

localtownpages Hopedale

Vol. 12 No. 12

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

April 1, 2026

Hopedale enjoyed maple syrup workshop

By THERESA KNAPP

On a crisp sunny day in late February, 20 people gathered at the Bancroft Memorial Library to learn the art and tradition of maple sugaring at a hands-on, family-friendly event hosted by resident and local historian Kelly Merchant.

Attendees of all ages learned the basics of tapping maple trees, including how to identify suitable trees, when and how tapping is done, and how sap is collected and transformed into delicious maple syrup – and Merchant shared samples from a previous batch.



Hopedale residents Nathan DeMattia, 11, Logan Viens, 11, Ciaran DeMattia, 9, and Jayson Stone, 11, enjoyed the workshop and enjoyed a cup of 100% real maple syrup. Photo by Theresa Knapp

SYRUP

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Crebase named Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year

By THERESA KNAPP

Hopedale Public Schools' Superintendent Karen Crebase has been named Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year, earning statewide recognition for her leadership, innovation, and dedication to student success.

As a veteran educator with more than 30 years of experience, Crebase has led the Hopedale district for the past decade. During her tenure, she has prioritized college and career readiness, expanded STEM opportunities, and strengthened partnerships to enhance learning for all students.

The honor was awarded through the AASA [American Association of School Admin-

istrators] National Superintendent of the Year Program, which recognizes exceptional public school leaders across the country. The program highlights excellence in leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, and community engagement.

Crebase was formally recognized in February at the AASA National Conference, where she joined fellow honorees representing all 50 states.

Crebase told *Hopedale Town News*, "I am honored to be recognized with this award considering the incredibly talented leaders

CREBASE

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SYRUP

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“It’s just a backyard hobby that I like to do but it’s fun and it’s delicious,” said Merchant, a longtime Hopedale resident.

Myla DeSilva, 4 of Mendon, was Merchant’s unofficial assistant sugar maker. Myla knew all about the maple syrup process after learning about it through Forest Friends at Bright Beginnings. She said the syrup tasted “good” and her favorite part about the event was “handing her stuff.”

Nathan DeMattia, 11 of Hopedale, attended the event with his friends and family. “It’s amazing, I’m going to go right home and try to make it myself,” he said while tasting a bit of syrup Merchant shared from a previous batch.

Jayson Stone, 11 of Hopedale, agreed. “It’s really good; it’s a lot more natural than the commercial syrup.”

And, because there was still plenty of snow on the ground, some attendees added snow to their syrup to make a maple slushie. A fun and tasty time was had by all.



Kelly Merchant of Hopedale educated attendees on the New England tradition of maple syrup tree tapping. Here, she shows a cup of syrup straight from the tree, informing the group the sap is clear when it flows out of the tree. Photo by Theresa Knapp



Myla DeSilva, 4, of Mendon attended the maple syrup event. Myla had learned about the maple syrup process earlier in the month through Forest Friends at Bright Beginnings. Photo by Theresa Knapp

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UMass Memorial – Milford Regional Holding 2nd Annual Senior Wellness and Resources Fair

MILFORD, MASS.—UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center’s Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is holding its second annual Senior Wellness and Resources Fair on Wednesday, May 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Fair will provide seniors and caregivers the opportunity to connect with senior agencies, health services and other community support organizations in one accessible venue. The event will be held in the hospital’s Atrium Café and is free of charge.

For questions, contact UMass Memorial – Milford Regional Community Benefits Manager and PFAC Secretary Michelle Sanford at 508-422-2827 or michelle.sanford@umassmemorial.org.

About UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center

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CREBASE

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across our state. And, although this award was presented to me, I feel that I received it due to the contributions of everyone within our school community. Every day, I get to interact with families and community members who support new and innovative initiatives, hardworking staff members who always put the needs of our students first, and students who come to school each day wanting to learn and contribute to the continued improvement and success of our district. This award is the culmination of a decade of work and I was thrilled to rep-



Hopedale Superintendent of Schools Karen Crebase has been named Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year. Source: Hopedale Public Schools

resent Hopedale when receiving my award at the conference.” Over the past 10 years, Crebase has made a lasting impact on Hopedale schools and the broader community through a leadership style rooted in visibility, accessibility, and strong relationships. She is known as a frequent presence in classrooms and school events, where she regularly engages with students and staff. School Committee Chair Jennifer McKeon praised Crebase’s leadership, noting her commitment to ensuring high-quality education for every student and her steady guidance through both new initiatives and challenging times. “Superintendent Crebase

has worked tirelessly to ensure that every child in our district receives the highest quality of education possible,” McKeon said. “Her steady leadership has set a standard for excellence that will continue to guide us in the years ahead.” Beyond the district, Crebase has also played a key role in educational leadership statewide through her work with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. She has served as an officer for the past three years and currently holds the position of president, collaborating with colleagues across Massachusetts to advocate for policies that support students, educators, and public schools.

Important election information for Hopedale

Hopedale’s annual town election will take place on May 12. Seats available include Board of Health (3 years), Housing Authority (5 years), Library Trustee (3 years), and Park Commission (3 years). Nomination papers were due in March. The last day to withdraw as a candidate – or to object to nomination papers - is Thursday, April 9, at 5 p.m.

Other important dates include:

- Saturday, May 2, at 5 p.m.:** Last day to register to vote in the Annual Town Election
- Tuesday, May 5, at 5 p.m.:** Last day to request mail-in ballot (absentee or early)
- Tuesday, May 5:** Last day to post the warrant for the Annual Town Election
- Saturday, May 9, at 5 p.m.:** Last day to register to vote at the Annual Town Meeting
- Tuesday, May 12:** Last day to post the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting

Source: www.hopedale-ma.gov

Cultural Council seeks new members, summer activities moved

The Hopedale Cultural Council is the local agency of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. In the fall, they award grants for cultural activities in our area. We also organize the summer band concerts and the annual Day in the Park. This year, because of the park reno-

vation, the concerts in June and July, and the Day in the Park on Sept. 19 will be held on the grounds of the Hopedale Community House. The Cultural Council is very grateful to the Community House for offering to host these Hopedale traditions for 2026;

however, these projects cannot continue unless there are members of the community who are willing to volunteer their time. If you are interested in serving on the Cultural Council, please contact www.hopedalecultural-council@yahoo.com or visit @HopedaleCultural on Facebook.

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Annual Town Meeting set for May 19

Hopedale’s Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 19. More information will be posted at www.hopedale-ma.gov as it becomes available.

Hopedale in 1926, population 2,988, fire department calls

Series looks back at Hopedale 100 years ago

By Dan Malloy
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

In 1926, one way for people in Hopedale to keep up with what was going on in town was to subscribe to the weekly Milford Gazette. Admission to Milford Hospital, plays at the Town Hall, a vacation, and much else not reported now would be there each week. Here are some items from the first few months of 1926.

At the Milford Hospital Monday Dr. J.F. Keane operated on the foot of Mrs. Gladys Faunton.

After having kept the property at 160 Hopedale St., near the railroad viaduct, under surveillance for some time, Deputy Sheriff S. E. Kellogg (28 Dutcher St.) conducted a raid Monday and seized nine barrels of wine, some 60 bottles of home brew beer, and a half pint of what appeared to be whiskey. Samples have been sent to the state chemist for analysis and arrests will follow his report.

An illustrated address on missionary work among the Indians was given Sunday evening at the Union Church.

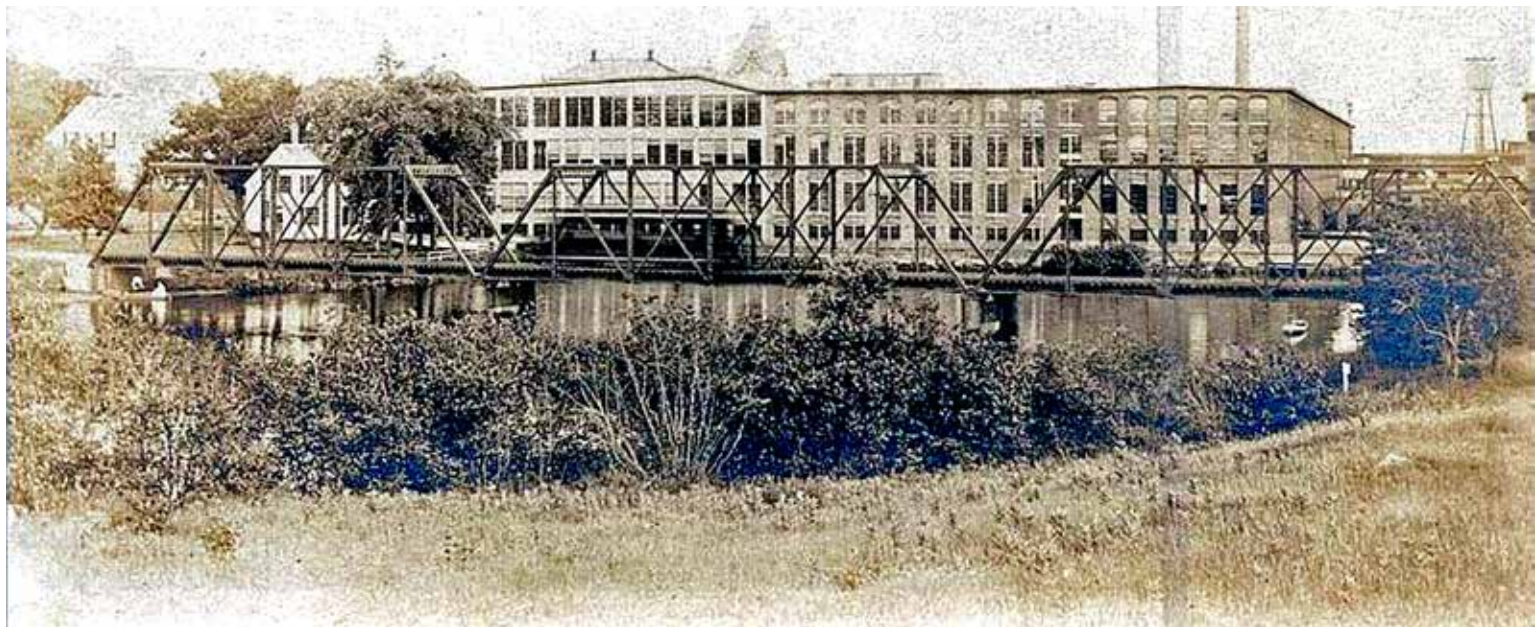
About 35 couples attended the apron and necktie party of the Winter Dancing Club Saturday.

James McAuley (125 Mendon St.) won the Henry Ford cup in the North Atlantic states radio fiddling contest, recently conducted from Station W.B.Z., Boston.

George Davenport, (37 Inman St.) who was taken to the Milford hospital with a fractured right ankle, sustained Saturday by slipping between the tim-



Photos of the trolley bridge that results in George Davenport's death. Photo source: Dan Malloy, www.hope1842.com



bers while crossing the street-car trestle over Hopedale Pond, died Wednesday of pulmonary embolism. He was 44 years old, a carpenter by trade and leaves a wife.

The Draper eleven was defeated by the Whittall team Wednesday at Worcester, 11

to 2. After a rough game with several fist fights between the players and spectators which called for action by the police. After three Hopedale players had been sent from the field the game became a runaway match.

F.J. Dutcher was moderator of the special town meeting

Monday and as a member of the of the school committee he outlined the need of a new high school building, the estimated cost of which would be over \$150,000. It was announced that Princess Margaret Draper Boncompagni has offered the Gen. W.F. Draper homestead on

Adin Street as a site for the new school, provided that the plans for the new building are acceptable to her. B.H.B. Draper spoke in favor of accepting the offer, which was done.

Dan Malloy is the founder of www.hope1842.com, a website devoted to the history of Hopedale.

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Hodgdon named to Simmons University Dean's List

Hopedale's Madeline Hodgdon has been named to Simmons University's dean's list for the fall 2025 semester.

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.

Memorial’s ‘Wee Deliver’ allows students to appreciate mail delivery

At Memorial Elementary School, an exciting new program called “Wee Deliver” is bringing learning to life while spreading kindness throughout the school community. Modeled after a real postal service, the Wee Deliver program allows students to take on important roles as they sort, organize, and deliver mail to classrooms across the building. Each classroom has been assigned its own unique address, allowing students, staff, and even families to write and send letters to anyone in the school.

The Wee Deliver program is designed to teach students about the lost art of letter writing. From the excitement of sending and receiving mail to learning the proper way to address a letter and affix a stamp, students are gaining hands-on experience with the fundamentals of written communication. The program encourages attention to detail, patience, and thoughtfulness, helping students understand the effort and care that goes into crafting a personal note. By bringing these skills to life in a fun, interactive way, Wee Deliver ensures that the joy and value of letter writing remains a meaningful part of students’ educational experience.

Through the program, student “postal workers” are responsible for collecting mail, sorting it at the school’s postal station, and delivering it to the appropriate classroom addresses. These hands-on jobs help students develop responsibility, teamwork, and organizational skills while also building confidence as they contribute to the daily operations of the school. The program also creates meaningful opportunities



for students to practice real-world skills such as reading addresses, writing letters, and communicating with others.

Beyond the educational benefits, Wee Deliver is also helping strengthen the sense of connection within the school community. Students are excited to receive notes from friends, teachers, and family members, and the simple act of sending a letter has created new opportunities for encouragement, gratitude, and positive communication throughout the building.

The launch of Wee Deliver



has already generated great enthusiasm among students and staff at Memorial Elementary School. By combining authentic learning experiences with a focus on kindness and connection, the program is another example of the creative ways Hopedale schools continue to engage students while building a strong and supportive school community.

Submitted by Hopedale Public Schools

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Hopedale production of *Footloose*

The Hopedale Junior-Senior High School stage came alive with music, energy, and unforgettable performances as students presented the musical *Footloose* on Friday and Saturday, March 13–14, to a full house of family members, friends, and community supporters.

The story follows a teenager who moves to a small town where dancing is banned, and follows the journey of young people working to bring music, freedom of expression, and understanding back to their community. The production featured fun choreography, powerful vocals, and a talented student cast who captured the excitement of this classic musical.

The performances were a testament to the incredible dedication and talent of our students. From the actors on stage to the hardworking stage crew behind the scenes, countless hours of rehearsal and preparation resulted in a production that the Hopedale community will not soon forget. Their teamwork,



creativity, and commitment shined throughout the week-end.

A special thank you goes to Christopher Chatham, who



served as producer, music director, and choreographer, and to Lindsay Mayotte, the director, for their leadership and efforts in guiding students through the process of putting on this production. We are also grateful to the Hopedale Friends of Music, our supportive families, and the entire Hopedale community for championing the arts and supporting our students. Their encouragement and generosity continue to make opportunities like this possible for our young performers.

Submitted by Hopedale Public Schools

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The Snow Has Melted—It’s Time for Financial Spring Cleaning



Glenn Brown, CFP

After a winter spent clearing snow and managing the elements, spring brings a welcomed shift. It’s time to open things up and clear out the old. Just as melting snow reveals what’s been hidden all winter, spring is also a chance to uncover areas of your finances that need attention.

Let’s discuss five areas for review to help ensure things remain organized, efficient, and aligned with your planning.

1. Review Beneficiaries

Work benefits, retirement accounts, and life insurance policies pass according to the beneficiary listed, not your will or trust. Studies show ~30% of Americans have outdated beneficiary designations, which can lead to unintended heirs or tax

consequences. Life events such as marriage, divorce, births, or deaths can change your intended beneficiaries. Even without major changes, it is wise to confirm that your accounts reflect your intentions.

2. Revisit Auto, Homeowners, and Umbrella Coverage

Homeowners coverage should reflect current replacement costs, auto liability limits should align with your assets, and umbrella insurance provides an extra layer of liability protection.

Rising property values and auto replacement costs naturally raise premiums, but some of the largest increases come after state-approved rate adjustments. While the state may approve a 3–7% increase, insurers can adjust individual policies within their pricing matrix. Examples of policyholders seeing 30–75% increases occur, even if nothing about their home, auto, coverage, or claims history has changed. Because of auto-renewal, most people simply accept and pay. Without shopping your options, you could end up paying far more than necessary.

3. Check Your Estate Plan

Estate planning is not a one-time task. Trusts, wills, powers of attorney, and healthcare proxies should be reviewed to ensure they reflect your current wishes and family circumstances.

While the federal estate tax exemption is roughly 15 million per individual, Massachusetts has a much lower exemption of 2 million, ranking it 49th in the United States. This makes state-level planning especially important for residents.

Review also allows you to evaluate strategies such as lifetime gifting, trust funding, or charitable giving that may reduce state estate tax exposure. It is also essential to ensure that successor trustees, health care proxies, and other responsible parties have electronic copies of your documents, and that assets intended for a revocable trust are properly titled in the trust’s name. These steps help prevent delays, confusion, and unintended consequences.

4. Consolidate Old Retirement Accounts

Over 50% of Americans have multiple retirement plans still held at prior employers. Leaving accounts scattered can create unnecessary complexity, inconsistent investment strategies, and administrative inefficiencies.

Consolidating into a coordinated structure simplifies management, improves oversight, and makes it easier to rebalance your allocations to align with your evolving goals and risk tolerance. Fewer accounts also allow for better investment

alignment, lower fees, smoother required minimum distribution planning, and a clearer view of your overall progress toward retirement.

5. Declutter Accounts and Organization Systems

Just like a closet or garage, your financial life accumulates items you no longer use. Old bank accounts, unused credit cards, dormant investment accounts, and forgotten subscriptions create unnecessary clutter. Closing or consolidating accounts simplifies your administrative burden. Many find it helpful to consolidate to one primary bank account and one primary credit card, making it easier to reconcile expenses, track spending, and perform a cash flow analysis for the year ahead.

Minor Changes with Meaningful Impact

Financial spring cleaning does not require major changes. It is about maintaining clarity,

ensuring alignment, and reducing unnecessary complexity. Taking time to review these baseline areas strengthens your plan, improves organization, and provides confidence that your finances reflect your current priorities and goals.

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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Camera Club to hold April meetings

The Stony Brook Camera Club meets in person and/or virtually on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September to June.

In person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin. Our meetings feature speakers, competitions, and discussions of general interest. We also sponsor a number of photography activities and workshops throughout the year.

SBCC includes and welcomes photographers of all abilities. April programs will be held on Zoom and include:

- April 7: Member competition
- April 14: "Black and White Photography" with Silvanna Della Camera
- April 21: "The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods" with Mark Bowie
- April 28: New Member Showcase

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For more information on any programs or to register, please call 508-634-2209 for assistance or check the Event Calendar at www.bancroftmemoriallibrary.org.

Library News

The Library will be closed on Monday, April 20 for the Patriots' Day holiday.

Southwick's Zoo Drawing for 2 FREE passes! – April 1 through April 10

Enter for your chance to win two passes to Southwick's Zoo! To enter, fill out a form at the Library from April 1st through April 10. The Friends of the Library will pull 25 winners on Saturday, April 11 and notify winners by phone. NOTE: You must be a Hopedale resident to

enter and one entry per family/ address is allowed.

Helen Symonds Book Group – Wednesday, April 1 at 1 p.m.

The group will be discussing Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell.

Get help with Jenna – Tuesday, April 21 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Need help with applications or support services? Jenna, a Community Health Worker with the Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health, can assist with MassHealth, Fuel Assistance, Medicare, past-due bills, and more. She works with the Hopedale Board of Health and has extensive healthcare experience. Schedule a free 30-minute appointment via the Library's online Event Calendar or call 508-634-2209 for assistance.

Drop in Cribbage – Fridays 4/3, 4/10, 4/17 & 4/24 at 1:30 p.m.

Join us in the Program Room where we offer a relaxed, come-when-you-can atmosphere to enjoy friendly games with players of all levels.

BVPL Cribbage Tournament – Wednesday, April 22 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Represent Hopedale at the next Blackstone Valley Public Libraries Cribbage Tournament at Grafton Public Library! Registration is mandatory; please call the hosting Library to register.

Maker Monday – Monday, April 27 at 6 p.m.

This month the adult crafting workshop is Junk Journaling. A junk journal is a handmade book made from reused materials such as envelopes, magazine clippings, fabric, and other items. Once it's put together, you fill it with keepsakes, writing, drawings - whatever inspires you! Registration is required.

News from the Friends of the Hopedale Library:

The Blackstone Valley Labor Strikes – Wednesday, April 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Join us as Park Ranger Allison Horrocks of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park presents a talk on labor activism in the Blackstone Valley, exploring the region's pivotal

role in the history of American workers' movements. From early mill protests to the 1913 Hopedale labor strike at the Draper Company, Horrocks will examine how workers across the Valley organized to challenge wages, working conditions, and corporate power during the rise of industrialization. Registration is required.

Craft Swap & Puzzle Sale – Saturday, April 18th from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

We are holding a FREE Craft Swap in the Program Room. Gently used puzzles will also be available for sale. No need to bring something to take something — everyone is welcome! We're accepting arts and crafts supplies, kits, equipment and tools. Items can be new, used, or opened, as long as they're clean and in usable condition. Can't make it that day? No problem! You can drop off your donations at the Library any time during regular hours. Due to space constraints we cannot accept totes or other storage containers.

Free Seed Library!

Stop by and get free seeds from our Seed Library. There is no limit! If you don't need a full packet, there are smaller envelopes available to take what you need. Sponsored by The Friends of the Hopedale Library.

About the Friends of the Library

Founded in 1983, the Friends of the Hopedale Library is a volunteer non-profit that supports the Library by funding equipment, materials, and programs beyond the regular budget. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month, September - June, at 6:30 p.m. New members and ideas are always welcome!

News from the Marjorie E. Hattersley Children's Room:

April Rainbow Crafts – Saturday, April 4 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Drop in the Library to create some rainbow themed crafts: a Rainbow Sun catcher, a butterfly magnet and a rainbow loom bracelet.

F.A.I.R. - Family Adventures in Reading – Monday, April 13 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

F.A.I.R. is an evening for families to spend time together

and explore a book. Six families will have the opportunity to meet and share a story, a snack and a craft. When the meeting is over the family will keep their copy of the book read. Maximum of 6 families per meeting; registration is required.

April Vacation Week is April 20 – 24: All ages are welcome to join Ms. Laura and celebrate MUSIC!

Tuesday, April 21 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.: Join us for a Dance Party at the Library! Laser lights, glow bracelets, bubbles, temporary tattoos and everyone gets an instrument to keep!

Wednesday, April 22 1 - 3 p.m.: Vacation Family Movie Matinee: The Guys are at it again...but what happens when the Girls get involved? Who will end up being the Good Guys in the end? Drop in and be cozy - you can wear pajamas, bring a blanket, a pillow, a stuffy, a snack and a friend!

Thursday, April 23 12 - 1 p.m.: It's a Teddy Bear Picnic! Bring a blanket, a lunch and your favorite cuddle as we gather in the Program Room to sing along with Cindy Tuminelli, make Teddy Bear bead bracelets and get silly with some face painting! Registration is required and limited to 40 attendees total.

Tummy Time Play – Tuesdays 4/7, 4/14 & 4/28 at 10 a.m., ages 0-18 months

Join us for some infant fun in a safe environment! There are fun, developmentally appropriate toys that encourage gross motor development. Drop in!

Toddler Tunes – Thursdays 4/2, 4/9, 4/16 & 4/30 at 10 a.m., ages 18 mos - 3 years

This program is perfect for energetic toddlers! Along with a story, we will work on gross motor skills and play with balls, a parachute, instruments, bean bags, scarves and more. Drop in!

Builder Saturday – Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

If you love Legos, we've got thousands to play with! Use our Legos to create a masterpiece that we can put on display for all to see. Drop in and all ages welcome.

Sunny the Reading Dog and Mrs.

LIBRARY

continued on page 9

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LIBRARY

continued from page 8

Poisson – Monday, April 27 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Visit with Sunny the Reading dog and Mrs. Poisson from BBC, the human he has claimed! Drop in for a story and read a story to Sunny too. All ages are welcome!

Volunteer Saturdays for High School Students – Saturday, April 25 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Each month there will be an opportunity for high school students to earn 2 hours of volunteer time from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Registration is required.

Genre Book Club – All ages

Join the Genre Book Club and create your own bookmark with a cable ring. Read any book you choose on your own schedule; after each finished book, stop by the Children’s Room to collect a genre badge. The club has no scheduled meetings, is open to all and can be joined at any time.

Reading Dragons: A Card Game Reading Club – All ages

Reading Dragons allows readers to earn collectible dragon cards through logged reading time. Every 30 minutes recorded on a Time Tracker earns one card, and completing two hours earns all four stages of a dragon. The card game can be played with friends as additional dragons are earned. Readers are invited to add book recommendations as “Book Scales” to the dragon display in the Program Room. The program runs on a rolling basis and can be joined at any time.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

Bancroft Memorial Library offers the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program for young families and early readers. At registration, you will be provided a starting kit with a library book bag, cable for achievement tags, program information, suggested book list and a log for books 1–100. Every 100 books read earns a tag for the cable, and reaching 1,000 books earns a lawn sign celebrating the achievement. This program runs on a rolling basis and can be joined anytime.

For updates throughout the month, Friend us on Facebook and sign up at www.wowbrary.org to discover the Library’s newest books, movies and music. Our webpage is www.bancroftmemoriallibrary.org

Pets of the Month: Brook and Bean

Brook and Bean are little barn babies. Both girls were very shy when they arrived. As the weeks passed, Brook started to come around. This little tricolor tabby tux now seeks attention and loves to be pet. She does not yet enjoy being picked up, but she just melts into you and craves love and affection.

Her sister Bean isn’t quite there yet; while Brook is cuddling up to you, Bean is trying to disappear into the corner. She will allow gentle petting but spooks easily. We are certain that with security and consistency Bean will discover all the benefits of attention that Brook has already discovered. The way to Bean’s heart might just be through play. Both girls love their toys and can’t wait to



have a room to run around in. Brook and Bean have waited four long months to find a loving home. All they really need now is a family and a safe space they can call their own. For information on meeting Brook and Bean, or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit <https://www.milfordhumane.org/>

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

PLEASE RECYCLE



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43 Main Street, Hopkinton
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BVT's FY27 budget approved by School Committee

On March 12, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee approved the proposed FY27 budget, advancing a plan that emphasizes fiscal discipline, cost-saving measures, and continued investment in high-quality career and technical education. As a fiscally autonomous regional school District, all expenses are rolled into a single annual per-pupil assessment to its member towns, giving the District one “bite at the apple” each year.

As you review the FY27 budget report and consider your investment in BVT, you will see the proactive planning and strategic use of resources reflected throughout the document. While the state estimates that vocational education should cost nearly twice as much as traditional education, BVT has consistently submitted budgets with per-pupil costs well below that estimate. Compared with its 25 sister vocational schools, BVT ranks in the bottom third for per-pupil expenditure, demonstrating financial efficiency without compromising educational quality. These metrics reflect a strong return on investment for its member communities.

In addition to benefits, salary and wage are typically the largest drivers of school budgets. This year, BVT achieved a modest 3.9% increase in employee health insurance benefits, well below the regional norm of 15–

Town	Enrollment	Operation Ratio	Minimum Contribution	Transportation Capital Equip Retiree Med	Additional Assessment	Debt	FY 2027 Assessment
Bellingham	77	6.16%	1,098,162	177,164	94,169	-	1,369,495
Blackstone	60	4.80%	647,166	138,049	73,378	-	858,593
Douglas	132	10.56%	1,859,022	303,709	161,433	-	2,324,164
Grafton	92	7.36%	1,363,298	211,676	112,514	-	1,687,488
Hopedale	65	5.20%	801,305	149,554	79,493	-	1,030,352
Mendon	74	5.92%	1,274,871	170,261	90,500	-	1,535,632
Milford	204	16.32%	1,655,694	469,370	249,486	-	2,374,550
Millbury	77	6.16%	1,084,378	177,164	94,169	-	1,355,711
Millville	22	1.76%	240,117	50,618	26,905	-	317,640
Northbridge	167	13.36%	1,976,202	384,239	204,237	-	2,564,678
Sutton	72	5.76%	1,240,415	165,660	88,054	-	1,494,129
Upton	94	7.52%	1,580,831	216,278	114,960	-	1,912,069
Uxbridge	114	9.12%	1,861,710	262,295	139,419	-	2,263,424
TOTAL	1,250	100.00%	16,683,171	2,876,037	1,528,717	-	21,087,925

20% increases, which ultimately becomes a major component of the budget. The School Committee and the Teachers’ Association worked amicably this year to settle the next three-year contract. The agreement includes increases well below the current regional norm of 11% and is estimated to save the District approximately \$2 million over its duration.

“I am grateful for, and happy to report, that we have fostered and maintained the working relationships and awareness that allow our system to continually make adjustments to run more efficiently,” said Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director. “Whether it is negotiating

benefits and contracts to contain costs or applying for grants and seeking donations to supplement revenues, everyone at BVT is rooted in protecting quality career technical education at mindfully efficient expense.”

In preparing next year’s budget, our goal is to keep BVT’s high-quality vocational education as affordable as possible while maintaining the programs and supports our students need to succeed. That work also relies on the support of informed and engaged municipal partners like you. We appreciate your shared commitment to fiscal responsibility and educational excellence.

The proposed FY27 budget will be presented at 13 annual

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee has approved a FY27 budget of \$21,087,925, and Hopedale’s total contribution for FY2027 is \$1,030,352.

- **Enrollment: 65 students**
- **Operation ratio: 5.20%**
- **Minimum contribution: \$801,305**
- **Transportation, capital equipment, retiree medical: \$149,554**
- **Additional assessment:* \$79,493**

**No explanation available at press time*

Image source:
www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/about/district/fy27budgetreport

town meetings this spring, where it will seek community support. The full budget report is available for review on the school’s

website at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/fy27budgetreport.

Submitted by Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District



“ WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! ”

◦ Have an Upcoming Event?

◦ Do you have a concern about things happening around town?

EMAIL US & LET US KNOW!

Editor@HopedaleTownNews.com

Craft swap and puzzle sale on April 18

Back by popular demand, the Friends of the Hopedale Library will host a Craft Swap and Puzzle Sale on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the Program Room at Bancroft Memorial Library.

All are invited to browse a wide assortment of arts and crafts supplies at the Craft Swap. Everything is free to take and available on a first-come, first-served basis, and no donation is required to participate. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced crafter, there will be something for everyone. In addition, a variety of gently used puzzles will be available for sale, with proceeds supporting library pro-

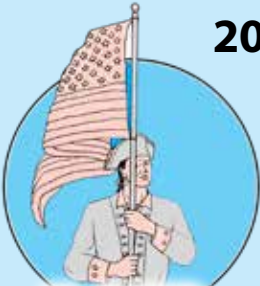
grams and services.

In preparation for the event, the Library is currently accepting donations of arts and crafts materials, including yarn, fabric, paper goods, beads, kits, tools, and other creative supplies. Items may be new, used, or previously opened, provided they are clean and in good, usable condition.

Donations may be dropped off during regular library hours. Due to space limitations, storage totes and large containers cannot be accepted.

For more information, please contact the Bancroft Memorial Library at 508-634-2209 or visit the Event Calendar at www.bancroftmemoriallibrary.org.

APRIL 2026 HOPEDALE SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 11am.....Meditation 12:30pmLiterature 12:30pmCribbage	2 10am..... Watercolor Class 1pm..... Tai Chi	3 10am.....Low Impact Exercise SENIOR CENTER CLOSES at 12pm NOON
6 9am.....FREE Panera 9am.....Bridge 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 12:30pm... Mah Jongg 12:30pmBINGO	7 12:30pmMah Jongg 12:30pmBridge 3:30pm..... Dance	8 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 11am.....Meditation 12:30pmLiterature 12:30pmCribbage	9 10am..... Watercolor Class 1pm..... Tai Chi	10 10am.....Low Impact Exercise SENIOR CENTER CLOSES at 12pm NOON
13 9am.....FREE Panera 9am.....Bridge 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 12:30pm... Mah Jongg 12:30pmBINGO	14 12:30pmMah Jongg 12:30pmBridge 3:30pm..... Dance	15 9:30amNurse Clinic 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 11am.....Meditation 12:30pmLiterature 12:30pmCribbage 1pm..... Birthday Celebration for Violet Ghetti	16 10am..... Watercolor Class 11am.....Cannabis Workshop (RESCHEDULED) 1pm..... Tai Chi	17 10am.....Low Impact Exercise SENIOR CENTER CLOSES at 12pm NOON
 CLOSED Patriots' Day Holiday	21 12:30pmMah Jongg 12:30pmBridge 3:30pm..... Dance	22 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 11am.....Meditation 12pmLunch at the Senior Center 12:30pmLiterature 12:30pmCribbage	23 10am..... Watercolor Class 1pm..... Tai Chi	24 10am.....Low Impact Exercise SENIOR CENTER CLOSES at 12pm NOON
27 9am.....FREE Panera 9am.....Bridge 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 12:30pm... Mah Jongg 12:30pmBINGO	28 12:30pmMah Jongg 12:30pmBridge 3:30pm..... Dance	29 10am.....Low Impact Exercise 11am.....Meditation 12:30pmLiterature 12:30pmCribbage	30 10am.....Watercolor Class 1pm..... Tai Chi 1-3pmLittle Red Shop Museum	

Hopedale DECA sending 17 to international competition in Atlanta

State Competition Accomplishments

From March 12 to March 14, 49 Hopedale DECA members participated in the 67th Annual Massachusetts DECA State Career Development Conference, held in the Boston Seaport District. Over 4,000 students attended this year's competition, with Hopedale students facing off against up to 50 competitors per category.

Hopedale DECA students competed in the Project Management event, where they applied project management skills to organize events such as a Financial Literacy Fair and a Career Fair for HJSJS students in grades 7-12, as well as a Growing Minds Activities Fair for elementary students. In the Operations Research category, students conducted thorough primary and secondary research on a business's use of corporate social responsibility and researching ways to develop a CSR strategy to achieve internal and external results.

Throughout the competition, Hopedale DECA members honed valuable networking and employability skills that will benefit them both in high school and in their future careers.

Accomplishments:

Top 12 finalists: Rose Deering: Hospitality and Tour-

ism Professional Selling, Colin Haynes: Personal Financial Literacy, Emilee Connolly: Professional Selling, Josie Fleming, Kate Friesema, Gabby Rinehart: Project Management Career Development.

Top 7 Award Recipients Heading to the International Career Development Conference this April in Atlanta, Georgia! Emma Friesema, Charlie Gingras, Nolan Murray: Project Management Financial Literacy, Daisy Everett, Avery Miller, Ryan Thompson: Project Management Career Development, Ariv Srivastava: Financial Consulting Professional Selling.

In addition, Hopedale DECA received Gold recertification for the Raider's Nest School Based Enterprise, Gold certification for the Raider's Print Shop School Based Enterprise, Diamond level for their Chapter of Excellence submission (2nd place in the state), and earned 10 Leadership Spots for the Thrive and Aspire Leadership Academies at the International Career Development Conference.

International Competition, here we come!

Moving on to the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) are 17 Hopedale students! DECA members in attendance will expand their leadership skills and business



knowledge while also networking with business professionals and peers from 50 different states, four U.S. territories, Canada, Mexico, Germany, Korea, and more. In addition to the Top 7 award recipients listed above, Maddy Buttonow, Kate Friesema, Gabby Rinehart, and Savannah Sene will be competing in the School Based Enterprise events.

The following students will

be participating in leadership academies: Rose Deering, Josie Fleming, Colin Haynes, Charlie Keyes, Trevor Lachiato, and Matthew Miller.

Thank you!

Hopedale DECA would like to thank all who made attending the state conference possible, including the officer team, DECA members and competitors, parents, guardians, and HJSJS staff. Thank you also to the 2026

Hopedale DECA State Sponsors who reduced competitor costs for the event. Thank you in advance to the Hopedale community for the continued support of Hopedale DECA member competitions and experiences. Please reach out to Talitha Oliveri, advisor, at toliveri@hopedaleschools.org with questions or to receive additional sponsorship information.

Submitted by Hopedale DECA

Hopedale Public Safety Log

Missing person, threats, arrests

Between Feb. 16 and March 15, the Hopedale Police and Fire Departments responded to hundreds of calls, many related to motor vehicle stops, vehicle accidents/crashes, traffic complaints, erratic operators, preventative patrolling, community policing, well-being checks, illegal parking, theft/larceny/forgery/fraud, lost/found property, property watches, animal complaints, LTC/FIC (license to carry/firearms identification card) matters, suspicious persons/activity, summons service, court appearances, 911 hang-ups/open lines, safety details, school resource officer, cell checks, LTC/FID delivered, general information, record requests, and training.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Entries of note

include:

Feb. 16 at 4:19 p.m., Pierce St., warrant service

Feb. 17 at 11:25 a.m., Police Dept., LTC/FID delivered

Feb. 17 at 1:39 p.m., Freedom St., animal complaint

Feb. 17 at 1:43 p.m., Adin St., animal complaint

Feb. 17 at 1:59 p.m., Patrick Rd., soliciting

Feb. 18 at 8:58 a.m., Mendon St., suspicious activity

Feb. 19 at 3:01 p.m., South Main St., fight

Feb. 19 at 4:13 p.m., Hopedale St., unattended death

Feb. 21 at 12:42 a.m., Hammond Rd., follow-up investigation, arrest. A 33-year-old Hopedale male was charged with assault and battery.

Feb. 22 at 4:23 p.m., Mendon

St., motor vehicle stop, arrest. A 31-year-old Mendon male was charged with possession of Class B drug, possession of open container of alcohol, and two outstanding warrants.

Feb. 23 at 6 a.m., Dutcher St., wires down [major snowstorm]

Feb. 23 at 9:28 a.m., South Main St., tree damage

Feb. 24 at 7:55 p.m., Dana Park, suspicious activity

Feb. 25 at 3:04 p.m., Hazel St., hit and run

Feb. 25 at 3:43 p.m., Bancroft Park, theft/larceny/forgery/fraud

Feb. 28 at 11:25 a.m., Milford St., arrest. A 42-year-old Hopkinton female was charged with possessing a counterfeit note, electronic device use while operating a motor vehicle (1st

offence), another jurisdiction warrant.

Feb. 28 at 1:23 p.m., Milford Hospital, prisoner transport

Feb. 28 at 6:54 p.m., Lower Jones Rd., disturbance

March 1 at 5:43 p.m., Mendon St., motor vehicle stop, arrest. A 22-year-old Milford male was charged with operating a motor vehicle with license suspended, motor vehicle lights violation, another jurisdiction warrant.

March 2 at 8:45 p.m., Hopedale St., motor vehicle stop, arrest. A 31-year-old Milford female was charged with OUI-liquor OR .08%, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, marked lanes violation.

March 4 at 7:22 a.m., Adin St., tree damage

March 5 at 2:47 p.m., Hopedale St., disturbance

March 6 at 2:20 p.m.,



Dutcher St., past hit and run

March 6 at 8:27 p.m., Tammie Rd., disturbance

March 8 at 12:05 a.m., Bancroft Park, erratic operator

March 9 at 12:56 a.m., Mendon St., threats

March 11 at 3:08 pm., Hopedale St., trespassing/unwanted person

March 13 at 9:26 a.m., Mendon St., burglar alarm

March 13 at 7:46 p.m., HPD, harassing phone calls

March 14 at 2:09 a.m., Milford St., Mendon, mutual aid

March 15 at 1:57 a.m., Hopedale St., missing person

Source: Hopedale Police Department

Hopedale Fire Dept. celebrated International Women’s Day

On March 8, the Hopedale Fire Department celebrated its female firefighters in honor of International Women’s Day. A HFD Facebook post read:

“Today we recognize and celebrate the dedication, strength, and commitment of women.

Pictured below are Firefighter Anna Micelotti and Firefighter Olivia Liang of the Hopedale Fire Department. These firefighters proudly serve our town with professionalism, courage, and teamwork.

“We are grateful for the important roles women play in our community. We are lucky to have Anna and Olivia protecting our community, supporting their fellow firefighters, and inspiring the next generation.

“Please join us in recognizing Firefighter Micelotti, Firefighter Liang, and all the women out there making a difference in our lives. Thank you for your service, ladies!”

Source: @HopedaleFireDepartment/Facebook



Firefighter Anna Micelotti.

Firefighter Liang.

School vacation to be music to the ears

Dance party, family movie matinee, teddy bear picnic



Cindy Tuminelli will perform live music at the library’s Teddy Bear Picnic on April 23. Registration required. Courtesy photo

School vacation week in April is all about music at the Bancroft Memorial Library. Ms. Laura has planned fun, high-energy programs to keep kids moving, creating, and entertained.

On Tues., April 21, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., join a Dance Party featuring disco lights, glow bracelets, bubbles, temporary tattoos, and more. Each participant will even receive an instrument to take home.

On Wed., April 22, from 1 to 3 p.m., enjoy a Family Movie Matinee. This mystery film asks: the guys are at it again.... but what happens when the girls get involved? Who will end up being the good guys in the end? To find out the movie title, you can call the Library at 508-634-2209. Families are invited to drop in and get cozy; pajamas, blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, snacks, and friends are all welcome.

On Thurs., April 23, from 12 to 1 p.m., the Library will host a Teddy Bear Picnic in the Program Room, featuring live music by Cindy Tuminelli. The event will include singing, face painting, and a craft to make teddy bear bead bracelets.

Registration is required for the Teddy Bear Picnic and is limited to 40 attendees, including both children and adults. A waitlist will be available once the event is full. If you register and are later unable to attend, please notify the Library so your spot can be offered to another family.

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Living Healthy

Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming Eye Care

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming medicine, and ophthalmology is one of the fields experiencing its impact firsthand. For patients, this means eye diseases can be detected earlier, monitored more accurately, and treated more effectively. Although AI may sound futuristic, it is already integrated into clinics and hospitals, enhancing vision care and improving patient outcomes.

The Complexity of the Human Eye

The human eye is an intricate organ. At its core is the retina, a thin tissue layer containing millions of light-sensitive cells that convert light into signals the brain interprets as vision. Because the retina's structures are microscopic and delicate, early disease detection can be challenging. Even experienced ophthalmologists rely on advanced imaging technologies to identify subtle abnormalities.

AI as a Diagnostic Assistant

AI now assists doctors in analyzing these images in ways that were previously impossible. Sophisticated algorithms can review detailed scans of the retina and optic nerve, comparing them with thousands or even millions of other images. By recognizing patterns difficult for the human eye to detect, AI can help specialists identify early signs of disease, guiding faster and more accurate diagnoses. Importantly, AI does not replace physicians; it acts as a powerful assistant, helping ophthalmologists interpret complex data and make better-informed decisions.

Early Detection of Eye Disease

One major benefit of AI in eye care is early detection. Many conditions, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration, can damage vision silently before patients notice symptoms.



By the time vision changes are apparent, disease may already be advanced. AI analyzes retinal images to detect subtle abnormalities that might otherwise go unnoticed. In some clinical settings, FDA-approved AI tools automatically screen for diabetic retinopathy, identifying patients who need specialist evaluation.

Accuracy and Consistency in Monitoring

AI also enhances accuracy and consistency. Imaging technologies such as optical coherence tomography (OCT) generate

highly detailed three-dimensional retinal images, enabling specialists to examine microscopic layers of the eye. AI algorithms can measure retinal thickness, detect fluid accumulation, and monitor optic nerve health with remarkable precision. This reduces variability in

interpretation and allows doctors to track even minimal changes over time, improving diagnosis and monitoring of glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, and macular degeneration.

Predicting Disease Progression

Advanced AI tools can also predict disease progression. By analyzing large databases of retinal scans and patient outcomes, these systems estimate which patients are at higher risk of vision-threatening complications. Predictive insights allow physicians to intervene earlier and tailor treatments more effectively, shifting care from reactive to proactive.

Expanding Access to Care

AI is expanding access to eye care as well. Tele-ophthalmology programs in rural or underserved areas enable patients to have retinal images captured locally, which are then analyzed using AI to determine who requires further specialist evaluation. This approach improves efficiency, reduces unnecessary travel, and ensures that serious conditions are not overlooked.

AI in Surgical Planning

AI is influencing surgical care, particularly cataract surgery. Advanced algorithms analyze detailed eye measurements, assisting surgeons in selecting the optimal lens implant for each patient. These tools improve surgical planning and increase the likelihood of excellent postoperative vision. At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, we integrate AI and advanced technology to deliver high-quality care. Our state-of-the-art retinal imaging systems detect disease early and accurately, while multiple OCT scanners provide extraordinary detail of the retina and macula, aiding in the diagnosis and monitoring

of macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center and Technology

Every patient at Milford-Franklin Eye Center benefits from the highest level of our commitment to advanced technology. When it comes to glaucoma treatment, we were the first in the region to adopt the newest Direct SLT laser system, which uses advanced eye-tracking technology to track the eye during treatment and complete the procedure in about 1.2 seconds. Surgical care is equally advanced. Our accredited ambulatory surgery center in Milford was the first in the area to adopt the Unity cataract surgery system and offers laser-assisted cataract surgery. With our ORA system, we can verify lens implant power in real time during surgery to ensure the most precise visual results.

Commitment to you

Milford-Franklin Eye Center outcomes rival those of major Boston hospitals while keeping care close to home. We offer same-day emergency care, Saturday appointments, and a full-service optical shop with an on-site lab. Our QUAD A-accredited surgery center provides the highest level of safety and comfort, with anesthesiologists and IV sedation available for every procedure. Unlike practices performing office-based cataract surgery without anesthesia support, we ensure world-class care in a fully accredited facility.

The AI Revolution and Commitment to the Community

Living in the communities we serve, we remain dedicated to advancing ophthalmology through technology, AI, and patient-centered care. From early detection to precise surgical interventions, artificial intelligence is transforming vision care and helping patients preserve sight, improve quality of life, and access the best care close to home.

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Sports

Hopedale Basketball Success

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Entering the 2025-26 high school basketball season both the Hopedale boys and girls teams had aspirations of winning the Division 5 State Championship. When the regular season came to an end, both teams' goals were in play: the boys finished the season 15-5 earning themselves a two seed, while their counterparts went 13-7, also grabbing a two seed in the tournament.

Girls Basketball

At the time of this writing the girls team, which last won the Championship in 2022, was preparing to take on Drury, the number one seed in the tournament, for the State Championship leaving their goal still intact. In order to get to the Title game the female Blue Raiders took out Cape Cod Regional (62-24), Prospect Hill Academy (53-43), Minuteman Regional (54-36) and Douglas 44-41.

Last year, Hopedale was the number one seed in the tournament but were upset by the ninth seed in Lee Middle/High School (44-41) in the Round of 8.

"Coming into this season we wanted to get back to where we were last year," Girls Coach Jay Rojee said. "If we could do that, then the Final 4, once there, bets are all off and it becomes one minute at a time."

According to the Blue Raider coach, the girls were able to get to the State Championship with all five starters putting in their best efforts. Senior center Phoebe Carroll, who was an 8th grader sitting on the bench in 2022, has not only learned from that experience but has become a team leader. The senior led the team in scoring 15 points and pulling down 13 rebounds per game while becoming a better ball distributor.

Senior Anna Faford, the teams point guard, is the Hopedale main ball handler on every possession and was able to add 10 points, 5 rebounds and 4 assists per game this season. Junior Layla Huntley added 10

At press time, Hopedale captured the Division 4 State Tournament with a 48-35 win over the number one seed Drury. The title was the Blue Raiders second in five years. Carroll lead the way putting up 23 points in the victory while Weeden and Huntley each added 10 points; the trio accounted for 43 of Hopedale 48 points to earn the victory. Defensively the Blue Raiders dominated the number one seed through the contest.

rebounds per game and continuously found herself guarding the opposition's center, while junior guard Lexi Carroll was in charge of guarding the opposition's guard.

"Layla and Lexi are two very defensive minded players who take on the best of the best," the Hopedale Coach said. "They also do a lot of things that don't make the paper and provide us with some big baskets."

Sophomore Jenna Weeden rounds out the starting lineup for the Blue Raiders. According to the Coach, she is the team's sniper and can knock down the three-point shot with relative ease. The sophomore can also drive to the basket but it's her ability to take the outside shot that helps spread the floor.

Grabbing a two seed was great but being the one seed would have been preferred to Rojee; however the top four seeds are all pretty much the same once you get into the tournament.

"We knew we'd get a high seed due to our tough schedule with our league play as well as the tough non-league games we added," Rojee said. "We play top teams all season, so we are ready for the tournament, but it all depends on the matchups you get once the tournament begins."

Rojee liked his matchups outside of taking on Douglas in the semi-finals. Hopedale had already beaten the Tigers twice in the regular season and by the time they captured the third win, the two teams had each



Success on the courts for Hopedale Basketball. Courtesy photo

scored 131 total points, showing how even they were.

Drury will be a bit of a different challenge for the Hopedale girls but if they stay consistent to what they have done all year and utilize their post play they should be able to come away with another State Championship to bring back to the high school.

Boys Basketball

While the girls will be suiting up one more time in hopes of winning another title, the boys will be in the crowd cheering them on as their season came to an end in the Round of 8. Prior to their upset loss to number seven seed Prospect Hill Academy (67-51) in the Round of 8, the boys were able to defeat Cape Cod Academy (59-50) and Bethany Christian Academy (58-53).

Coming into the season, Coach Tony Cordani was unsure of what he was going to get from his team. The Blue Raiders lost to Pioneer Valley last year in the State Championship game and graduated four of their five starters from that team.

"This year was not what I had expected, having graduated four starters from last year's team that

went 18-2 and got to the State Championship game," he said. "I thought this year's team over-achieved in a lot of ways."

Senior point guard and captain Keigan Murphy was the team's lone returning starter and, along with senior JJ Douglas, who was the team's sixth man off the bench last winter, provided the Blue Raiders with the offense. The two each averaged 17 points per game. Junior Nate Rutkowski, who came off the bench last year, occupied the starting power forward position this year. All three athletes were named to the All-Star team.

Hopedale has two reserve players from last year's squad who did not see a lot of action but have stepped up this year to round out the boys starting rotation. Seniors Trevor Lachaitto, the teams center, and forward Wyatt Bliss both provided outstanding defensive capabilities and rebounding to help the team to win 15 games during the regular season. Much like this year's squad, Cordani will see four of his five starters leave the program due to graduation; Rutkowski will be the only one back come next winter.

Rutkowski will be joined by sophomore Urijah Rosas on the

court next season. Rosas saw the occasional start this year and will see more significant when the new season rolls around next year.

"With both Keigan and JJ gone, Urijah, who got some experience this year, is going to need to become more of a scorer for us," Cordani said. "We will also look to Nate to improve upon his scoring as well."

Hopedale played good basketball throughout the regular season and by the time that the tournament seeding were announced they were not surprised they were named a two seed.

"We had been playing well and against top notch teams, so we were expecting a high seed," the Hopedale Coach said. "Unfortunately, we ran into a very talented Prospect Hill team. It's always tough when you don't win, especially after getting so deep into the tournament, but it was fun."

Now, with another four seniors leaving a successful season, the hope is Cordani will be able to replace them with enough talent to get the Blue Raiders back on the right path and into the State Tournament again next year.

Real Estate Corner

Recent Home Sales

Date	Hopedale	Amount
03/13/2026	1 Villa Dr.	\$572,000
02/27/2026	370 S. Main St.	\$555,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages

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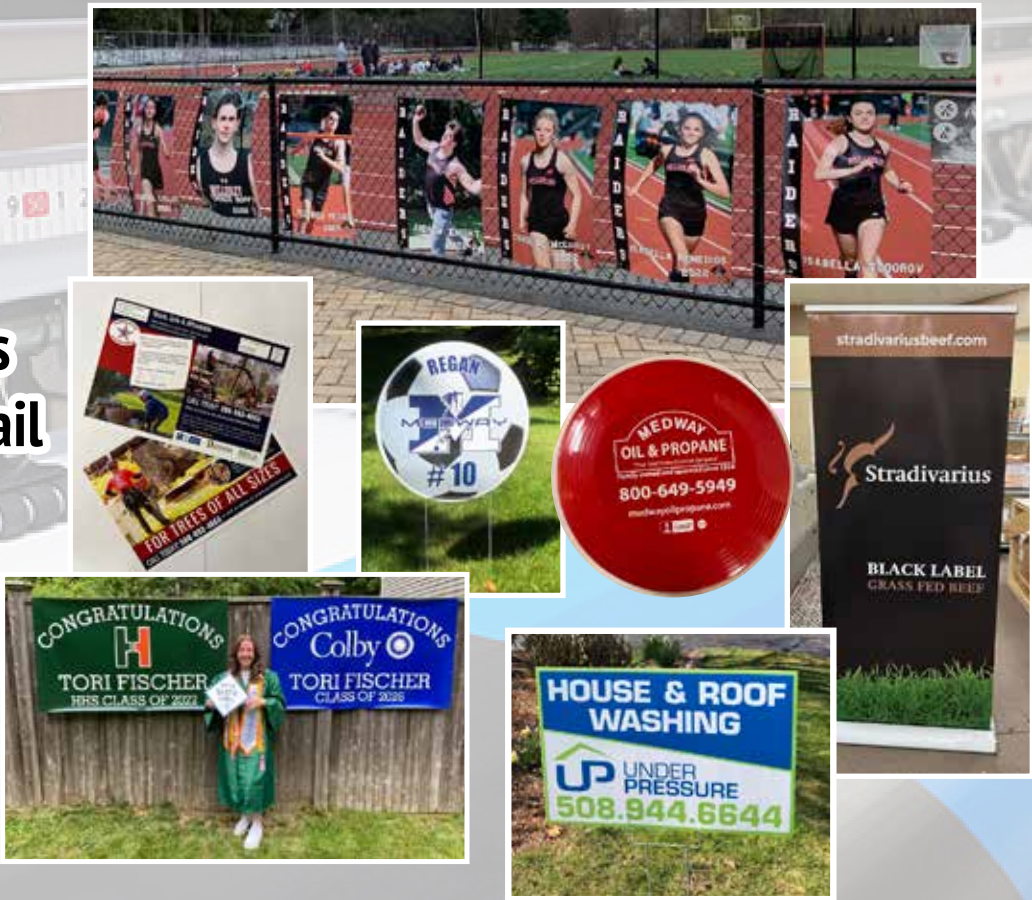


The 3-bed, 2-bath, 2,748-square-foot house at 1 Villa Drive in Hopedale recently sold for \$572,000.

Image credit: www.zillow.com

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