmaster Brian Hayes; (middle row L to R) Assistant Scoutmaster Chris Ross, Cameron Kavanaugh, Nathan Mandrik, Gage Shannon, Domenic Izzo, Jackson Luca, Assistant Scoutmaster Brian Mandrik; (back row L to R) Logan Rizzo, Aiden KokEnnen, Austin Rizzo, Connor Hayes, Sam Catalogna, Connor Ross. *Courtesy photo*



Members of Milford's Scouting America Troop 314 hold starfish on a recent high adventure trip to Sea Base in the Bahamas. *Courtesy photo*



The crew learning about navigation from Captain Josh on board The Adonai. *Courtesy photo*

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Rene Flatt of Milford celebrates 102nd birthday

At age 50, Rene Flatt decided to go to college. She enrolled at Eastern New Mexico University and earned a degree in English and communications. An avid poet, Rene has won multiple awards for her poetry. [see Shoes poem below]

Raised in Ballinger, Texas, Rene grew up alongside her twin sister Lorene; twin brothers Melvin and Elvin; and sisters Naomi and Lavoy. Her mother, Bertha, stayed busy raising six children who were born within five and a half years, while her father, Henry, farmed cotton on

the family land.

In high school, Rene was active in basketball and running. After graduation, she married her high school sweetheart, "S.K.," whom she met at a skating rink.

Shortly after their wedding, S.K. was drafted into the U.S. Army and served 27 months in combat during WWII. During this time, Rene lived near her family and held various jobs. When S.K. returned home, the couple moved to New Mexico, where he worked in the oil industry, before eventually returning to Texas to farm corn, cotton, and maize. It was there they raised their children

Ilene and Collin.

Rene and S.K. retired at 55 and settled in Paris, Texas, where they ranched and sold cattle. Rene enjoyed traveling, especially to Colorado for waterskiing and snow skiing. Today, she loves watching the Kansas City Chiefs and Texas Tech Red Raiders. She is the proud grandmother of two, and great grandmother of five.

State Representative Brian Murray attended Rene's recent birthday party, "We were thrilled to help Rene celebrate her 102nd birthday," he said after the event.

Source: State Rep. Brian Murray, taken from The Buzz newsletter



Rene Flatt, 102, of Milford holds a citation from the House of Representatives commemorating her 102nd birthday, presented to her by State Rep. Brian Murray. Courtesy photo

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Shoes

By Rene Flatt

As I packed each box on moving day
I tried to throw some things away,
But not so simple is the task,
To discard memories from one's past.

The many shoes standing there
Held memories beyond compare.
Laminated baby shoes from early years
Keep me smiling through my tears.

And how could I forget
The white boots I wore the day we met!
There are the pumps I wore the day
That we gave our daughter away.

And your Army boots that signified
Your love of country till the day you died.
They are only shoes – I told myself
As I placed each box back on the shelf.

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Financial Advisor Mark Freeman focuses on clients' success

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Freeman worked in two other industries before establishing his finance career in 2017. Even though his first two jobs were outside his training, Freeman said he was hired by Edward



Jones, "one, because I have the ability to analyze data quickly and, two, because I always try to figure out a better way to do things. I bring those skills to my finance clients."

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

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

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



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

tional nonprofit organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

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

For more information call Freeman at 508-293-4017 or

email him at Mark.Freeman@EdwardJones.com.

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

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Town votes to take property by eminent domain for \$520,000

6 Park Terrace to be utilized by police department

By Theresa Knapp

At a Special Town Meeting on Feb. 9, Milford voters authorized the Select Board to take the residential property 6 Park Terrace by eminent domain.

The single article warrant asked residents if they would raise a money “to be utilized to acquire by purchase, or take by eminent domain, a certain property located at 6 Park Terrace...and to also be utilized for purposes of demolishing any buildings or structures on said property at the time of acquisition.”

In a January letter to Town Meeting Members, Town Administrator Richard Villani said that, “due to the property being listed for sale, the Board feels there is urgency to schedule a Special Town Meeting, rather than waiting for the May Annual Town Meeting.”

In the letter, Villani explained the two-family dwelling was built in 1930 and is currently unoccupied. The town had

tried, without success, to purchase the property which has been for sale since June 2025. The property is behind the police station and is “sandwiched between properties owned by the Town and utilized by the police department...The Select Board feels that due to its location, the property will be extremely valuable to the town. It will allow for potential expansion of the police station to include parking and other facilities. Presently, there is not sufficient town-owned area to park the department’s vehicles.”

At the Feb. 9 meeting, Select Board Chair Thomas O’Loughlin asked voters to approve the article and to “appropriate the sum of \$620,000 by transferring the sum of \$505,000 from Fund 2610 Sale of Town-Owned Property and \$115,000 from Excess and Deficiency, said sum to be utilized to pay any damages and for the purpose of demolishing any building or structure existing on

the property to be acquired.”

The Finance Committee recommended favorable action.

O’Loughlin explained this is the only home on that road. “The town wanted to acquire that property back when the police station was expanded but out of respect for the family that was residing there at the time, the Town did not do that at the time.”

O’Loughlin said the town had attempted to purchase the property twice “since the early 2000s” without success. He said, “Since then, there’s a lot that’s on the other side of that property. So, there’s a lot owned by Milford National, the house, and then the police station. We acquired that lot on the other side when Milford National was being sold, they deeded it to the town as a donation...The only thing the town doesn’t own on that side of the street is that one structure.”

Milford Police Chief Robert Tusino said, “The reason this



At a Feb. 9 Special Town Meeting, residents voted to take the house at 6 Park Terrace by eminent domain for fair market value (\$520,000). The property is sandwiched between two town-owned properties and will be utilized by the police department. Photo credit Theresa Knapp

wasn’t acted upon sooner is simply because it wasn’t a viable option,” and urged Town Meeting to support the article.

“The issue for us now is, and I’ll be quite frank with you, we have town vehicles that we park off property, we shouldn’t be doing that. Why? Because we

don’t have a place for them.”

Speaking from the podium, Select Board member Paul Mazzuchelli encouraged voters to support the “very important

PROPERTY

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Mark Freeman, CEPA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next, rebalance your portfolio. You may uncover opportunities to shift toward in-

vestments with more consistent income or better tax efficiency. Sometimes a small tweak can generate extra cash flow without increasing overall risk.

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

Don't overlook health care:

Health care costs often grow faster than general inflation. Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket expenses can rise annually, and the need for long-term care remains a big financial uncertainty for retirees. Building health care-specific inflation into your plan now can help prevent surprises later. Any savings you have in a health savings account can help you cover health care costs. And many pharmaceutical companies offer financial assis-

tance programs to help pay for costlier medications.

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

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Citizens for Milford to hold candidate forum

Citizens for Milford, in partnership with Milford TV, invites all Milford voters to attend the twelfth Candidate Forum featuring candidates in Milford's upcoming town election.

The forum will be held Mon., March 16 at 7 p.m. and will feature candidates running unopposed, as well as the three candidates running for one seat on the Board of Health, which is the sole contested race this year. The forum will take place in Upper Town Hall (52 Main Street). All candidates have also been invited to meet voters beginning at 6:30 p.m. before the forum begins. This event is free and open to the public.

Candidates running for the one open seat on the Board of Health who will be participating in the forum include Rosemary Cerqueira, Diana Haynes, and Scott Vecchiolla. Other candidates who will be participating will be announced on the Citizens for Milford website (CitizensforMilford.com) once

confirmed.

Citizens for Milford members José Costa and Geri Eddins will moderate the forum. The forum will begin with opening statements from each of the candidates, followed by questions from the moderators. Audience members will be provided the opportunity to pose their own questions.

Milford TV will broadcast the forum live on the public channel (Comcast 8 | Verizon 38), Verizon channel HD 2140, MilfordTV.net, and the Milford TV app. In addition, Milford TV will record the forum for on-demand viewing and will rebroadcast it in the days leading up to the election on April 2. Citizens for Milford will also provide a link to the video on its website and Facebook page as soon as it is available.

More information about the forum and the candidates is available on the Citizens for Milford website CitizensforMilford.com.

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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 myo-

pia, 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.
- **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 recommend treatments like atropine eye drops, multifocal contact lenses, or

EYES

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Milford Town Library Calendar of Events

80 Spruce Street, Milford • 508-473-2145 • MilfordTownLibrary.org • HOURS: Mon. – Thurs. 9-9 • Fri. 9-6 • Sat. 9-5 • Sun. CLOSED

By Reference Department

AARP Tax Aide Program

The AARP Tax Aide Program returns this year to help seniors and low-income individuals file their income tax returns for free. Appointments are available on Saturdays starting continuing until April 4, 2025. To schedule an appointment, please call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145 ext. 2. Trained volunteer preparers will be able to complete returns for the tax years 2025, 2024 and 2023. Please note that separate appointments are required for each tax year.

Tax Forms

Federal and state tax forms are available in the library lobby on the Grab & Go table. Please take only what you and your family will need. Federal tax forms can also be found online at irs.gov. State tax forms can be found online at mass.gov, at MassTaxConnect.

NEW! Adult Book Club!

Come join us at the new Mil-

ford Town Library Adult Book Club! Designed for readers 18 and older, our meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. The first meeting will be on Thursday, March 19. The March book selection is *Maybe You Should Talk To Someone* by Lori Gottlieb. This bestselling memoir by psychotherapist Gottlieb explores how therapy can deepen our understanding of ourselves and our shared humanity.

Center Book Group

The Center Book Group meets next on Tuesday, March 17 at 10 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center to discuss *Three Days in June* by Anne Tyler. Tyler's been crafting quietly, astute novels for decades and this 2025 title about Gail Baines, a 61-year-old recently fired mother of the bride, continues that tradition. To reserve regular or large print copies, call us at 508-473-2145 ext. 2 or visit the Libby App.

English Classes

The library offers free drop-in classes for adults who want to learn and improve their English. Beginner classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 - 8 p.m. An intermediate class is held on Thursdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Classes are held on the lower level of the library in the ESL Classroom. For more information, please call 508-473-2145 ext. 2.

Las clases gratuitas sin cita previa para adultos que quieren aprender y mejorar su inglés comienzan el martes 14 de enero de 2025. Las clases para principiantes se llevan a cabo los martes y jueves por la noche de 7 a 8 p.m. Una clase intermedia se lleva a cabo los jueves de 5:30 a 6:30 p.m. Las clases se llevan a cabo en el nivel inferior de la biblioteca en el aula de ESL. No es necesario registrarse. Para

obtener más información, llame al mostrador de información al 508-473-2145 x 2.

As aulas presenciais gratuitas para adultos que desejam aprender e melhorar seu inglês começam na terça-feira, 14 de janeiro de 2025. As aulas para iniciantes são ministradas nas noites de terça e quinta, das 19h às 20h. Uma aula intermediária é ministrada às quintas-feiras, das 17h30 às 18h30. As aulas são ministradas no nível inferior da biblioteca, na sala de aula ESL. O registro não é necessário. Para obter mais informações, ligue para o balcão de informações em 508-473-2145 x 2.

VIRTUAL: The History of Carole King Monday, March 16, 2 - 3 p.m.

Carole King was writing pop hits in her teens. "Will You Still

Love Me," "Up On The Roof," "The Loco-Motion," "One Fine Day." This alone would be the basis of a standout career. Carole's fortunes however explode in 1971 with the release of her solo album "Tapestry." It was #1 for 4 months and stayed on the album chart for over 6 years! More and even bigger hits. Led by Gary Wenstrup, who has taught courses on the Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel and Motown Records for the Continuing Education Departments of College of DuPage and Oakton (IL) Community College. Wenstrup has lectured at over 80 public libraries. Besides being featured on radio broadcasts and in newspaper articles, he is also a reoccurring guest on the widely

LIBRARY

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EYES

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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 Cen-

ter, 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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LIBRARY

continued from page 9

respected podcast “Something About The Beatles.” To register for this virtual program, visit the library’s events calendar.

Scrunch-Paint a Silk Scarf with Gariné Arakelian Monday, March 30, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.

Registration is required! Please visit our calendar page to reserve your space.

Exclusive workshop on creating stunning “tie-dye style” silk scarves with no experience necessary! During the workshop, we will provide step-by-step instructions for a creative process that will leave you with a wearable masterpiece. Each participant will leave with a beautiful silk scarf masterpiece.

Research Your Italian Roots

Dr. Noel Bon Tempo offers free consultations to those who want to research their Italian Ancestry. A retired pediatrician and co-founder of the Milford Free Clinic, Dr. Bon Tempo graduated from the University of Bologna Medical School in 1968 and lived in Italy for many years. Fluent in Italian, and an avid researcher of his

own ancestry, Dr. Bon Tempo loves helping others navigate the many tools and records available to discover and document their own Italian family trees. To arrange a consultation with Dr. Bon Tempo, please call 508-473-2145 ext. 2 or email (milfordreference@cwmar.org) the Reference Department at the Milford Town Library.

Mahjong @ MTL

A Mahjong group meets twice a month at the Milford Town Library. This group welcomes players familiar to Mahjong to join for enjoyment of the game, not for high stakes competition! The group meets on select Tuesdays from 6 - 8 p.m. at the library in the Quarry Room.

March & April meetings:

- March 17, March 31
- April 14, April 28

Those who are interested can attend any of the meetings. Mahjong sets are provided. Questions? Please call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145 ext. 2.

Milford Area Wordsmiths

Join the Milford Area Wordsmiths writers' group! We provide a safe place for

adults (18+) to write and even share your work if you desire. All levels are welcome, from first-time writers to published authors. The group meets the first and third Monday of each month (except holidays) from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, please call 508-473-2145, option 2. March & April Meetings: March 16, April 6, April 20.

Tea and Book Tasting

On Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., stop by the adult services area to sample some autumnal teas and peruse seasonal books. The self-serve pop-up tea station can be found in our cozy reading nook on the main level, tucked behind the DVD section, across from the graphic novels.

Ongoing: Find great deals on gently used books for children, teens and adults at the Friends Book Store and book table, replenished weekly.

Donations for the Daily Bread Food Pantry can be dropped off in the blue bin by the Friends book table.

Community Puzzle Tables are always available in the adult services area.

Mary Sannicandro turns 104!



Sate Rep. Brian W. Murray stopped by Cornerstone at Milford to celebrate Mary Sannicandro's 104th birthday.



Friends and family recently gathered at Cornerstone at Milford to celebrate Mary Sannicandro's birthday. Photos courtesy of State Rep. Brian W. Murray

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Mendon Historical Society receives donation



Central One Federal Credit Union in Milford recently made a donation to the Mendon Historical Society. The check was presented by Nicholas Mazzarini, Milford Branch Manager. Ruth O'Grady, president; Ruth Cassinelli, past president, and Amy DeWitt, long time member, gratefully accepted the check on behalf of the Historical Society. Photo source Mendon Historical Society

Free magic show for families of first responders, veterans, active military March 15

On March 15 at noon, Thanks To Yanks is hosting a free children's magic show for families of first responders, veterans, and active military members.

The event will feature magician Tommy James. Space is

limited and reservations are required.

The event will take place at the Italian Vets Milford with a pizza lunch to follow.

For tickets and more information, contact info@thankstoyanks.org.

Chamber of Commerce held Legislative Breakfast in February



Last month, Rep. Brian Murray joined his colleagues from the legislature at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast at Galliford's Restaurant in Mendon. With Chamber members, they discussed energy costs, unemployment insurance and healthcare affordability, among several other issues. Photo source: Rep. Brian Murray

Pet of the Month: Meet Miles

Miles has been waiting patiently since August for you to walk through the door and take him home. While he waits, he's been making the most of his time at the Milford Humane Society, playing with all the toys and finding all the highest spots with best views.

Miles was surrendered from a home with too many cats. He has made it pretty clear that he is not ready to share his home with another pet. But just take

one look at his handsome face and you know that he's the only pet you need.

For more information about

Miles, or any of the other cats in our care, visit the Milford Humane Society at www.milfordhumane.org.



To meet Miles, please visit the Milford Humane Society at milfordhumane.org or call 508-473-7008 for more info



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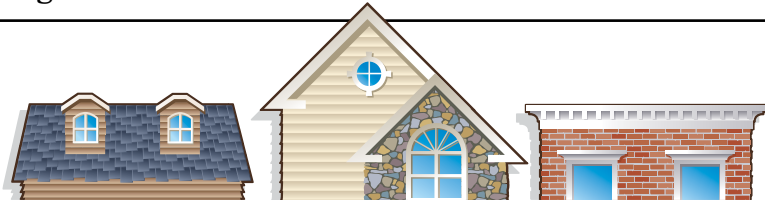


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How Much Home Can I Afford?

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Did you know?

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.

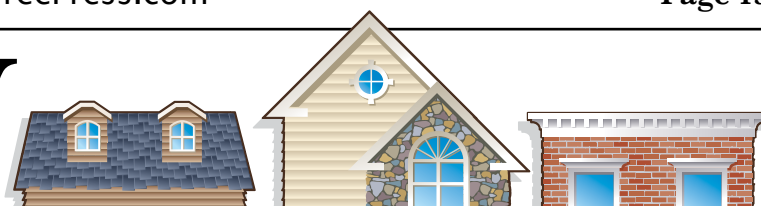
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HOME REVIEW



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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PROPERTY

continued from page 6

article” to address “a real and growing need in our downtown which is adequate parking at our police station and the surrounding municipal area...Its location is uniquely situated for municipal use and no other nearby parcels can meet this need. It is the only parcel that can solve this parking problem...This is about a clear municipal need and every option has been exhausted.”

Mazzuchelli said “eminent domain is always the last resort” and explained “the town did what we were supposed to do.” The property was appraised with a fair market value of \$520,000. The town approached the owner to negotiate in good faith but “the price that they want is far above that number. And as a Select Board, we can’t justify paying well beyond fair market value with taxpayers’ dollars.”

Villani, also a Town Meeting member at-large, said the property was originally listed

at \$659,900 in June of 2025. He had a meeting with the listing broker in October to express town interest. An independent appraisal came back at \$520,000 and the town made an offer which was rejected. The owners said they had two offers, one for \$620,000 and one for \$610,000, which ultimately did not go forward for reasons not known to town officials.

Most Town Meeting speakers were in favor of the article though one resident expressed concern that a two-family dwelling would be destroyed at a time when there is a housing shortage. Town officials noted this property has been vacant for eight months and there continue to be other vacant properties around town.

After a 20-minute discussion, the article passed unanimously.

To watch a recording of the meeting, visit MyMilfordTV at <https://bit.ly/MilfordSTM-02092026>.



Drone footage behind Milford Police Department (rooftop in foreground) of 6 Park Terrace, a property that Feb. 9 Special Town Meeting voted to take by eminent domain by paying fair market value (\$520,000). Image credit Milford Police Department

Community Use Newspaper Club takes off

Student asks, “What does ‘booyah’ mean to you?”

At the Milford Community School Use Program, the Newspaper Club has quickly become a hit among students at Woodland Elementary School! Participants have the opportunity to create their own articles, comics, recipes, games, and more. No matter the idea, every effort is made to include submissions in the newspaper to showcase as many student interests as possible. The first edition was released at the beginning of February, and a newspaper box will soon be placed in the Woodland Elementary School library allowing students and teachers to pick up their own copy.

Within the Community Use Program, the word “Booyah” has become a popular catchphrase among participants. The fun expression is often used by students to celebrate something exciting, and it has quickly become part of the program’s culture. Its popularity inspired members of the Newspaper Club to reflect on what “Booyah” means to them, and below are their thoughts.

These interviews were conducted by Lilly Chicarelli and include every member of Newspaper Club.

What “Booyah” Means to Me

“It means to me like when someone says booyah, it is going to be a fun experience!” ~ Brie
“It is just, like, awesome! It is literally the meaning of Community Use.” ~ Leah



“It means outgoing, cool. You use the phrase a lot in real life.” ~ Nick
“Booyah, it sounds ridiculous. They should use a different phrase, there are many other phrases out there.” ~ Josh
“It means something fun is going to happen!” ~ Jesse
“A little bit weird.” ~ Nolan
“Kind of annoying.” ~ Evan
“Booyah is the first word to ever exist even in the age of the dinosaurs!” ~ AJ
“It is an exciting thing to look forward to from people.” ~ Kinley
“Booyah is a very passionate word to use to express yourself when you are happy.” ~ Lilly
“I like it, I think it’s fun!” ~ Max
“It is energetic!” ~ Kyle
“It means to have a fun and

have a good time.” ~ Ana
“It means it is good and it reminds me of extended day!” ~ Maggie
“Booyah is amazing and it expresses excitement and energy!” ~ Elise
“It is like a burst of excitement!” ~ Ange
“Booyah is a way of life! It brings us all together and lets us share our excitement. Booyah is not just a phrase to use once in a while, it unites us, brings joy and most importantly RULES!” ~ Gianna
“Booyah is not just a word, it’s that feeling when you wake up on a warm summer morning. Booyah is not just a word, it is those good feelings.” ~ Julie
What do you think Booyah means to you?

March Mystery Bag

I’m sharing a small batch of March Mystery Bags with my community. Each bag includes a few seasonal surprises. Scan this QR code to sign-up if you’d like one. Quantities are limited.

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SOUR GRAPES by Tim Jones

Panel 1: A dog is running towards a doghouse. A speech bubble says: "OMINOUS, WAKE UP! WE OVERSLEPT AND WE'VE GOT A BUSY DAY!"

Panel 2: The dog is running away from the doghouse. A speech bubble says: "WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME LEFT IN THE DAY, SO WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?"

Panel 3: The dog is running away from the doghouse. A speech bubble says: "YEP. NAPTIME IS PRIORITY ONE."

Family-run Affordable Junk Removal takes the stress out of cleanups

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company takes an environmentally responsible approach to disposal, recycling whenever possible and properly handling non-recyclable materials. "With four kids, sustainability is especially important to us," he says.

During the business's early

Business spotlight



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days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers re-invested into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 21 years, and we both work full time, managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to include a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the com-

munity, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and be involved in their activities. We're also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Milford, the Schadlers have been residents for over 20 years. Their four kids have gone to Milford schools. In addition to living in town, they are proud investors in the community. They sponsor and coach several sports teams, volunteer at the schools, and own both commercial and residential properties.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across

the MetroWest area," he says. To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

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Contractor yard proposed for 225 West Street

By Scott Calzolaio

A proposed contractor's yard at 225 West Street was presented to the Planning Board on Feb. 17 by Milford-based D&L Design Group, representing Alpine Place LLC of Franklin.

Peter Lavoie of D&L Design outlined the preliminary site plan and answered initial questions from board members during the meeting.

A contractor's yard is a small lot where local tradespeople can store work vans and equipment overnight and when not in use.

The proposed site would include 11 parking spaces and one handicap-accessible space. Plans call for a two-story building with a 3,600-square-foot footprint. The first floor would contain six separate storage units for

contractors. The site would be used for van and equipment storage only. Abutting properties include residential and commercial buildings.

Board members discussed placing restrictions on the property if approved. One concern focused on prohibiting outdoor storage, limiting all materials and equipment to the interior of the building.

Another concern involved trailer access, as the entrance to the proposed lot begins on a steep hill. A restriction on trailers at the site is being considered, said Planning Board Chair Marble Mainini.

"There's no way a trailer could make it up that hill back there without getting hung up, so there's no way a trailer could

make its way to that site," he said.

No new curb cuts off Route 140 are proposed. Contractors would enter and exit the property using the existing curb cut at 215 West Street (currently a medical office building) and travel around the rear of the property.

The project must still go before the Conservation Commission. There is a question as to whether part of the site is classified as wetlands or a detention basin. If the land underneath proves to be a working basin, it would need to be cleaned and confirmed to be functioning properly.

The Planning Board is scheduled to revisit the proposal on March 17.



A contractor's yard is proposed at the site of 225 West St. If approved, vehicles enter the site through an existing drive at 215 West St. Photo credit Theresa Knapp

Milford Beautification Day scheduled for April 25

Citizens for Milford is organizing the Annual Milford Beautification Day, which enables area residents, organizations, and businesses to work together to beautify our community by picking up trash around town. Milford Beautification Day will be held Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, April 26 from noon to 3 p.m. All interested citizens are invited to meet with organizers anytime between those hours in the municipal parking lot across from Sacred Heart Church (5 East Main Street) to get sup-

plies, instructions, and assignments.

Families, community groups, churches, local businesses, and teenagers who need to perform service hours are all invited to participate. Younger children are encouraged to attend as long as they are accompanied by a supervising adult.

All Beautification Day volunteers are invited to a free lunch courtesy of the Milford Lions Club and Milford's Rail Trail Flatbread Company to thank everyone for their efforts to beautify our community. Lions Club members will be grilling

hamburgers and hot dogs on site, and folks from Rail Trail Flatbread Company will be serving samples of New City Microcreamery ice cream. In the event of rain, food service will not be available on Sunday.

To help ensure the organizers can plan the clean-up routes for volunteers, the group is asking residents to report streets and neighborhoods that are of particular concern. Residents can submit their recommendations by emailing them to CitizensforMilford@gmail.com or by messaging them to the Citizens for Milford Facebook page (@

CitizensforMilford) before 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 23.

Community involvement with Beautification Day continues to grow. Citizens for Milford is sincerely grateful to the Milford Highway Department, Friends of the Milford Upper Charles Trail, Milford Lions Club, Rail Trail Flatbread Company, and Master Roof. Corporate volunteers continuing their partnership with us this year include Milford Federal Bank, Milford Doubletree Hotel, and Planet Aid. Combined with the work of all residents who volunteer on Beautification Day, this

event is a true demonstration of community pride.

Questions regarding any of the Beautification Day efforts may be submitted by email to CitizensforMilford@gmail.com.

Citizens for Milford is a volunteer, nonpartisan, grassroots organization, which includes a diverse group of citizens who care about our community. Participation in our projects and events is open to everyone in Milford. More information is available on the group's website CitizensforMilford.com.

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Musicians wanted, concert band seeks new members

The Southeastern MA Community Concert Band is in its 50th year and performs about a dozen concerts a year in the local area. They are a non-audition group and welcome musicians of all abilities (brass, woodwinds, percussion).

The band currently has 45 members of all ages and rehearses weekly at the Medway Community Church.

Whether you are currently playing, or even if it's been years, you are encouraged to



dust off that instrument and join the fun and active group.

For more information, contact the personnel manager

at music@smccb.com about joining or coming to watch a rehearsal. You can find more information at smccb.com.

Milford appoints DiVitto as Interim Athletic Director

AD Peter Boucher resigns following 12 successful years with Milford Public Schools

The Milford Public Schools is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Steven DiVitto to the role of Interim Athletic Director, effective March 14. DiVitto will replace Athletic Director Peter Boucher, who has resigned his position to take the role of Wellness Director in another community. Boucher has spent the past 12 years in Milford as AD.

Welcome Steven DiVitto

DiVitto currently serves as the Dean of Students at Milford High School, a role he has filled for the past five years. In taking on the Interim AD position, DiVitto will continue as Dean of Students in a reduced role, with some of his responsibilities shifting to other building administrators and staff. Previous to his current position, DiVitto was a coordinator for an alternative pathway program for high school students for several years, and a high school teacher for approximately five years.

After graduating from MHS in 2003, he obtained his bachelor's degree from Assumption University in Organizational Communications in 2007, and his Master's Degree from American International College in Special Education in 2017.

In the realm of Athletics, DiVitto has served as Head Coach



Steven DiVitto
Interim Athletic Director

of the Girls' Softball team at MHS since 2014. He will be resigning from that position to take on this new role; a new coach will be appointed in the near future. DiVitto also serves as Head Coach of the Milford Legion Baseball team, a position he has held for the past 12 years. Of note, DiVitto's teams have won state championships in softball (2017) and Legion baseball (2014), and he has been recognized as state Softball Coach of the Year (2017).

DiVitto said, "I am excited and thankful for the opportunity to help lead the Milford Public Schools Athletic Department for the upcoming spring season. We have many varsity, sub-varsity, and middle school programs ready to get underway soon. I'd

like to make this as smooth a transition as possible for all of our student-athletes, coaches, and families. I look forward to carrying on the continuity and great tradition of Milford Athletics."

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Craig Consigli said, "Steven is a familiar face at Milford High School. His role as the Dean of Students has allowed him to form many relationships with students, staff, families, and coaches over the years. Additionally, Steven has been a very successful coach in his own right, and knows what it takes to build a strong program and culture. He'll step into this Interim role with many strong attributes, which will allow him to hit the ground running."

Farewell Peter Boucher

The Milford Public Schools would like to thank and recognize the many contributions of AD Peter Boucher. He was appointed to the position in 2014. Since that time, Boucher has supervised an athletics program that has had many notable accomplishments on the field, court, track, and pool, while also excelling in the classroom

and community. Milford Athletics under Boucher have been celebrated for sportsmanship, leadership, and efforts to build a strong Unified Athletics program inclusive of all student-athletes.

Of note, under Athletic Director Boucher, Milford student-athletes and coaches have:

- 39 league titles across all sports
 - 12 state championships (7 Cheer, 4 Wrestling, 1 Softball)
 - Multiple state finalists and "Final Four" teams
 - Multiple state and New England individual champions and finalists
 - 9 league or state Coach of the Year awards, and multiple Honorable Mentions
 - Numerous D1, D2, and D3 college athletic commitments
- Dr. Josh Otlin, Principal of Milford High School, shared, "Peter has had a profound impact on the Athletic Program at Milford High. We offer one of the largest and more robust programs in the state for high schools our size. Overseeing such a diverse number of sports, with teams at the sub-varsity and varsity level in most sports,

requires a lot of coordination and effort. Peter has been an excellent leader and advocate for our student-athletes and coaches, allowing them to have great success. I thank him for his efforts in Milford."

"On behalf of the Milford Public Schools, our community, and the thousands of student-athletes that have competed as Scarlet Hawks over the past 12 years, I want to thank Peter Boucher for all of his hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm," stated Consigli. "The position of Athletic Director requires a lot of long hours and late nights at the fields and in the Gym. Peter has put a lot into the role, allowing Milford Athletics to be a leader in the Hockomock League and throughout the state. Our student-athletes routinely achieve success in competition, but also in the classroom and in the community. Peter has helped to create those expectations and culture. We wish Peter nothing but success in his new role, and thank him for all of his hard work."

Submitted by Milford Public Schools, edited for clarity

Local residents named to Simmons University Dean's List

Simmons University in Boston has announced its Dean's List for fall 2025. The following Milford residents have been named to the list:

- Isabella Borges
- Gabby Fernandes

To qualify for dean's list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours of work in classes using the letter grade system.



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Milford Public Schools

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• April 3 - No School - Good Friday

District News:

Do you have a child ready for Kindergarten in the Fall of 2026? Students must be five (5) years old on or before August 31 to enroll in Kindergarten. Have you registered your child for Kindergarten? If you have not, please visit as soon as possible: The Family Resource Center, 189 Main St. 2nd Floor, Milford, MA 01757.

Milford High School

Step right up and secure your ticket to the best night of entertainment this year: the Best Buddies Annual Talent Show and Pageant on Thursday April 9 from 5 - 8 p.m. at the Milford High School auditorium. Showcasing a variety of special skills and beautiful costumes, you will find yourself transported to the greatest circus there ever was! This event is hosted by our district's Best Buddies organization and is sure to bring you nothing but joy and inclusivity. Our students are so excited to show you what talents they have been hiding up their sleeves; they're just waiting for their audience to appear. We hope to see you there for a great show filled with talents, tricks, and surprises! If you have any questions please reach out to Lexi Forgit (aforgit@milfordma.com), Jenna Smith (jesmith@milfordma.com) or Kailyn Santacroce (ksantac-

roce@milfordma.com).

Celebrating the MHS wrestling team for winning the Division 2 State Championship for the second year in a row, and the 4th time in 5 years. They also had two individual state champs, Brayden Boccia and Ryan Flis. Interestingly, Brayden won his state championship 30 years after his father, Coach PJ Boccia, won a state championship!

The MHS Guidance Department will host a College Application Overview presentation on Tuesday, March 17, from 7 - 8 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. This presentation will be focused on current Grade 11 (Class of 2027) students and families. Topics will include the college application process, college visits, and college entrance exams. Portuguese and Spanish translation services will be available - we hope you will join us!

The MHS Guidance Department will host a College Panel Night on Thursday, April 16, from 7 - 8 p.m. in the High School auditorium. This will be helpful for all MHS students of any grade and their families. Representatives from Assumption University, Fitchburg State University, College of the Holy Cross, Bridgewater State University, and Quinsigamond Community College will be in attendance to answer questions about admissions, the application process, financial aid, campus life, and more. Translation services will be available. We

hope to see you there.

We are very pleased to share that Milford High School's Academic Decathlon did exceptionally well at their Regional Competition! We are proud to celebrate these outstanding achievements. Our student scholars brought home an impressive collection of medals, showcasing the depth of talent, intelligence, critical thinking, and dedication within our school community.

- A special congratulations to Mazie Gomez Garcia, who earned a GOLD medal in the Honors Division for her speech — an extraordinary achievement that reflects both her brilliance and her poise under pressure!
- The team's top scorer, Nicholas Kenton, delivered a stand-out performance and earned a bronze medal in Economics, demonstrating exceptional critical thinking and mastery of complex subject matter.
- Christyan Souza Lima earned a bronze medal in Mathematics, proving that hard work and academic excellence truly pay off!
- Alexis Hall had a spectacular multi-event showing, earning a silver medal in Subjectives AND a bronze medal in both Speech and Interview — a remarkable triple performance that highlights incredible versatility and skill!

These students represent the very best of Milford High

School - curious, driven, and hungry to learn. We could not be prouder of the entire team and the dedication they bring to academic competition every single day. Good luck to the MHS Academic Decathlon team as they head to the State Competition in March — the MHS is behind you all the way!

Stacy Middle School

Bravo to the Stacy Middle Dance Team, who performed at multiple MHS basketball games. They showed great skill and teamwork while entertaining the crowd. Stacy Middle School had a fun week of Spirit Days prior to February break Themes included Sports Day, Rhyme without a Reason, Twin Day, and Color Wars.

Woodland Elementary School

Woodland's 3rd and 4th grade Strings students held a concert at MHS. Over 225 students participated in this event, and performed beautifully in front of a very packed house! Congratulations to those students and Ms. Rebecca Knapp for her instruction and direction of these budding musicians.

Massachusetts State Senator Becca Rausch was kind enough to visit Woodland Elementary today to speak with our 5th Graders. Senator Rausch talked about her role as a State Senator, and discussed the various structures of government at the local, state, and federal level.

Brookside Elementary School

Brookside celebrated its first round of students that completed 100% of their journey on ST Math. Twenty-seven students in grades K-2 received certificates and a special visit from Jiji the Penguin.

Brookside had its Make & Take Art Event at the end of February break. Families came and crafted their hearts out. Thank you to our PTO organizers that helped put together this fun morning.

Memorial Elementary School

Memorial School launched the Books and Beyond Reading Program. This program began with a goal to climb "Mount Read More" for the next 8 weeks. This is an 8-week read-a-thon that the entire school can

participate in. Please help and encourage your child to read as much as they can over these next few weeks.

Shining Star Early Childhood Center

Shining Star had a special visit from Mr. Gerry, who brought his musical talents—and plenty of smiles—to the preschool.

From toe-tapping tunes to big sing-alongs, Mr. Gerry knows exactly how to strike the right chord with our Stars. The students always look forward to his visits, and this one was music to everyone's ears.

At Shining Star, Character Counts! SSECC would like to recognize Maitas, Josh, and Ravi for displaying Kindness; and Jordan, Srinika, and Evelyn for being Responsible. Way to go.

Shining Star Staff Spotlight:

- Ms. Renee Waltsak. She shares her knowledge and experiences as an educator with others. She has such a kind heart and is the first to step in when she notices anyone having a hard time. Ms. Waltsak goes above and beyond in everything she does!
- Ms. Brenda Pereira. She is a hard-working and compassionate person. Her positive attitude is contagious, and it is no surprise that the students she works with adore her. Ms. Pereira exemplifies what it means to be an educator, and we are lucky to have her at Shining Star!
- Ms. Brianna Capone. She is so welcoming and friendly.
- Ms. Marjorie Weiner. She is supportive, welcoming, and compassionate.

Kudos to Shining Star Director, Dr. Corrie Masterson. In addition to her great work leading and developing SSECC, Dr. Masterson is a visiting professor at Framingham State University. She is also Program Coordinator and Academic Advisor for students earning their Masters of Education in Special Education. She was recently awarded the FSU Graduate School Advisor of the Year Award. We want to give a shout out to Corrie for her great work in the Milford Public Schools, but also for her contributions in helping develop the next generation of educators!

Submitted by Milford Public Schools

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Milford Public Schools 'Pictures of the Week'



Tooth be told, last month the Tri-Valley Regional High School dental students paid their annual visit to Shining Star, continuing a five-year tradition. In honor of Oral Health Awareness Month, they helped our preschoolers learn all about healthy teeth, smart brushing habits, and how to keep cavities away. The students had a blast learning how to keep their smiles bright and strong!



The students at Memorial School learned about the Olympics through some fun activities. They were greeted in the hallway with a "tunnel of flags" from around the world; and learned about friendship, teamwork, and trying your best through a short video about the Olympics and coloring sheets with positive messages. Finally, all students participated in a torch relay at each grade level, each earning a gold medal sticker.



All photos source Milford Public Schools



Patriots Super Bowl Spirit was on full display in our schools in February. Lots of students and staff were excited to show off their team spirit ahead of the big game.



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Recent Home Sales

Date	Milford	Amount
02/26/2026	14 Shadowbrook Ln. #30	\$246,000
02/26/2026	19 Village Cir.	\$580,000
02/25/2026	57 Pine St.	\$528,000
02/25/2026	8 Black Bear Cir.	\$649,900
02/20/2026	104 Purchase St.	\$719,000
02/20/2026	64 Lawrence St.	\$470,000
02/19/2026	3 Brown Bear Ln.	\$613,050
02/17/2026	21 Princess Pine Ln.	\$510,000
02/09/2026	27 Grant St.	\$454,000
02/05/2026	19 Shadowbrook Ln. #23	\$262,500
02/03/2026	9 Hillside Ave.	\$760,000
02/03/2026	1 Florence St.	\$195,000
02/03/2026	20-22 Chapin St.	\$799,900
01/30/2026	33 Brown Bear Ln.	\$686,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Milford Free Press



The 4-bed, 1-bath, 1,522-square-foot house at 57 Pine Street in Milford recently sold for \$528,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Parks Department provides 2025 review, 2026 goals

Recent improvements include installation of ADA-compliant sensory play equipment



New ADA-compliant sensory play equipment was recently installed at Town Park. The \$20,000 cost was split between the Parks Department and the town's Commission on Disability. Photo credit Theresa Knapp

By Nick Schofield

At a Feb. 26 meeting of the Milford Select Board, Parks and Recreation Administrator James Asam shared highlights of progress his department made in 2025, as well as early thoughts on goals for 2026.

Asam shared usage data for both the town pools and the Lake Louisa Disc Golf Course. Attendance numbers for the pools was over 10,000 for the season, over half of which were children.

"We expect those numbers to keep going up," said Asam. "We're averaging a good 700 to 900 people a week, depending on the weather."

Noting that the disc golf app the Parks Department uses only accounts for 30-40% of users, he shared that 5,500 rounds were played at the disc golf course in 2025. Asam hinted he was working on early plans to expand the course by an addi-

tional nine holes.

Another highlight for the Parks Department was the opening of the recreational side of Town Park in June. "So far, everything's been great up there," Asam reported. He told the board that cameras have been installed to reduce vandalism issues, and more for monitoring the bathrooms to be installed at a later date.

Asam also highlighted a collaboration between his department and the Commission on Disability to include inclusive play structures at Town Park. The Commission and his department split the \$20,000 cost to put ADA-compliant sensory play equipment, including harmony flowers, harmony bells, flower petal drums, rainbow chimes, and rainbow bongos.

"I think they're going to get a lot of use," Asam said, explaining the play features were recently installed.

Select Board member Michael

Walsh praised Asam for his cooperation with the Commission on Disability, noting town officials had heard concerns over a wheelchair-accessible swing and initiated the process to meet that request. "No' is not in your vocabulary," said Walsh.

Mazzuchelli concurred and added, "The more you can do to make it more welcoming to everybody is a big plus for the town."

Looking ahead, Asam said the Parks Department will continue collaborating with cricket teams using the Fino Field Annex in the coming year. It also will host the No Fame Games once again and has plans for improvements to Fino Field.

Asam also teased the development of a civic recreation website, which he anticipated will be up in May. It will have reservation information for Parks Department properties and calendars for residents to access.

Milford residents named to Worcester State University Dean's List for Fall 2025

The following Milford residents have been named to Worcester State University's Dean's List for Fall 2025:

Ethan Brewis, Lorraine T DeSouza, Lauren E Flanagan,

Kevin Flores, Sadrac Gaspard, Edward W Hough, Aery Kang, Glenda L Nunez Santos, Alicia A Pacheco, Kyle A Perry, and Kristel Ann A Regala.

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 six credits.

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Select Board approves increases in town health insurance rates

Town official calls 9.9% increase 'outrageous' but better than other towns

By Nick Schofield

On Feb. 26, the Milford Select Board voted in favor of new health insurance rates, approving a 9.9% increase in plan costs for town employees and retirees, as recommended by the town's Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC).

Kristin Melpignano, the town's human resources director, appeared before the board to detail the negotiation process with Blue Cross Blue Shield and the IAC's recommendations. She said the committee initially was presented with either a 14.4% or 10.4% increase in insurance rates, depending on the inclusion of GLP-1 medications.

"Most municipals ... are dropping [GLP-1s] because they're just driving up the prices too much," said Melpignano. As a result, the IAC opted to keep the current plans it has in place, minus the weight loss medications.

Although she characterized

the 9.9% increase as "outrageous," Melpignano told the board the final negotiated rate was better than other communities the IAC had reviewed, some of which saw increases between 15% and 20%.

She noted the recommended dental plan had a smaller price increase of 3%, which mostly covers administrative costs.

Melpignano said a lot of town health insurance participants are accessing Blue Cross' Access Blue New England Saver plan, which is a lower cost plan with a higher deductible.

"I think folks that fit into that category are taking advantage of that much lower cost," she said, adding the deductible for that plan only increased \$50 from the previous year.

She also reported the majority of the town's ancillary benefits and optional insurances will shift from Colonial to The Hartford.

The insurance company is dropping some of its prices and are offering no medical questions this enrollment period, with guaranteed issue.

"That's about as good as it gets, on the bright side," Melpignano concluded.

Select Board members commended Melpignano and the IAC on their work to obtain a favorable rate for the town.

"The fact you negotiated a more favorable rate here, I think, is really commendable," said Chair Thomas O'Loughlin.

Member Paul Mazzuchelli also extended his thanks to Melpignano, noting that health insurance costs are a national concern and not just a Milford issue.

Prior to their vote of approval, Melpignano added that the town's employee assistance program would increase from \$2 to \$2.10 per contract.

GLOUCESTER

continued from page 1

SSG Short was posthumously promoted to the rank of staff sergeant.

"He was a veteran who was residing in Milford shortly before his death," said Select Board Chair Thomas O'Loughlin.

The Gloucester-based fishing vessel Lily Jean was lost at sea in January.

On the morning of Jan. 30, the U.S. Coast Guard responded to an emergency beacon activation from the 72-foot boat, which was approximately 25 miles off the coast of Cape Ann. The ship had seven crew members aboard, including SSG Short, according to a Coast Guard press release (news.uscg.mil).

On Jan. 31, the Coast Guard suspended its search for the Lily Jean after finding a debris field near the beacon's activation point, the body of one of the crew members, and the vessel's life raft. No additional crew were recovered.

A Feb. 18 report from WCVB-5 said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-

ministration (NOAA) had made further attempts to locate the remains of the boat. In addition, federal investigators were looking into the incident, citing freezing spray and high seas as factors that may have contributed to the ship's sinking.

In a letter to the Select Board, Milford Director of Veterans Services, John Pilla, said that 31-year-old SSG Short had lived in town since July 2025.

A Marshfield native who attended the University of Maine, Short joined the Maine Army National Guard in December 2012, going on to specialize in mountaineering training. He deployed to the Horn of Africa in 2021, and spent time in Djibouti and Somalia. In a Facebook post, the Maine National Guard (@MENationalGuard) characterized SSG Short as a "dedicated Infantryman with Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Company (Mountain)."

According to a Portland Press Herald (https://press.herald.com) report, SSG Short was a fourth-generation fisherman. A GoFundMe (https://bit.ly/GoFundMe_FreemanShort) has been set up to support the family.



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SPORTS

Hough looks to make MHS Wrestling history

MHS sophomore already among state's top grapplers

By Chris Villani

Amelia Hough was not afraid to set ambitious goals for herself at the start of her sophomore season wrestling for Milford High. She wanted to win the prestigious Lowell Invitational Tournament and capture state divisional and all-state titles.

Hough won at Lowell — the first MHS girl to do so — and nearly took home both state titles with a pair of runner up finishes.

"I fell a little bit short," Hough said, noting the competitor who beat her moved into the 107 lb division just before states. "But, being a finalist in both tournaments at that level is just as good as the goal I set for myself before the season."

Competing primarily against boys during the dual meet campaign, Hough posted

a 29-12 record overall and earned a second straight trip to the New England meet, where she finished 5th as a freshman. Hough was also a finalist in the co-ed division at the sectional meet.

With two years still to go in her high school career, she still has her sights set on becoming the first female state wrestling champ in a program that has won four team state championships over the past five years.

"My goal is to be a state champion and an all-state champion, I am not giving up on that goal regardless of what happened the past two weekends," Hough said. "My goal is always to win the biggest tournaments."

Hough has been wrestling since she was seven years old and got into the sport because it

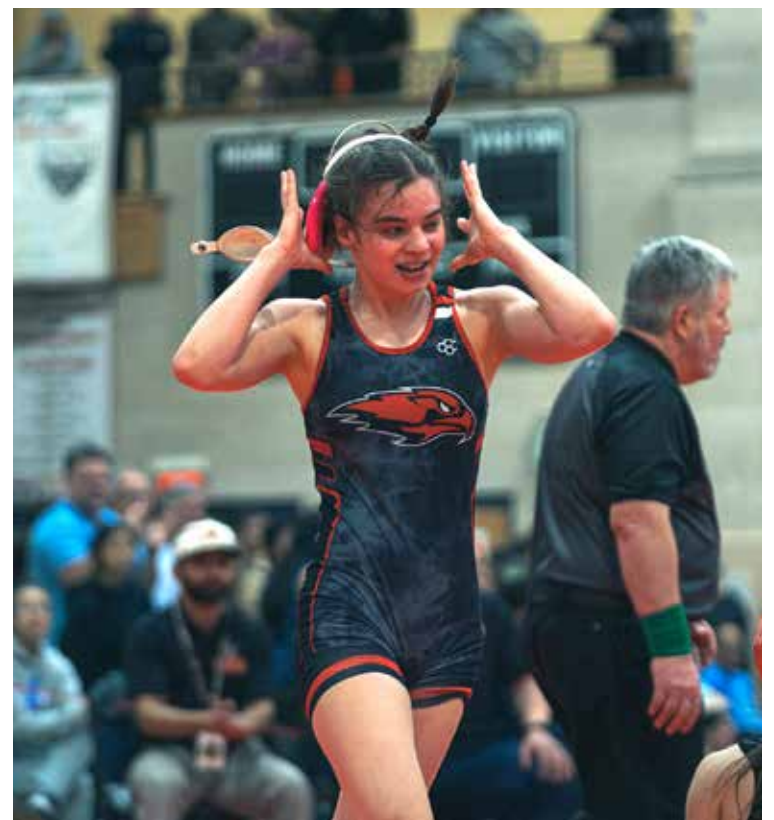


Milford sophomore Amelia Hough hopes to someday become the program's first female state wrestling champ. Photo by Jose Pinto

was something her older brother and his friends participated in. She took to it immediately, and said she enjoys both the challenge and how the sport forces an athlete to control their emotions. Hough also said she started to believe in herself even more this winter.

"I feel like I improved a lot since last year," she said. "One big thing that helped me improve in my wrestling was my confidence. I would be really nervous before I would wrestle and it affected how I did on the mat. I learned how to trust my training, and that allowed me to compete in the bigger tournaments."

Hough said she has grown used to being one of the few girls in a male-dominated sport, but she has noticed that there are more girls wrestling at the high school level and in youth divisions compared to when she started just a few years ago. She is hoping that her winning a state title someday could inspire other girls to take up the sport.



Amelia Hough. Photo by Grayson Fries

"I think it would be one of my biggest accomplishments yet," Hough said. "I want to

keep making history and seeing a path for other girls who are in youth wrestling."

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SPORTS

Milford Girls Hoops raises the bar

Scarlet Hawks earn playoff victory after strong regular season

By Chris Villani

Throughout the first part of the season, Milford High School head girls' basketball coach Austin Costa was not entirely sure just how good his team was. The Scarlet Hawks scored several victories, but had not yet run into the iron of their schedule.

When that time came, MHS showed it was up for the challenge with competitive games against some of the Hockomock League's top teams and a close loss in the finals of the Hopkinton Holiday Tournament.

"After all of those games we thought, 'Alright, we are here, we can compete with these teams,'" Costa said.

Milford qualified for the state tournament and hosted a first-round game against Somerville. In front of a charged home court crowd, the Hawks advanced with a 51-42 win.

"The atmosphere was incredible," Costa said. "It was everything we wanted to see and hoped the girls would have. The girls played a really good game and it was exactly what we preach for Milford basketball."

The Scarlet Hawks were paced — both in that game and all season long — by their seniors. Ava Baglione averaged

more than 18 points per game, the fourth highest total in the league.

"She was our steady scorer all season," Costa said. "She was a fantastic leader and she gave us everything we needed on that side of the ball."

Katelyn Kearnan proved to be a well-rounded player for MHS, averaging nearly 12 points per game to go with six rebounds, three steals, and two blocks. She was also a matchup nightmare for the opposition.

"If they put a taller player on her, she is too fast," Costa noted. "And she is too tall for the smaller guards to keep up."

Although she was sidelined for most of the year with an injury, Costa added that the leadership of senior Chloe Murdock was invaluable.

Milford's season came to an end with a loss at Norwood in the second round, but Costa told the team to focus on what they had accomplished.

"They set the foundation, they set the bar, not only for the underclassmen, but also the youth teams who want to be a part of this someday and achieve the same thing," he said. "I think this is a new start for Milford girls basketball."



The Milford High girls basketball team qualified for the postseason this winter and earned a first-round victory. Photo by Pete Boucher

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