

localtownpages Norfolk & Wrentham

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

April 1, 2026

Tri-County Carpentry Students Build Dugouts at Freeman-Kennedy Fields

By GRACE ALLEN

After a long, cold winter, baseball is back in Norfolk. And this year, kids playing at the Freeman-Kennedy School fields will have new dugouts to use while waiting for their turn at bat. That's all thanks to Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, whose carpentry students have been building the new dugouts in a project coordinated with Norfolk's recreation department.

According to Tom Antonellis of Tom Antonellis Carpentry, who serves on the school's board of advisors, the project allows students to apply their classroom learning in a real-world setting, gaining hands-on construction experience in practical projects.

Students began working



Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School carpentry students and instructors pause for a photo at the Freeman-Kennedy School fields in Norfolk, where they have been constructing new dugouts throughout the winter. (Photo courtesy Norfolk Recreation.)

on the dugouts around mid-November and have continued building them through the winter months. Despite the tough conditions and several school breaks, the students have con-

tinued to make steady progress.

"They've been out there on the days it's been 10 degrees,"

DUGOUTS
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What to Know About Accessory Dwelling Units

By MAUREEN SULLIVAN

A solution to the state's current lack of affordable housing could be as close as your basement or back yard.

Residents in Norfolk and Wrentham are starting to explore the option of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Meanwhile, local officials, and construction firms, are on the ground floor when it comes to state regulations that became law in February 2025.

"A lot of people don't even know about the ADU yet. We think it's a viable way for property owners and families to be able to afford having their own living space on the same property," said Charles J. Fruci Jr., owner of Wrentham-based Distinctive Creations Inc., a construction and remodeling company that builds ADUs.

According to Rachel Benson, Wrentham's director of Planning

and Economic Development, the town has approved six ADU projects so far. Norfolk's director of Planning and Development, Richard McCarthy, said the town received its first application in February.

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

An ADU can be a part of the main house (garage, basement, etc.) or may be detached. It must include sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities, as well as a separate entrance. It can be no larger than one-half of the gross floor area of the main dwelling, or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller. There is no owner-occupancy requirement.

As part of the state's Affordable Homes Act, ADUs are now

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DUGOUTS

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Antonellis said. “Because this is real life. They’ll graduate and get a job somewhere and that job may warrant them to be out in the cold, working.”

Approximately ten students work on site at a time, supervised by Tri-County carpentry instructors Jeremy Barstow and Mark Spillane.

The plan calls for six new dugouts at the Freeman-Kennedy fields. As of early March, two were largely completed, with additional materials expected to arrive soon so students can begin work on the next set.

“These are complete constructions,” Antonellis said, noting that the structures are being built from the ground up rather than restoring existing dugouts. The fields are used by both baseball and softball teams.

Project materials are being funded through a three-way partnership among Norfolk



Baseball, Norfolk Softball, and Norfolk Recreation. Funding comes from program fees and tournament revenue generated by the organizations, and no taxpayer dollars are being used to cover any portion of the material costs.

Based on typical labor rates for comparable outdoor wooden structures in Massachusetts—such as decks or sheds—construction labor can range from roughly \$30 to \$100 per square foot in the Boston area. By having Tri-County students com-

plete the work as part of their training, the project is expected to save many thousands of dollars in labor costs.

The instructors try to replicate real job site conditions as much as possible, including staging and safety precautions. Students are taught to conduct themselves with responsibility and professionalism, and graduates of the Tri-County carpentry program are considered to be highly qualified, entry-level carpenters.

Tri-County Regional Voca-



tional Technical High School serves students from 11 communities, including Norfolk and Wrentham, as well as Franklin, Medfield, Medway, Millis, North Attleborough, Plainville, Seekonk, Sherborn, and Walpole.

Antonellis, who has been a contractor for more than five decades and has served on Tri-County’s advisory board for about 18 years, helped connect the project with the town and assisted with coordinating materials.

“I like to see the students get out and learn,” he said. “There’s book learning, but there’s nothing like hands-on learning.”

For Antonellis, a graduate of vocational school himself, the project highlights both the value of vocational education

and the importance of skilled trades.

“Vocational school is a fantastic avenue, not just for carpentry but for so many different vocations today,” he said, noting that projects like the Freeman-Kennedy dugouts allow students to gain practical experience while also contributing to the community.

“I think this is a really great opportunity for the students and a great opportunity for our community of Norfolk to benefit,” Antonellis said.

To be considered for a project by Tri-County students, visit tri-county.us/page/public-services and submit a work request. An instructor will be in touch if the project is considered a good fit for the students and if there is room in the schedule.

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Norfolk’s 17th Annual Clean & Green Town-wide Cleanup Set for April 25

The Norfolk Grange invites residents of all ages to celebrate Earth Day by participating in Norfolk’s 17th Annual Clean & Green Town-wide Cleanup on

Saturday, April 25.

The annual event encourages volunteers to help beautify the community by removing litter from roadways and public places

throughout town. Participants may collect trash at any time during the week leading up to the event, as well as on April 25 itself. Volunteers are asked to at-

test that the materials collected are not from household waste.

Collected litter and recyclables may be dropped off at the Norfolk Grange Hall, 28 Rockwood Road, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on April 25. Volunteers who are unable to transport their litter or larger items may request pickup at their cleanup site by contacting Kevin Roche at 508-328-5604. Lions Club volunteers will assist with pickups on April 25.

Participants may also pick up volunteer certificates documenting their community service during drop-off hours at the Grange Hall.

For additional safety guidelines and event information, visit the Norfolk Grange Facebook page or contact Robin Biscaia at 508-740-2777.



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DWELLING

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allowed “by right.” That means an application would not require a special permit, variance, zoning amendment or waiver. It would require a site plan review process, and the ADUs must meet local and state building and sanitary codes.

“Massachusetts needs more homes to drive down costs for everyone. That’s why, with the Legislature, we legalized ADUs by right in the Affordable Homes Act,” said Governor Maura Healey in a press release from September 2025. “ADUs can help seniors afford to stay in the communities they love, give families a chance to earn some extra income, or provide an individual with disabilities more independence.”

Although in its early stages, ADUs could become a major factor in home construction and renovation, according to Fruci. “Unlike ‘in-law additions,’ ADUs can be built and rented out to family or complete strangers for additional income. We believe these ADU projects will take off and become over 50 percent of our work load in the near future,” he said.

Currently, Distinctive Creations has three ADU projects, all in the design or permitting phases. Fruci estimated it would take about six months from getting the building permit to completion.

“These projects are like building a small house,” he said.

Costs for an ADU can vary

depending on the project, Fruci added. Distinctive Creations budgets an average starting cost of \$350-\$400 per square foot.

“In theory, building an ADU within the existing footprint of a home should reduce costs because you avoid expenses like sitework, concrete and new foundation work. However, interior conversions come with their own challenges that can offset some of those savings,” he said.

“For example, if the ADU is created in an existing basement, the building code requires two means of egress dedicated to that unit. One of those exits cannot be through the main house. That means you’d need either two bulkhead-style egress points for a full foundation, or two exterior doors for a walkout basement. Additionally, the separation between the ADU and the existing living space must meet two family or multifamily fire separation requirements, which typically means fire rated ceilings and or walls depending on the layout.

“So, while an ADU within the existing footprint can be less expensive overall, the actual cost depends heavily on the existing conditions of the house and property. Every location — basement, first floor, attic or addition — comes with its own set of challenges, code and construction considerations,” Fruci added.

The Local Regulations

As part of the amendment on ADUs passed by Norfolk’s Annual Town Meeting in 2025, an

ADU is not to be used as a short-term rental, and must remain an accessory to the principal dwelling (no separate ownership). One ADU is allowed by right per lot; a special permit is required for the use of land or structures in a single-family residential zoning district for more than one accessory dwelling unit. There should be an additional 10,000 square feet of land for any additional ADU, with a maximum of two ADUs.

If the ADU is within a half-mile radius of a transit station in Norfolk, such as Commuter Rail, no additional parking spaces would be required. If outside that radius, the ADU must include one private off-street space (a waiver may be granted by the Planning Board if the applicant can prove the parking space is not needed).

Wrentham also amended its zoning bylaws regarding ADUs during its Annual Town Meeting in 2025. Additional adjustments — including proposed ADUs on non-conforming lots — is part of a draft article for this year’s Annual Town Meeting in June.

According to its zoning bylaws, only one ADU may be created within a single-family dwelling. The ADU can have no more than two bedrooms, and may be occupied by someone providing medical or custodial care to an occupant of the main dwelling. Also, any entrances to the ADU must be on the side or the rear of the building. As in Norfolk, ADUs may not be used for short-term rentals.

In both communities, ADUs

must meet local and state building and sanitary codes.

While ADUs would count toward a community’s year-round housing stock, they would not count toward a community’s affordable housing as it relates to Chapter 40B, according to Benson.

“Chapter 40B requires that a city/town has to have at least 10 percent of its year-round housing stock be Deed-Restricted Affordable, better known as its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI),” she said. “However, ADUs do count towards a municipality’s year-round housing stock, so those units bring the denominator number up in that percentage calculation.”

She added that Wrentham has about 11.7 percent of its housing stock as deed-restricted affordable, so it currently meets the 40B requirements. According to McCarthy, Norfolk has 4.96 percent of its units listed on its SHI.

The Process

McCarthy said Norfolk residents should set up a meeting with the town’s building com-

missioner to help determine if the ADU could be built within the house, or as a detached unit.

If the ADU would be within the house, with no external change, the resident would work with the Building Department; this would include a determination of applicability to figure square footage. A detached ADU would go through the site plan review process.

In Wrentham, applications for ADUs, including a site plan and architectural drawings, would go through the Building Commissioner; the applications must be consistent with the submission requirements of the rules and regulations of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Once the process becomes more refined, Fruci said ADUs could become a more feasible option for homeowners.

“We believe the flexibility of the ADU being able to go almost anywhere (within the zoning and codes) will eventually make it easier for parents, siblings and family to afford today’s living cost and if renting the ADU collect some additional income,” he said.

Charles River Chorale to Present Spring Concert “It’s About Time” in Medway

The Charles River Chorale will present its spring concert, “It’s About Time: A Journey Through Memory and Moment,” on Saturday, May 2 at 5 p.m. at the Medway High School auditorium.

The program opens with “Les Chansons des Roses,” a five-movement choral cycle by acclaimed composer Morten Lauridsen set to poetry by Rainer Maria Rilke. Lauridsen is the most frequently performed American choral composer in modern history.

The second half of the concert shifts styles as a rock band joins the chorale for a lively set of songs exploring the theme of time, including favorites such as “If I Could Turn Back Time” and “Time After Time.”

Under the direction of Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the 100-voice Charles River Chorale will present a program designed to stir memories, lift spirits, and remind audiences that music is truly timeless.

For more information and ticket details, visit <https://our.show/crcspringconcert> or scan the QR code provided.

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Friends of the Norfolk Public Library to Host 2026 Book and Bake Sale

The Friends of the Norfolk Public Library will hold their annual Book and Bake Sale on Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25 at the Freeman-Kennedy School, 70 Boardman St.

A special Friends Members Preview Sale will take place on Friday, April 24 from 6 to 9 p.m. Current members are invited to shop early, and new memberships may be purchased at the

door beginning at 5 p.m.

The sale will open to the general public on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The popular event will feature a wide selection of gently used hardcover and paperback books, as well as CDs, DVDs, games, and puzzles. Volunteers carefully inspect all puzzles to ensure they are complete before being offered for sale.

Proceeds from the sale support a variety of programs and resources at the Norfolk Public Library. Recent contributions from the Friends include the purchase of a new self-checkout station to replace outdated equipment.

Community members interested in supporting the sale can donate items in good condition. Donations may be dropped off in the Friends' book closet during regular library hours or at the Friends' shed at the Transfer Station, 33 Medway Branch, on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

In addition to the annual sale, the Friends maintain an ongoing book sale inside the library at 2 Liberty Lane, where donated titles are available for purchase year-round.

The Friends of the Norfolk Public Library also welcome new

members and volunteers. Membership information is available at the library or online at www.NorfolkMALibraryFriends.org.

The group will hold its next meeting on April 7 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Schoolhouse Room at the Norfolk Public Library.

For more information, contact the Norfolk Public Library at 508-528-3380.

Norwood Hospital Supporters Rally on Beacon Hill, Urge Action on Eminent Domain Bill

Supporters of reopening Norwood Hospital traveled to the Massachusetts State House in February to testify in favor of legislation that would allow the state to take the hospital property by eminent domain.

A group of residents, local officials, first responders, and members of the Finish Norwood Hospital Task Force attended a Feb. 12 hearing before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight to advocate for House Bill 5047.

The bill, filed by state Rep. John H. Rogers and state Sen. Michael F. Rush, would authorize the state's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to seize the land beneath the former Norwood Hospital site on an emergency basis. The goal is to preserve the property for future health care use and facilitate re-

opening the hospital under a new operator.

"This bill empowers the Commonwealth to take a proactive, strategic role in planning for regional health care infrastructure," Rogers said during the hearing, citing ongoing concerns about access to care since the hospital's closure.

Norwood General Manager Tony Mazzucco also testified, highlighting increased ambulance transport times and limited access to critical services.

"Particularly if you were to have a heart attack in Norwood — or Walpole, or Wrentham, or Sharon, or Canton, or Dedham, or Foxborough, or Mansfield — you are 40 minutes from getting the appropriate care," Mazzucco said. "The best hospitals in the world do not matter if patients can't reach them."

Norwood Hospital has been closed since June 2020, when severe flooding forced its evacuation. Prior to its closure, the hospital served approximately

126,000 patients annually and operated a 130-plus-bed acute care facility with an emergency department.

Town officials launched the Finish Norwood Hospital campaign in 2025 to advocate for reopening the site. The task force includes health care providers, public health officials, labor leaders, emergency responders, and local and state officials.

The proposed legislation remains under consideration as state leaders continue to evaluate options for restoring hospital services to the region.

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Out, Damned Blot!

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

The sacred scrolls on which the clouding gems were penned
By creative minds adjoined, are drowning,
Drowning in rivulets of darkness from the spilled wells of broken
souls.

Downward they course, among the brilliant phrases,
Those which enlighten the mind and break the bonds of tyranny.

Who boasts the audacity to tip the inkwells in the treasured halls
of democracy?
Who purposed to blot the hopes and prayers of the oppressed?
The trolls of autocracy, my friends, those who weave steel cables,
Screwed to the minds of ignorant marionettes.

The rivulets spread across the parchment, gobbling precious
words like voracious insects
As the gaping maw of history's dustbin beckons, already overflowing
with tragic stories past.

Hark! Are those the distant drums on Battle Road, struck by glorious
ghosts of days of yore?
They are the pulse-beat of Lady Liberty's quest for justice.

"To arms!"; she cries, with hopes but fears, her plea will fall on
deafened ears.

Gilly's House Announces Scholarships for Local Students

Gilly's House in Wrentham is pleased to announce the availability of two \$1,000 scholarships for graduating seniors in the local community. One scholarship will be awarded to a senior from Franklin High School and one to a senior from King Philip Regional High School.

These scholarships are intended for students who plan to pursue a career in the field of mental health, including areas such as psychology, counseling, social work, psychiatric nursing, or other related professions dedicated to supporting mental health and well-being.

Applicants are asked to submit a short essay describing their interest in the mental health field and their future goals. Essays should explain what inspired their desire to pursue this path and how they hope to make a positive impact in the lives of others through their work.

Gilly's House is proud to support students who are committed to helping others and strengthening the mental health resources in our communities. By encouraging future professionals in this important field, we hope to continue building awareness, compassion, and support for those facing mental health challenges.

Each school's guidance department has disseminated application information.

Vance Gilbert to Perform at Circle of Friends Coffeehouse

Vance Gilbert will perform at the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse on Saturday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7 p.m., and tickets are \$25.

A longtime coffeehouse favorite, Gilbert is known for his distinctive voice, accomplished guitar playing, and engaging storytelling. His latest album, *The Mother of Trouble*, features collaborations with Lori McKenna, Joey Landreth, and Joe K. Walsh.

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a nonprofit affiliated with the First Universalist Society of Franklin. Concerts are held in a smoke- and alcohol-free, handicapped-accessible meetinghouse at 262 Chestnut Street.

Beverages and desserts will be available. For tickets and information, visit circlefolk.org.



Federated Church of Norfolk Invites Community to Holy Week and Easter Services

The Federated Church of Norfolk invites the community to take part in its upcoming Holy Week and Easter services. Events begin with a Palm Sunday service on Sunday, March 29 at 10 a.m. A Last Supper service will follow on Thursday, April 2 at 7 p.m. The church will host an Open Sanctuary for prayer and reflection on Friday, April 3 from 12 to 3 p.m., and its April Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, April 4 from 8 to 10 a.m. Easter Sunday services will take place on April 5 at 8 a.m. on Town Hill and at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary, featuring the bluegrass band Southern Rail.

These events highlight the long-standing presence of the Federated Church as part of Norfolk's history.

The church traces its origins to 1795, when members of the Congregational Church in Wrentham, along with their pastor, Rev. David Avery, left to form the North Parish Association. Like many early New England communities, the congregation's first building was a meetinghouse that served both as a place of worship and as the site of town meetings.

The church is closely tied to Norfolk's early development. When Norfolk applied for incorporation in 1870, Massachusetts required that a town have defined boundaries and a Protestant church. Early town records also show that many church leaders served as town moderators, selectmen, and other officials. In 1875, the congregation donated the original meetinghouse to the town for use as Norfolk's town hall.

In 1918, under the leadership of Rev. William Lowstuter, the congregation invited the local Baptist church to consolidate, forming the Federated Church of Norfolk. Today, members represent more than 15 denominations.

The church continues to play an active role in the community. Its pastors have served as chaplains and emergency contacts for the Norfolk Police and Fire Departments, the church participates in local events, and it hosts Boy Scout Troop 80. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the church also joined other groups in the Love Your Neighbor initiative.

Members are also working to preserve the church's history. A History Committee is collecting and organizing documents, photographs, and other materials into an interactive database. The committee is also transcribing 22 oral history interviews recorded with longtime members between June 2025 and January 2026, with excerpts to be shared online.

Much of the church's earlier story is documented in *The Federated Church of Norfolk: A Bicentennial History*, published for the church's 1995 bicentennial and available at the Norfolk Public Library.

All are welcome to attend the upcoming Holy Week and Easter services.

Wrentham to Host 2026 Bay State Games Rugby Tournament

The Town of Wrentham has been selected to host the 2026 Bay State Games rugby tournament, which will take place in July at the William A. Rice Recreation Complex.

The competition will feature the fast-paced Rugby 7s format and include teams from the Massachusetts Youth Rugby Organization and invited clubs from neighboring states. Teams will compete across multiple divisions, with each guaranteed at least three matches and medals awarded to top finishers.

"We're honored that Wrentham has been chosen to host," said Stephen Signes, president of Barbarians Youth Rugby.

"This competition is a highlight of the season for our athletes, and we look forward to welcoming teams from across the region."

Additional details, including the tournament schedule, will be announced by organizers in the coming months.

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

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A photograph of Anita Mecklenburg, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a red shirt, speaking at a podium with a microphone. She is gesturing with her hands while speaking.

"Because Norfolk Matters"

Emerson's Prison Initiative Opens New Doors for Corrections Officers

By JOE STEWART

Most of us pass MCI-Norfolk on Route 1A without giving it much thought. But inside that institution, something quietly remarkable has been unfolding — and it recently took a new turn that reaches beyond the prison walls to benefit the people who work there.

In February, the Emerson Prison Initiative (EPI) announced its inaugural Correction Staff and Families Scholarship, awarding more than \$3,000 in total to seven recipients. Among the first recipients was Matthew Powers of Franklin, whose mother Paula

Berndt is a staff member at the institution. MCI-Norfolk Superintendent Kenneth Lizotte and EPI Director Mneesha Gellman presented the awards at a ceremony held at MCI-Norfolk on February 10.

The scholarship can be applied to tuition, books, materials, application or testing fees, and transportation at any accredited college or university, not only Emerson. A job as a corrections officer does not require a college degree, and according to Dr. Gellman, that's precisely the gap this scholarship is designed to address.

The Woman Behind It

Dr. Mneesha Gellman is associate professor of political science in the Marlboro Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies at Emerson College and the founder and director of the Emerson Prison Initiative, which brings a Bachelor of Arts pathway to incarcerated students at state prisons in Massachusetts.

In a conversation in March, Dr. Gellman described the scholarship as an extension of EPI's core mission: using education to interrupt cycles of incarceration and create opportunity.

The program, she explained, is funded entirely through private contributions; no tax dollars support EPI or its scholarships.

The Superintendent's support made it possible to go further than the scholarship alone. With his backing, Emerson has been able to offer corrections staff on-the-clock workshops at the prison itself, including sessions covering how to navigate the financial aid process and how to write a college admissions essay. For someone who hasn't thought about college since high school, or never considered it at all, those workshops can make the difference between an aspiration and an application.

What EPI Has Built

Launched in 2017, EPI offers the same courses taught on Emerson's Boston campus, with Emerson faculty, as well as guest faculty from other local universities, all bearing official Emerson credits. The program provides a pathway to a Bachelor of Arts in Media, Literature, and Culture. EPI students also receive a minor in Economics. EPI selects its students through a rigorous admissions process that includes in-person interviews and an essay exam scored by a faculty panel and accepts approximately 25 percent of applicants each cycle. Since 2017, EPI has admitted 80 incarcerated students and 20 have graduated.

The evidence for why this matters is substantial. According to a December 2024 analysis by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, a nonpartisan research center established by the state legislature, postsecondary correctional education is the program with the highest rate of return among all adult criminal justice programs analyzed. The analysis concluded that the program delivers more than \$14 in benefits to the state for every dollar invested.

That kind of return makes intuitive sense when you consider what a degree opens up. Education expands the range of legal employment available to people leaving prison, which is ultimately what makes reentry work.

A Graduate Who Came Back

To understand what EPI actually means in a person's life, consider Kevin Keo.

Kevin Keo is a seasoned Circle Keeper and community organizer and activist who has been practicing restorative justice for eight years. He is a member of the Transformational Prison Project, a Boston-based nonprofit that brings restorative justice work into correctional facilities and supports people navigating reentry.

Keo was a member of EPI's very first cohort. He recalled that the program began as coursework only — there was no degree pathway at the start. That changed when, early on, Professor Gellman brought the president of Emerson College to the prison, which led to a Bachelor of Arts degree program. Keo's classes ran five days a week. He earned his BA in Media, Literature, and Culture in September 2022, which took five years, in part because of disruptions caused by COVID.

His path to that degree was not an easy one. Keo was arrested at 16 and convicted of murder at 18, receiving a life sentence. As a result of a Supreme Court ruling that found it unconstitutional to sentence juveniles to life in prison, he became eligible for parole after 15 years. He was released at 33 to a halfway house. Even with a family that was financially prepared to help him, he described the emotional reality as complicated because he sensed, even years later, that his father and brother were always holding their breath.

Today, Keo works with juveniles in the criminal justice system at detention centers. He described his approach as meeting young people where they are, listening, asking questions, and being ready to answer honestly from his own experience. The fact that he has been through what they are going through matters, he said, but it is not enough on its own. What works is being genuine in the moment.

OFFICERS

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Shoulder-to-Shoulder

MEN'S BBQ

hosted by Gilly's House

3rd Annual

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Planning Finances is a Treat for Todd Miller’s Clients

A visit with Edward Jones financial advisor Todd Miller can be especially sweet for his customers. They of course gain valuable guidance on how best to make their money work. But they often receive an additional tasty treat to take home: A jar of honey. And not just any honey. This honey is made by bees that Todd keeps in hives in his backyard. The buzzy hobby gives him the chance to be outdoors and spend time with his daughters Charlotte, 7, and Remy, 5, while staying close to home.

This combination of money and honey reflects Todd’s treasured principle: Time and money are valuable assets and should be spent wisely. Todd believes you are “never too young” to start learning and thinking about finances.

Talking about money can be considered taboo, but Todd believes open conversations are crucial. Young people need honest, clear information, which he provides to his daughters even at their young ages. “I wanted to make sure they learn from me and not the crazy advice they could get from YouTube or TikTok.”

He is following a family tradition. When he was 16 and started his first job, his mother insisted he invest a portion of each paycheck. “One of the most important things I had was



time and she taught me the importance of making the most of it.”

A small amount invested at 16 can grow to a large nest egg that can make dreams come true. He shares those lessons with his clients. All ages can benefit from financial guidance, he believes. But the ideal candidate for his services is 10 to 15 years away from retirement. They may have a general idea of the long-term goals but they haven’t formalized it and put it into a plan.

That’s where Miller steps in. “We look at their full financial picture, their bills, taxes, what they are currently doing to work toward their goals. The key to doing well with your finances is to be flexible and more open to opportunities, be willing to build a successful plan.”

Todd may have learned the value of money early in life but financial planning was far from his original career. After growing up in Hopkinton and graduating from Hopkinton High School,



Todd Miller with his wife Abbey and daughters Charlotte and Remy.

he received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in chemistry from Northeastern University.

He entered the military where he served as a military police officer. He later worked

as a chemist for five years. During this time he married his wife

Abbey and began a family. As part of this life transition, he worked with a financial advisor on tax planning, estate planning, creating a power of attorney and other financial tasks.

That advisor eventually invited him to be part of his business. Todd became a certified financial planner, a designation that allows him to “help my clients in the most ways and the best ways possible.”

The Hopedale resident is looking forward to moving into a new branch office in Foxboro later this year.

That will allow him to grow even deeper roots in the Hopedale, Bellingham, Norfolk and Wrentham area. He already delivers free talks at local senior centers to help people become better educated in finances and investments and looks forward to expanding his community involvement.

“I get to help my community and get introduced to a lot of people in the area. I like reaching out to the community. It’s very rewarding.”

Todd Miller can be reached by call or text at 781-652-9573 or by email at Todd.Miller@edwardjones.com.

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OFFICERS*continued from page 6*

When I reached Keo for an interview, he was walking out of a planning meeting for the upcoming Mother's Day Walk for Peace, an annual 5K in Dorchester that raises funds to support mothers and families of murder victims. The Walk began in 1996, founded by Chaplain Clementina Chéry of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, after her son Louis was killed. She organized the walk in the neighborhood where he was killed, choosing to grieve and celebrate at the same time. To date, it has hosted more than 500,000 families.

That Kevin Keo, once sentenced to die in prison, was stepping out of a meeting to help plan that event is, in its own way, the whole argument for what EPI is trying to do.

What This Means Locally

MCI-Norfolk is our neighbor. The corrections officers who work there live in our communities — in Wrentham, Norfolk, Franklin, and the towns around us. A scholarship that helps them, or their children, take a step toward a college education is a direct investment in the people who do one of the more difficult jobs in public safety.

For more information about the Emerson Prison Initiative and the Correction Staff and Families Scholarship, visit emerson.edu/epi.

Trinity Church Wrentham Announces Holy Week Services and Spring Community Events

Trinity Church Wrentham has announced its schedule for Holy Week services and several upcoming community events this spring at the church, located at 47 East Street.

Holy Week observances will begin with a Maundy Thursday service on April 2 at 7 p.m., featuring an agape meal and handwashing. A Good Friday service will be held April 3 at 7 p.m., including prayers and communion from the reserved sacrament.

The church will celebrate Easter Sunday on April 5 at 10 a.m. with a service of Holy Eucharist.

Antiques Show and Tell

Trinity Church will host an Antiques Show and Tell on Saturday, April 18 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the church.

Guy Trudel Jr. of Trudel's Auctions in Bellingham will be present to explain and evaluate antiques brought by attendees. Participants may bring small

treasures, artwork, or photos of larger items, and background stories about the items are welcome. Each attendee may have two items appraised.

An in-house antiques dealer will also bring some items to demonstrate what to look for when evaluating antiques. Attendees will have an opportunity to sell items to others if there is interest. The event will include appetizers and snacks.

A \$5 donation per person at the door includes appraisal of two items.

Additional April Programs

The church's Good Grief Support Group will meet on Sunday, April 19 at 4 p.m. in the parish hall with light refreshments. The non-denominational gathering is open to all. There will be no meeting on Easter Sunday, April 5.

A senior lunch will be served in the parish hall on Tuesday, April 14 at

noon, preceded by a healing service at 11:30 a.m. in Trinity's Chapel.

Beginner bridge sessions continue on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and new members are welcome.

Yard Sale Donations Being Accepted

Trinity Church's annual yard sale will be held Saturday, June 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parish hall.

Donations are currently being accepted for the event. The church welcomes items in good condition such as books, jewelry, small toys, puzzles, kitchen gadgets, and "white elephant" items.

To schedule drop-off or pickup of donations, call the church office at 508-384-3958 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Trinity Church's Priest-in-Charge is Lauren Lukason.

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Your Money, Your Independence

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 Plan-Dynamic, 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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Wrentham
Annual
Town
Election Set
for April 6

The Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, April 6, 2026, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Voting will take place at Delaney Elementary School, located at 120 Taunton Street.

Residents are encouraged to participate in the local election and cast their ballots during polling hours.

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Why Seeing a College In Person Can Change Everything

One of the most daunting parts of the college admissions process is not writing the essay, filling out the Common Application, or even creating the initial list of colleges. For many students, the hardest step is researching colleges well enough to narrow the list down to 8-12 schools that truly fit academically, socially, and financially.

Visiting a college campus in person is widely considered one of the best and easiest ways to research a school. It allows students to move beyond fancy brochures and websites to experience the campus "vibe" and "fit" firsthand. A campus visit can make college feel much less intimidating.

In my experience, students rarely regret going on college tours - you never want your child to say: "I wish I had toured more schools."

That said, many students avoid visiting campuses. Sometimes it's because they don't want to face the reality of college. Other times it feels easier to do research from their bedroom through a virtual tour. For some students, walking around an unfamiliar campus with strangers can feel overwhelming. And for

many busy high school students, it simply feels like they don't have the time.

While it's true that not every college can be visited in person - distance, schedules, and cost can make that difficult - students should still try to visit at least a few campuses. Even a small number of visits can make a big difference in helping students understand what type of college environment feels right. In my experience once the student starts visiting colleges - everything starts to change!

Whether researching a college in person or virtually, students need to focus on the same questions: What does the campus look like? What academic programs are offered? What is the overall campus vibe? Do the students feel like "your people"? Does the school offer merit scholarships or primarily need-based aid? And what type of student is the college looking for?

An in person visit makes it much easier to answer these questions.

Students can explore academic buildings, tour residence halls, and sometimes even sit in on a class. Information sessions provide insight into what admis-

sions offices value, such as GPA, course rigor, extracurricular involvement, and preparation for specific majors like engineering, business, or nursing.

One of the most important parts of a campus visit is simply observing student life. Are students studying on the quad? Playing frisbee? Walking together to class? These everyday moments help students sense whether they would feel comfortable there.

Social fit matters more than many students realize. In fact, the number one reason students transfer colleges is social fit - not academic fit.

The dining hall can also be surprisingly revealing. Recently, I visited Xavier University in Ohio. I loved the school. One of my favorite parts of the visit was simply sitting in the dining hall and watching students interact. Groups of students were laughing, talking, and eating together - students from all different backgrounds. The atmosphere felt warm, friendly, and welcoming.

Campus visits also give students a chance to explore the surrounding area. Many students enjoy having restaurants,



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

coffee shops, or outdoor spaces nearby. Seeing the surrounding town or city helps students imagine what life might look like outside the classroom.

Another benefit of visiting campuses is efficiency. One visit can quickly clarify what a student does - or does not - want in a college. For example, if a student visits a large city university like Boston University and realizes they would prefer a contained traditional campus - they can likely cross other similar city campuses off their list. On the other hand, they may discover they love the energy of a city campus.

While virtual research can still be helpful through college websites, student reviews, YouTube tours, and virtual campus tours - it often requires visiting

multiple sources to gather the same information that can be experienced in a single campus visit.

If possible, one of the greatest gifts a parent, guardian, or older sibling can give a student during the college process is the opportunity to experience a campus in person.

Seeing a college firsthand can bring clarity, confidence, and excitement to the journey ahead.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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Wrentham Commission on Disability Seeks to Raise Awareness, Recruit Members

By GRACE ALLEN

The Wrentham Commission on Disability is reestablishing its presence in town and working to raise awareness of accessibility issues while inviting residents to get involved.

Commission Chair Mary Dobek and Vice-Chair Rebecca Zitomer say the group's mission is to promote accessibility and inclusion for residents with disabilities while advising town officials on ways to improve access and services.

Wrentham had a Commission on Disability years ago, but it became inactive when members moved away or passed on. The commission has now been revived at the request of Town Manager Michael King, who reached out to Dobek, a member on the original Commission, to help restart it.

The current commission includes Dobek, Zitomer, and Jane O'Friel, but can include up to nine members.

The commission primarily serves in an advisory capacity to the town, helping identify accessibility issues and recommending improvements.

According to Dobek, a recent accessibility audit conducted by Wrentham resident Julie Garland as part of a graduate-level independent project has become an important reference for the town. Garland's employer, KMA, LLC, was subsequently hired by the town through a grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability to conduct audits of buildings and public spaces and to develop a transition plan for the town. The commission now uses that report as a benchmark to help guide improvements.

The group also collaborates with other town departments and boards, meeting monthly to discuss accessibility issues and explore ways to work together.

Residents who notice accessibility issues can contact the

commission through the town website. Members can then review concerns and determine how best to address them.

Examples might include improving crosswalk accessibility, evaluating intersections, or recommending changes to town facilities. While some older buildings in Wrentham's downtown may predate modern accessibility standards, federal and state laws generally require barriers to be removed when it is feasible to do so, and accessibility upgrades are typically required when buildings undergo renovations.

Commission members say accessibility will become increasingly important as Wrentham's population ages. Wrentham currently has five nursing facilities along with several 55-plus housing developments, making transportation and mobility key concerns.

Transportation in particular can be challenging in a rural

town like Wrentham, noted Zitomer, who is legally blind. Services such as ride programs can help, but they often have limited hours or geographic restrictions.

According to the ADA National Network, close to 30% of Americans over age 65 and 50% over 75 develop age-related disabilities such as mobility, vision, or hearing loss, impairments that can limit major life activities. Accessibility improvements can remove barriers that affect mobility, sensory, cognitive, and temporary disabilities—not just age-related limitations, note the commission's members.

Both Dobek and Zitomer bring personal experience to their work on the commission. Dobek has a son with cerebral palsy and has also worked in early intervention. Zitomer became legally blind in 2014 and has been involved with disability advocacy and training programs through the Massachusetts

Commission for the Blind.

The commission is currently seeking additional members as it works to expand its efforts in town. Residents with disabilities are especially encouraged to apply, as state guidelines require that a majority of commission members have a disability.

However, Zitomer emphasized that anyone interested in helping is welcome to attend meetings or volunteer.

"We never want to turn away anybody that wants to help," she said.

The commission meets monthly at Wrentham Town Hall, currently on Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m., though the schedule may change depending on member availability.

Residents interested in learning more or getting involved can find contact information for the commission on the Town of Wrentham website.

Norfolk Select Board Member Honored at 'Black Excellence on the Hill' Event

Norfolk Select Board member Dr. Taiese Bingham-Hickman was recently recognized at the annual "Black Excellence on the Hill" event hosted by the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus.

State Senator Becca Rausch nominated Bingham-Hickman for the recognition, which honors Black leaders from across Massachusetts for their contributions to their communities.

"It was my honor to nominate Dr. Taiese Bingham-Hickman, an educator, leader, and advocate for inclusive health care and housing, and the first Black woman elected to the Town of Norfolk Select Board in history," Rausch said in a statement.

Bingham-Hickman serves as Executive Director of The Leadership Alliance at Brown University, where she is also an adjunct assistant professor of biology. She is the founder and CEO of the New England Equity Collective, which promotes equity and access to housing.



According to the event program, Bingham-Hickman made history in 2025 when she became the first Black woman elected to the Norfolk Select Board. Her professional experience spans healthcare, disability advocacy, education, and housing.

In addition to her work at

Brown University and with the New England Equity Collective, Bingham-Hickman serves on the boards of the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress and Autism Care Partners.

A native of Lynn, Bingham-Hickman has lived in Norfolk since 2017.



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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

The Secret to Healthier Hair Might Be... Your Scalp

When we talk about hair care, the conversation usually revolves around the hair itself. Shine. Volume. Color. The perfect cut.

But there's a quiet truth that hair professionals have always known and science continues to confirm: the real starting point for healthy hair is not the hair at all.

It's the scalp.

The scalp is skin. The same living, breathing organ that covers your face and body continues up over your head, creating the environment where every single hair strand begins. Yet most of us treat it very differently from the rest of our skin.

We exfoliate our faces. We moisturize our skin. We protect it from buildup and congestion.

Our scalp? It usually gets shampoo and conditioner... and not much else.

Dermatologists often describe the scalp as one of the most active skin environments on the body. It contains tens of thousands of hair follicles and a high concentration of oil glands that work continuously to protect both the scalp and the hair shaft.

Like the rest of our skin, the scalp sheds cells, produces oil, responds to its environment, and benefits from proper care.

When the scalp becomes congested with excess oil, product buildup, dry shampoo, or environmental debris, the follicles can become weighed down. Hair may appear flat, dull, or harder to style. Sometimes the scalp itself may feel dry, tight, or irritated.

Think of the scalp like the soil in a garden. When the soil is clean, oxygenated, and balanced, plants grow beautifully. When it becomes compacted or congested, growth struggles.

Hair is no different.

Why Scalp Care Is Trending

That realization has sparked a quiet movement in the beauty world: the rise of scalp care.

Across the country, salons are beginning to approach the scalp the same way skincare professionals approach the face.

Gentle exfoliation, cleansing, circulation stimulation, and hydration are becoming part of modern hair wellness.

The idea is simple. When the scalp is healthy, hair behaves better.

It feels lighter. It moves more naturally. It often appears fuller at the root because buildup is no longer weighing it down.

Many people are surprised to learn that scalp care can also influence how hair holds style or how long a blowout lasts. When follicles are clear and the scalp is balanced, hair tends to respond more predictably to styling.

A Closer Look at the Scalp Spa

At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, this philosophy has inspired a growing interest in scalp-focused treatments.

Our Scalp Spa Experience begins with a look at the condition of the scalp itself. Just as an aesthetician studies skin before recommending a facial, stylists evaluate what the scalp needs at that moment. Some clients benefit from gentle exfoliation, while others need hydration or circulation-focused massage.

The treatment includes a detoxifying scalp scrub, nourishing oil application, massage, cleansing, and a professional blowout. It's designed to address a variety of concerns ranging from dry, itchy, or oily scalp to clogged follicles, irritation, and hair that feels weighed down.

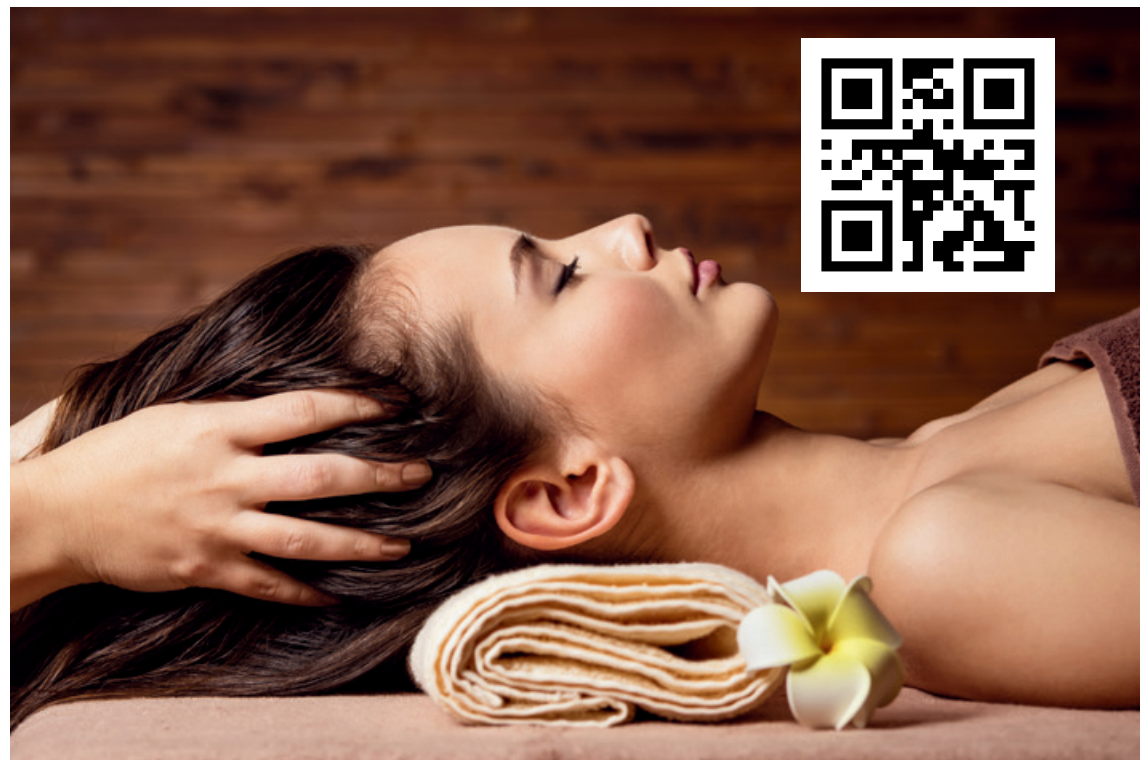
The goal is simple: restore balance.

Clients often describe the treatment as deeply relaxing, but the benefits go beyond relaxation. When the scalp is refreshed and clarified, the hair itself can feel noticeably different.

Lighter. Softer. More voluminous at the root.

The service concludes with a professional blow-dry, allowing clients to see just how well hair behaves when the scalp environment is reset.

What's interesting is that most people discover scalp care not because they were searching



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for it, but because they were trying to solve a hair problem. Hair that won't hold volume. Hair that feels heavy no matter what products are used. Hair that just doesn't seem to cooperate the way it once did.

Often, the answer isn't another styling product.

It's simply caring for the skin beneath it.

As more people begin to think of scalp health as part of overall hair wellness, this once overlooked area is finally getting the attention it deserves.

To help maintain results at home, b.LUXE also car-

ries luxury scalp-care products from Oribe and Kerasilk. These professional formulas are designed to gently exfoliate buildup, soothe irritation, and support the scalp's natural balance. When the scalp is treated with the same care as skin, the result is hair that feels lighter, healthier, and noticeably more vibrant.

Those curious about scalp health or wondering whether buildup, dryness, or irritation may be affecting their hair can speak with a stylist during a regular visit or consultation. Many people are often surprised to

learn how much the condition of the scalp can influence the way their hair looks and behaves.

After all, healthy hair doesn't begin at the ends.

It begins at the roots.

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Norfolk Barber to Compete in Charity Boxing Event Supporting Parkinson's Research

By GRACE ALLEN

Norfolk resident Kenneth Murphy, owner of Main Street Shave in Norfolk, will take part in Punch 4 Parkinson's, a charity boxing event scheduled for April 23 at The Royale, located at 279 Tremont St. in Boston.

Murphy is participating in the event as part of a fundraising effort to support individuals living with Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis. As one of the fighters, he has been challenged to raise \$7,500.

Punch 4 Parkinson's is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that develops non-combat boxing training and exercise programs for people living with Parkinson's disease. Through charitable donations, the organization has sponsored more than 500 participants—known as "Warriors"—and provides hands-on training through boxing centers sanctioned by USA Boxing.

Murphy said that if he is able to meet or exceed the fundraising target and become one of the event's top contributors, he will earn a championship belt. He hopes to display the belt in his barbershop.

"To me, that belt wouldn't just represent my win. It would represent Norfolk and the community coming together for a great

cause," Murphy said, noting that many of the people supporting his fundraising efforts so far are from town.

Murphy said he is currently training for the event and hopes to give his best performance on fight night. "I plan on giving it everything I've got," he said.

Individuals interested in supporting Murphy's fundraising efforts can donate through his online page, or by scanning the QR code. Donations are tax-deductible, and contributors will automatically receive a receipt after completing their donation.

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Norfolk Voters Head to the Polls May 5

By JOE STEWART

Norfolk's Annual Town Election is set for Tuesday, May 5, and several races will give voters a genuine choice. Town Clerk Carol Greene, who provided information for this article, encourages residents to take advantage of early voting options — more on those below.

Contested Races

The Select Board will see a head-to-head contest this spring. With one seat open, incumbent Anita Mecklenburg faces a challenge from Cathy Brown. (A third candidate, Shawn McGrath, pulled papers but has since withdrawn from the race.)

The Recreation Commission also has two open seats with three candidates in the running — incumbent Alex Perry, along with Mark Bykowski and Lauren Sager — so voters will again choose two.

Uncontested Races

The remaining positions on the ballot have a single candi-

date each. Patricia Salamone is running for re-election to the Board of Assessors, John Bowman is seeking re-election to the Board of Health, and incumbent Paul Terrio is the sole candidate for Constable. Susan Jacobson is running for a five-year term on the Housing Authority. Jim Lehan is running for re-election to the King Philip Regional School Committee.

Two Norfolk School Committee seats are open with incumbent Lauren Vives and Birch Duggins-Warf running. (Lindsay Semas, a third candidate, withdrew). The two Planning Board seats are uncontested, with incumbent Melissa Meo and Allary Braitsch each running for one. And Carol Greene is running for re-election as Town Clerk.

How and When to Vote

Election day is Tuesday, May 5. All election day voting is held at the Freeman-Kennedy School, 70 Boardman Street.

Town Clerk Greene particularly encourages voters with limited time on Election Day

to take advantage of in-person early voting, which is available at Town Hall, 1 Liberty Lane, in the Town Clerk's Office on the ground floor. Early voting runs from Friday, April 24 through Thursday, April 30, with the following hours: Friday April 24, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday April 25, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Monday April 27, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.; Tuesday April 28, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.; Wednesday April 29, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.; and Thursday April 30, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Residents who have requested a mail ballot may return it by mail or by using the secure drop box at the back entrance to Town Hall, which is under 24-hour video monitoring. Mail ballots must reach the Town Clerk's office by the close of polls on Election Day to be counted.

For voter registration information and additional election resources, visit norfolkmass.gov/departments/town_clerk/election_resources.php.

Candidate information was accurate at press time, but additional changes may occur before the final ballot is set.



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Norfolk American Legion Planning Trip to Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum

The Norfolk American Legion Post will host a special day trip to the renowned Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, the day after Memorial Day.

The group will travel by motorcoach, departing from Norfolk at 7:30 a.m. The cost is \$85 for veterans and \$120 for non-veterans.

The trip will be hosted by Norfolk American Legion Post Commander Frank Zolli, who served two years aboard the USS Intrepid during the Vietnam War, making the visit a unique opportunity to tour the historic aircraft carrier with a veteran who once served on it.

The USS Intrepid is one of the nation's most celebrated military ships. Commissioned during World War II, the aircraft carrier saw extensive combat in the Pacific Theater, surviving five kamikaze attacks and a torpedo strike while helping defeat Japanese forces. The ship later served during the Vietnam War and also participated in NASA space capsule recovery missions.

After being decommissioned in 1974, the vessel was transformed into the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, opening to the public in 1982. Today, the museum showcases an impressive collection of historic aircraft, military artifacts, and space exploration exhibits.

Among its highlights are the Space Shuttle Pavilion featuring the Enterprise space shuttle, the British Airways Concorde supersonic jet, and the guided missile submarine Growler. Visitors can explore the flight deck, hangar deck, and numerous interactive exhibits that bring naval aviation, space exploration, and American military history to life.

The museum offers an immersive experience aboard a real aircraft carrier and is an exciting destination for veterans, families, children, and anyone interested in World War II history, the Vietnam War, naval aviation, or NASA.

Those interested in joining the trip or seeking more information should contact Commander Frank Zolli at 508-520-2751 or email fczolli@gmail.com.

Original Congregational Church of Wrentham Accepting Donations for Spring Yard Sale

The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham is collecting gently used items for its upcoming Spring Yard Sale.

Donations may be dropped off during church office hours, Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The church will also hold a Drive-Up Donation Day on Saturday, April 25, from 1 to 3 p.m. During that time, donors may pull into the church parking lot where volunteers will assist with

unloading items from vehicles.

The Spring Yard Sale will take place Saturday, May 16, from 8 to 11 a.m.

The church asks that donors not bring electronics, large furniture, car seats, strollers, or clothing.

The Original Congregational Church of Wrentham is located at 1 East St. in Wrentham. For more information, call 508-384-3110 or visit www.occhurch.net.

Gilly's House to Host Third Annual Shoulder-to-Shoulder Men's BBQ in Wrentham

Gilly's House will host its third annual Shoulder-to-Shoulder Men's BBQ on Sunday, May 31 at 1 p.m. at 1022 West Street in Wrentham.

The event will feature guest speakers, food, and a cornhole tournament. It is free for men who have lost a loved one to substance use or suicide.

Guest speakers include David Gilmeister, founder of Gilly's House; David Swin-

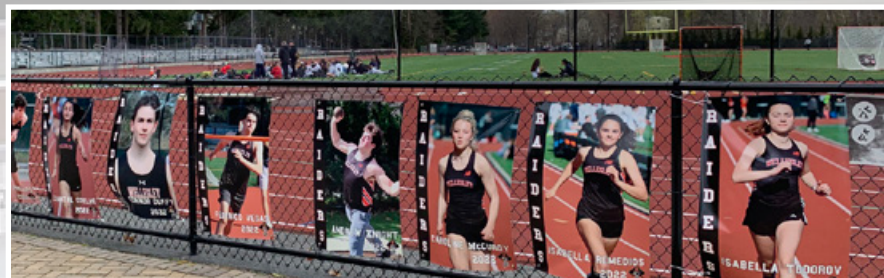
dell, founder of the CWS Foundation and director at The Sun Will Rise Foundation; and Tony Lagreca, station owner and host of the *Courage to Hope* podcast.

Registration is available at www.gillyshouse.com.

Questions about the event can be directed to David Swindell at dks27@comcast.net or Maureen Cappuccino at maureen@gillyshouse.com.

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Metacomet Public Health Alliance Announces Spring Health and Wellness Events

The Metacomet Public Health Alliance will host several upcoming community health events this spring in Norfolk, Wrentham, and Franklin, offering residents opportunities to learn about wellness, safety, and preventive health resources.

Two Health & Wellness Fairs are scheduled later this month:

Tuesday, April 21 | 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Norfolk Council on Aging
28 Medway Branch Road, Norfolk

Thursday, April 23 | 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Wrentham Senior Center
400 Taunton Street,
Wrentham

Both events will feature more than 20 vendors focused on healthy aging, wellness, and safety resources.

In May, the alliance will also host a Women’s Health Event featuring a vendor fair and on-site mammography services.

Tuesday, May 20
Vendor Fair: 2 – 5 p.m.
Dana-Farber Mammography Van: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. (times TBD)

The event will take place at New England Chapel, located at 300 East Central Street in Franklin. Residents are encouraged to attend and learn more about available health and wellness resources in the community.

Norfolk Cultural Council Announces Call for Artists for 2026 Juried Art Exhibition

The Norfolk Cultural Council is inviting artists to submit work for the 2026 Norfolk Cultural Council Juried Art Exhibition, which will be on display from May 2 through May 30 at the Norfolk Public Library, 2 Liberty Lane.

A reception and awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the library.

Artists may submit family-appropriate original artwork, including paintings, mono-prints, drawings, photographs, collages, and flat fiber art. Prints of original artwork will not be accepted. All pieces must be original and must not exceed 36 inches by 36 inches, including the frame.

The entry fee is \$25 for one entry or \$45 for two, with a maximum of two entries per artist. Entry fees are non-refundable. Applications will be accepted through April 17.

Digital payment may be submitted at <https://bit.ly/nccpay>, or checks may be sent to Norfolk Cultural Council, One Liberty Lane, Norfolk, MA 02056. Applications can be completed online at <https://bit.ly/ap-ncc>.

Sponsored applications are available; interested artists may email ncc@norfolk.ma.us for more information.

Prizes will be awarded.

Take Part in Open Space/Recreation Use Survey

By MAUREEN SULLIVAN

Residents in Norfolk are invited to help determine what happens with the town’s open space and recreation land over the next decade.

A survey is now available on the town’s home page, www.norfolkmass.gov. This survey includes questions about how often residents use recreational and conservation areas such as Kunde Conservation Land and the Campbell Forest; the reasons behind using (or not using) town recreational facilities; how often residents use facilities in other communities; and what amenities residents would like to see (better parking, improved lighting, etc.)

An updated plan would help the town set policy and priority actions for its open space and recreational facilities. It would also enable the town to access key funding sources from the state, such as Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Committees (PARC) grants.

The survey is open to all residents; the deadline to take the survey is May 1.

The last Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in 2017 and was certified through 2022.

In addition to the survey, the town will be seeking four residents to volunteer on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Steering Committee, according to Director of Planning and Development Richard McCarthy.

The committee will also include one member of the Conservation Commission; one member of the Recreation Commission; one member of the Select Board; and four residents. The members will serve on the committee until the Open Space and Recreation Plan is certified by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Once certified, the plan will be good for 10 years.

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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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Living Healthy

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underwent a program of care which included chiropractic adjustments as well as other soft tissue therapies such as cupping, muscle scraping and myofascial release to assist in her care. Within a short timeframe Susan was back to herself and living pain free.

We have helped many patients return to their normal daily lives following shoulder pain incidents, improving their mobility and ultimately eliminating their painful symptoms.

Call the Holistic Center at Bristol Square 508-660-2722 located at 1426 Main Street in Walpole to book your appointment today. Dr. Molly, Dr. Bien, or Dr. Goldstein will be happy to assist you on your journey back to health.

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Dr. Rochelle Bien, Dr. Molly Rappaport & Dr. Michael Goldstein

Stony Brook Camera Club Announces April Programs

The Stony Brook Camera Club (SBCC) meets on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September through June, offering both in-person and virtual options for members and guests.

In-person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street in Franklin. Club meetings feature guest speakers, photography competitions, and discussions on topics of general interest to photographers. The club also sponsors photography activities and workshops throughout the year.

SBCC welcomes photogra-

phers of all abilities.

The club's April programs, all held via Zoom, include:

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

For more information and a full calendar of events, visit stonbrookcc.com.

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Sports

King Philip Girls Hockey Stands Tall as Season Ends

By MATT HYLEN

The King Phillip girls hockey team ended their season with one of the most remarkable displays of resilience. Faced with an unimaginable tragedy following the passing of Head Coach Ken Assad, instead of backing down, the girls did exactly what Assad would have wanted.

The Warriors dedicated the season to their late head coach, powering through the regular season to earn the number five seed in the Division II playoffs. Once there, they dispatched Whitman-Hanson (6-0), Canton (2-1, 2 OT), Pembroke (1-0, 2OT), and Medfield (2-0) to earn a trip to the state championship game at Boston Garden. There, despite the continued season-long stellar goaltending of senior Kiki Lynch and a goal from junior Ella Morgan, the dream ended with a tough 2-1 loss to Milton. They ended a season they will never forget with a record of 23-3-1.

"This season will absolutely impact the rest of my life," Captain Camryn O'Shea said. "It has already impacted my own growth, perseverance, and understanding of life."

"When our team realized we were going to the Garden, it was truly one of the best feelings because it was all Kenny wanted for us," junior Erin Steck explained. "We all know he's doing 'the griddy' or doing another dance for us up there and always cheering us on."

Though the team came up just short in the championship game, it was never all about winning titles but rather the journey the team has been on together to get to this point.

"Dedicating the season to him has been very special for me, and I think it brought our team even closer together," sophomore Lanie O'Shea said.

Steck also added, "This achievement really shows how hard this team has worked, and how passionate every player is to reach our main goal. After Coach Kenny's passing, we all talked and went to the Garden as it was what we all wanted to do for him."

Coach Assad's presence, both on and off the ice, has left a monumental mark on the team that the girls will never forget. "I am so lucky to have been influenced by Coach Kenny's passion for everything he participated in," Camryn O'Shea stated. "He taught me how to be strong both on the ice and in life and that translated into how I dealt with his passing. I learned how to take this tragic event and make it into a reason to play harder every chance I get."

Coach Tim Langevin, who took over the role of head coach after Assad's passing, was remarkable in helping to not only lead this team, but also help them get through this impossible time. The methods in which he kept team morale up while also keeping Assad's memory at the forefront was an incredible display of leadership.



The King Philip Regional girls hockey team with Coach Tim Langevin and Assistant Coach Kate Holmes after their 1-0 double-overtime quarterfinal victory over Pembroke. (Photo courtesy King Philip Regional School District.)

"In between periods and before the game we have the little reminders of him," Steck said. "Whether it's someone saying 'do it for Kenny' or his favorite song 'Free Bird' coming on, or Coach Timmy saying 'everyone's rooting for you, especially the one upstairs,' the little reminders of him keep him in our hearts and go a long way."

The team would also perform a ritual of placing Assad's jacket on the bench during every game. "His jacket gives me an extra push to remind myself who this is all for," Steck said.

Though the Warriors did a tremendous job of showing their skills on the ice, they were far from alone off it. In light of

Assad's passing, Assad's family never stopped their support, helping in any way they could to cheer on their team.

"Seeing his family's love and unconditional support at every game means the world to us," Steck stated. "No matter how far away from the rink they are, they have constantly shown up to watch us and cheer us on. Seeing them there, although it is emotional, brings a piece of him to every game, which is extra special for everyone."

Camryn O'Shea also emphasized the impact the King Philip community has had on the team. "I hope that our fans and community know that they have impacted our season so much, with their endless support and appreciation for the work we have put into the season," O'Shea said. "With the community and support systems we have around us, we have gained the strength to

persevere and play for Kenny and the community."

Regardless of the end result, what the 2025-26 King Phillip girls hockey team has done this season is nothing short of inspiring. It is a story that not only touched the hearts of those close to them, but also touched the hearts of an entire community.

"As a team, we are very proud of the determination and strength everyone showed throughout the season," Lainey O'Shea expressed.

Camryn O'Shea also added, "Leading this team this year has been such an honor for me, each and every girl on the team has been a huge part of our success through it all, and I am so proud to be a member of this incredible team."

One thing is for certain: Coach Assad would be so proud of everything his team has achieved.

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Sports

EMASS Senior Softball League Opens Player Registration for 2026 Season

Be Part of a Team, Form Lasting Friendships and Enjoy Balanced Competition

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is now accepting registration for the 2026 season for men and women age 50 and older. With approximately 500 members, the league draws players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts, with games played primarily in Wayland, Medfield, Ashland, and Framingham. The season runs from late April through early October, including playoffs. Interested players can register at <https://e-mass.org/current-programs>. EMASS offers six divisions



that accommodate a range of skill levels. Two divisions play doubleheaders on Saturday mornings, while four play on weekday mornings. Some players continue to compete at a high level, while other divisions allow players to enjoy the game with others of similar abilities. “We are a group of folks who recognize how lucky we are to be able to play a game we love at our current age and at a level that matches our abilities,” said EMASS Commissioner Steve Bober.

For many participants, the league offers both recreation and community. “I joined EMASS when I retired and didn’t know a single person,” said Division Coordinator Al Handel. “Six years later, the best thing about being part of this community has been the number of friends I’ve made.” The league typically adds about 60 new players each year and reshuffles team rosters annually to encourage connections among members. Founded in 1995, EMASS provides a safe, organized opportunity for seniors of all skill levels to play competitive slow-pitch softball. For more information, visit www.e-mass.org.

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Fiske Public Library April Program Highlights

The library will be closed Monday, April 20, for Patriot’s Day. Regular hours are Monday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information and a complete list of programs and activities, visit fiskelib.org.

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

Student Reading Challenge 2025–2026 – Students read one book each month based on a prompt, collect stickers, and earn prizes. April’s challenge is a book about going through change.

Mad Science: Fire and Ice – Saturday, April 11, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Interactive science show for ages 3½ and up. Registration required through CFCE via fiskelib.org.

Read to Sophie the Library Dog – Saturday, April 18, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Children ages 5-10 can read to Sophie, a therapy dog from Dog B.O.N.E.S. of MA. Register for a time slot at fiskelib.org.

Magic Show with Scott Martell – Tuesday, April 21, 11 a.m. to noon. Magic and comedy program for ages 4-12. Sponsored by the Friends of the Fiske Library and funded largely by a grant from Eversource, MA.

Lunchtime Movie – Wednesday, April 22, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. PG-rated family movie in the Sweatt Room. Children may bring lunch and a picnic blanket.

Painting Class for Tweens and Teens – Saturday, April 25, 1 to 2:30 p.m. Art educator Julie Harrold will lead a spring acrylic painting class for ages 10 and up. Sponsored by the Friends of the Fiske Library.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Puzzle Race – Thursday, April 2, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Teams of four compete to assemble identical jigsaw puzzles. Entry fee \$30 per team.

“How to Paint Dandelions” Art Workshop – Saturday, April 4, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Beginner-friendly acrylic painting workshop for adults. Registration required.

Learn to Sew – Thursdays, April 9, 16 and 23, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Three-week series teaching sewing machine basics and sewing skills.

Dolley Madison Presentation – Saturday, April 11, 2 to 3 p.m. Janet Parnes portrays Dolley Madison as part of the Fiske Library Foundation’s Revolution 250 Speaker Series.

Free IT Help Office Hours – Tuesdays, 5 to 7:30 p.m. IT expert Ben Elliot provides help with personal technology questions. Appointments encouraged through his website.

Spice Kits – Monthly kits with recipes and a sample spice are available while supplies last. April’s spice is dill.

Fiske Library Book Club – Tuesday, April 28, 7 p.m. Discussion of *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney.

Virtual Author Talks

- **Valerie Neal** – On a Mission: The History of U.S. Women Astronauts, April 2, 2–3 p.m.
- **Brad Taylor** – Writing Action-Packed Spycraft, April 14, 7 p.m.
- **Miranda Cowley Heller** – Lush Lyricism and Intimate Confessions, April 22, 2 p.m.
- **Jason Reynolds** – Writing Beloved Characters and Portrayals of Resilience, April 30, 7 p.m.

Registration and additional information are available at library.org/fiskelib.

Residents Warned About Fraudulent Bill Payment Email Scam

The Town of Wrentham is warning community members about a scam involving fraudulent emails targeting applicants for permits, licenses, and other approvals from the Town.

Local officials have recently become aware of scam emails bearing official Town of Wrentham logos with fake billing invoices, referencing real property addresses and projects, with requests for payments via wire transfer, check or through links for online payment. Do not follow these malicious links, disregard these requests for payment and report these fraudulent emails as spam with your email service provider.

The Town of Wrentham does not send emails with links asking residents or contractors to pay permit fees or any other municipal bills.

Residents should only make payments on the official Town of Wrentham website by clicking the “Online Payments” button on the homepage at www.wrentham.gov. Fees can also be paid in-person at Town Hall at 79 South St. Permit applicants should also only use the

official Town website to access the Town’s permitting system through its OpenGov service, which can be reached directly at wrenthamma.portal.opengov.com.

Anyone who receives a suspicious message claiming to be from the Town of Wrentham is encouraged to contact Town Hall directly to confirm whether a payment is required. Town Hall can be reached by phone at 508-384-5400.

Town officials believe scammers may be targeting permit applicants by gathering contact information from the public domain. In some cases, fraudulent messages may appear convincing or may appear to come from legitimate organizations or individuals.

Similar scam emails have also targeted individuals and businesses in Mansfield and Franklin.

For more information about permits, payments or town services, residents should visit www.wrentham.gov.

Targets of online fraud may contact the Wrentham Police Department at 508-384-2121 to report suspected scams.

Norfolk Resident Barry Zimmerman Named Five Star Wealth Manager for 13th Consecutive Year

Norfolk resident Barry Zimmerman has been named a Five Star Wealth Manager for the thirteenth consecutive year, an

honor featured in the March issue of Boston Magazine.

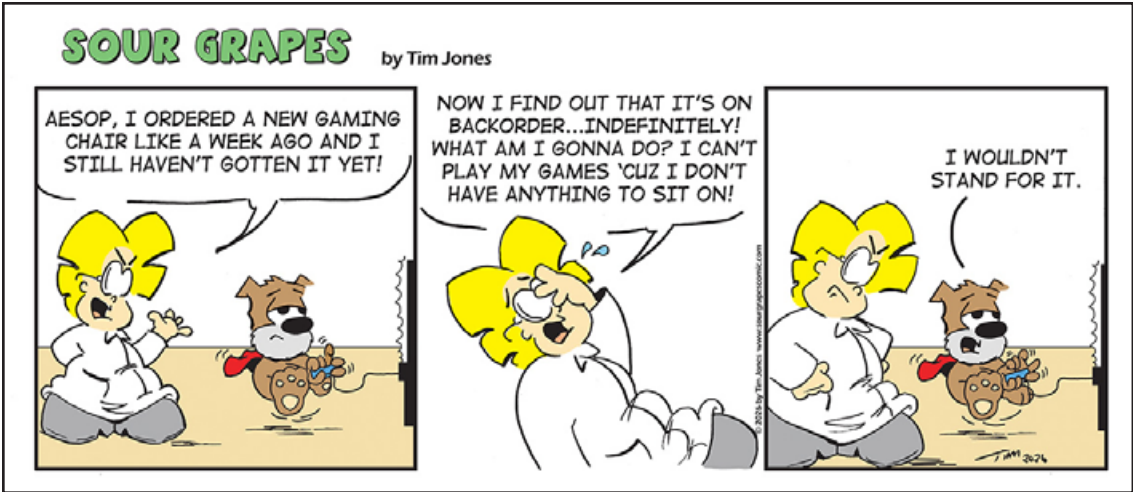
The Five Star Wealth Manager award recognizes financial

professionals who demonstrate strong client service and professional achievement. Recipients are selected through a research

process that includes peer nominations and industry evaluations, as well as surveys of thousands of financial services professionals and firms registered with FINRA or the SEC.

Zimmerman attended the University of New Hampshire as an undergraduate and later earned his MBA from Boston University.

Zimmerman is affiliated with Sunstone Wealth Strategies.



Treasurer Goldberg Announces Latest Release of Unclaimed Property Listings

Over 50,000 Names Added to Unclaimed Property List since August

Massachusetts State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg has announced the latest grouping of names added to the state’s list of unclaimed property owners. Over 50,000 new properties worth millions of dollars are owed to individuals, businesses, and nonprofits. This newly released list includes only individuals and businesses with unclaimed property over \$100.

“There is \$3.4 billion in unclaimed property here in Massachusetts, and some of it could belong to you,” said State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg. “So check the list,

go online, or call our office to begin the process. Even if you have checked before, check again because we are always adding new names and you never know!”

Unclaimed property includes forgotten savings and checking accounts, un-cashed checks, insurance policy proceeds, stocks, dividends, and the contents of unattended safe deposit boxes. Most accounts are considered abandoned and are turned over to the state after three years of inactivity. Last year, Treasury processed over 118,000 claims and returned \$237

million in property to its rightful owners.

Treasurer Goldberg urges all citizens to check www.findmassmoney.gov for a complete list of over 10 million properties or call our live call center at 1-888-344-MASS (6277).

The Treasury releases an updated list of unclaimed property assets every six months as the new accounts are turned over to the Commonwealth. There is no time limit for a person to claim this property and, in many cases, claimants will receive interest.

Check Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms After Daylight Saving Time Change

Outdated Alarms May Not Protect You When Needed Most, Fire Marshal Says

With daylight saving time now underway, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine is reminding residents to check their smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms after changing their clocks.

“Smoke and CO alarms save lives, but only if they’re working properly,” said Davine. “Take a moment to check the manufacturing date printed on the back of the device and replace any alarms that have gone out of date. And unless you have newer alarms with sealed, long-life batteries, this is a good time to replace the alkaline batteries in all your alarms.”

Smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years. Carbon monoxide alarms need replacement after 5, 7, or 10 years, depending on the make and model. If there is no date on the alarm, it should be replaced.

Of the 44 fire deaths in Massachusetts last year, 90% occurred in residential settings, and many took place overnight or in the early morning hours. Fire officials say smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling of each bedroom and in the hallway outside sleeping areas.

CHECK
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Real Estate Corner



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Real Estate Corner



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Norfolk County Real Estate Market Shows Mixed Results in February

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported mixed real estate activity in February 2026, with some indicators rising year-over-year while others declined compared to both last year and the previous month.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds recorded 7,083 documents in February, a 3% increase from February 2025 but a 10% decrease from January 2026.

"Document recordings in February continued to trend slightly ahead of last year," said O'Donnell. "Even with the typical late-winter slowdown, the year-over-year increase shows that engagement with real estate remains steady across Norfolk County."

A total of 952 deeds were recorded in February, an 8% decrease from February 2025 and a 15% decrease from January 2026. Deeds recorded with consideration totaled 379, an 11% decline year-over-year and a 20% drop from the previous month.

"The decrease in deeds reflects the ongoing shortage of prop-

erties coming onto the market," said O'Donnell. "Low inventory and homeowners holding onto low-rate mortgages continue to limit sales activity, and winter conditions may have discouraged some buyers and sellers."

The average sale price for commercial and residential properties in February was \$1,104,109, a 4% increase from February 2025 but a 26% decrease from January 2026. Total sales volume reached \$418 million, a 7% decrease year-over-year and 41% lower than January.

Lending activity showed year-over-year gains. The Registry recorded 1,219 mortgages, a 24% increase from February 2025 but a 3% decrease from January 2026. Total mortgage indebtedness was \$1.51 billion, a 7% decrease year-over-year but a 62% increase from January.

The Registry also monitored foreclosure activity. In February there were 3 foreclosure deeds, down from 7 in February 2025, while 27 notices to foreclose were recorded, up from 19 last year.

"Life can change unexpectedly, and financial hardship can affect anyone," O'Donnell said. "If someone is having trouble paying their mortgage, I encourage them to contact one of the non-profit agencies listed on our website."

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds partners with Quincy Community Action Programs and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions to assist residents facing mortgage challenges.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham. More information is available at www.norfolkdeeds.org.

Spring Has Arrived-and
So Have the Buyers





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CHECK
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More than half of last year's residential fire deaths involved adults age 65 and older. Davine encouraged residents to check on older relatives, friends, and neighbors who may need help installing, testing, or replacing alarms. Seniors can also contact their local fire department, council on aging, or senior center for assistance through programs such as the Department of Fire Services' Senior SAFE grant program.

Massachusetts firefighters respond to about 5,000 calls each year where carbon monoxide is detected. Because the gas cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted, working CO alarms are the only way to detect it. If a CO alarm sounds, residents should get outside to fresh air immediately and call 9-1-1.

**Call Jen Schofield at 508-570-6544
to run in our Real Estate Corner**

Real Estate Corner

Norfolk County Real Estate Activity Shows Steady Start to 2026

Real estate activity in Norfolk County remained steady in January 2026 compared to the same period last year.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds recorded 7,907 documents in January, a 1% increase from January 2025, though 22% lower than December 2025.

“Document recordings for January held close to last year’s levels,” said Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O’Donnell. “Real estate activity typically slows at the start of the year following December’s end-of-year surge.”

A total of 1,124 deeds were recorded, a 2% decrease from January 2025, while total commercial and residential real estate sales reached \$710 million, a 10% increase year over year.

The average sale price was \$1,498,107, up 21% from January 2025 and 4% from December 2025.

Lending activity also increased. The Registry recorded 1,251 mortgages, a 10% increase from January 2025, though 29% lower than December 2025. Total mortgage indebtedness reached \$929 million, a 19% increase from the previous year.

Foreclosure activity remained low, with three foreclosure deeds recorded, down from four in January 2025. Twenty-four notices to foreclose were recorded, up from 20 last year.

Residents seeking assistance with mortgage challenges may contact Quincy Community Action Programs, NeighborWorks Housing Solutions, or the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Consumer Advocacy and Response Division.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham. Land records are available at www.norfolk-deeds.org.

First Universalist Society in Franklin to Host “Moving From Grief to Justice” Service

The First Universalist Society in Franklin will host a special service titled “Moving From Grief to Justice” on Sunday, April 26, at 10 a.m. at its meetinghouse at 262 Chestnut Street in Franklin.

The service will feature Rev. Jo Murphy, Executive Director of UU Mass Action, who will explore how individuals and communities can move beyond fear and despair in difficult times. Rev. Murphy will discuss the importance of allowing space for grief and how that process can lead to justice-centered action, while sustain-

ing hope, joy, and wonder.

Rev. Murphy leads organizing and mobilization efforts through UU Mass Action campaigns. In addition to her advocacy work, she serves as a chaplain at Beth Israel and is the parent of a young daughter, Simone.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation. The congregation is led by Rev. Beverly Waring.

For more information about the First Universalist Society in Franklin, visit fusf.org, email info@fusf.org, or call 508-528-5348.



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New England Country Club in Bellingham MA

Entry Fee: \$150 Per Golfer

Includes:

- Continental Breakfast
 - Full Lunch
 - Green Fees
 - Cart
- Registration: 7:00AM

Shotgun Start: 8:30AM

Lunch: 12:30 – 2:00PM

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