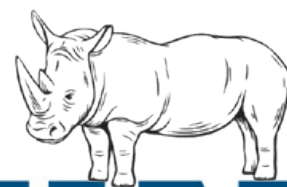




# Bellingham

## BULLETIN



Vol. 32 No. 6

Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

May 1, 2026

## Bellingham weighs \$3M school override June 2nd

By JENNIFER RUSSO

It's the kind of question that tends to go beyond Town Hall meetings and school committee agendas and into conversations over family dinners at the table.

At the May 27th Town Meeting, Article 2 will ask voters to agree to a town budget contingent on town voter approval on June 2nd of a \$3 million override aimed directly at funding the operating budget of the Bellingham School Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026. While the question is straightforward on paper, it leads to conversations about financial futures, children's futures, and what is reasonable given the current economic climate.

The official ballot language for the June 2nd election reads:

"Shall the Town of Bellingham be allowed to assess an additional \$3,000,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the Bellingham School Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026?"

Before it ever reaches voters, a question like this moves through a structured local process, starting with the annual warrant and numerous discussions at town meetings. The Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee held a series of joint meetings throughout February and March to review budget conditions and begin shaping the FY27 financial outlook. Presentations and

**VERRIDE**  
continued on page 2

## National champions!

### Bellingham winter varsity cheer wins at nationals in Orlando

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Bellingham High School Varsity Cheer had an amazing winter season, culminating in winning the first-place 2026 AmeriCheer International Championship Coed Division trophy in Orlando in mid-March.

"The whole team has just had a lot of strong work ethic. We just chose to not stop working all season and to keep fighting," says Coach Tracey Elliott, adding, "We never stopped pushing for more."

From the beginning of the

**CHAMPIONS**  
continued on page 4



Bellingham High School Varsity Cheer won the 2026 AmeriCheer International Championship Coed Division first-place trophy in Orlando in mid-March. Photo by Tracey Elliott

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**Southwick's ZOO**

# Rosary, raffle & plant sale are LoSA focus for May

The Ladies of St. Anne Sodality (LoSA) is still accepting applications, which are available at the doors of St. Blaise Church, for 2026 Scholarships. All high school seniors or full-time college or technical school students who have not previously won this scholarship are eligible to apply. The Scholarship is for \$750 each, and multiple scholarships may be awarded. Applications must be received by May 10, 2026.

LoSA members assembled

nine Mother's Day gift baskets with various items, such as spa and bath products, chocolates, wine, snacks. Raffle tickets for these baskets will be sold before and after each Mass. For \$5 you receive seven tickets, \$2 for three tickets or \$1 for one ticket. All baskets will be on display during weekend Masses. Drawing will be on May 3 following the 10 a.m. Mass.

The Ladies Annual Plant Sale will take place on May 16 and 17 before and after

each Mass. Each 6-inch pot contains three different colorful, drought-tolerant annuals. You can't beat the price at \$5 each!

The May 14 meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Chapel at St. Blaise Catholic Church, 1158 S. Main St., where we will pray the Rosary.

The April meeting was our annual Baby Shower for Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center, located in Attleboro. Abundant Hope has



**Pictured are Ladies who donated items for the Ladies of St. Anne annual Baby Shower for Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center, located in Attleboro, last month.**

been providing life affirming choices and material support to women and families in need, free of charge, in Southeastern Massachusetts and Northern Rhode Island for over twenty years. In 2023, over 1,000 clients visited AH receiving \$150,000+ in services. For more information on Abundant Hope, visit [www.ahprc.org](http://www.ahprc.org).

## VERRIDE

*continued from page 1*

recordings from those discussions are available on the town's website under the Finance Department's FY27 budget page here: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/924/Proposed-FY-2027-Budget>

The warrant itself is managed through the Town Clerk's office, which plays a key role in organizing, recording, and officially preparing the town's legislative and election documents

each year. It's the behind-the-scenes administrative step that ensures items like overrides are properly placed in front of voters at our town elections.

While overrides can sometimes reflect a mix of town-wide needs, this year's proposal is clearly centered on the school department. Officials have pointed to the steady climb in school-related expenses, encompassing everything from ensuring adequate staffing and contractual obligations to transportation and special education services, as a major factor be-

hind the budget pressure heading into the new fiscal year.

Like many communities across Massachusetts, Bellingham is working within the limits of Proposition 2.5, which sets a cap on how much local property tax revenue can increase each year. When costs rise faster than that cap allows, towns are left with a narrow set of options: reduce services, find ways to be more efficient, or ask voters to approve additional funding. This override falls into that last category.

For many parents, it comes

back to what classrooms will look like next year. How many students are in each room, what programs are available, and whether current staffing levels can be maintained or increased. Everyone wants the best possible education for their children, but it also brings another question - when the costs required to achieve and maintain that level of education start to grow significantly, how do we weigh that against what residents can realistically afford?

For other residents, especially those on fixed incomes or feeling broader financial pressure due to any number of reasons, the focus tends to shift to affordability and the long-term impact on property taxes, which could rise by several hundred dollars per household, depending on current home values.

If approved, the \$3 million override would be used specifically to support the school department's operating budget. It would enable the department to allocate funding aligned to their strategic plans. If the override is not approved, town officials have prepared an alternative budget that includes reductions. For the schools, that could mean difficult decisions around staffing, larger class sizes, and potential cuts to programs and supports, depending on how the

final budget is balanced.

Ultimately, the challenge is finding that middle ground where strong educational outcomes and fiscal responsibility aren't competing priorities, but parts of the same long-term plan for a healthy, stable town.

"We will continue to have meetings with the select board reviewing the override, and I expect to participate in public forums. We will also leverage information on the website, short informational videos, and outreach so that people understand the request being made by the May 27 town meeting and June 2 elections," shares Town Administrator Joseph Laydon.

Additionally, the Believe in Bellingham group has been hosting informational sessions and sharing information with residents. Follow their Facebook page to stay connected.

For now, the question sits in a very familiar place for Bellingham at the center of quality education and programs, taxes, and the ongoing effort to balance what a town wants to provide with what it can realistically afford. And on June 2, it will be up to residents to decide where that balance lands. No matter which side of the issue you may be on, it is important to vote and let your voice be heard.



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# Letter to the editor:

## Please vote YES on June 2nd, 2026

Dear Bellingham Residents:  
 There is an override vote in Bellingham on June 2nd, 2026. Thirty-six positions in our schools are at risk. Programming is at risk. Extra-curricular activities that help round out a comprehensive education are at risk. Positions can be eliminated, but the responsibility of those positions cannot. This override is not a band-aid, it's a tourniquet. The realities of unfunded mandates, rising health care costs, rising transportation costs and the complex calculus of special education/circuit breaker reimbursements. These are the things driving the need for an override. This override is not the result of mismanagement of funds or lack of transparency. This is a perfect storm that is impacting nearly 50 communities in Massachusetts. We are fully aware of the fiscal challenges that surround us. From the gas pump to the mortgage rate—we are all living with the fact that an increase in costs and materials gets passed on to the consumer.

Investing in schools is an investment in real estate and an investment in community. Most importantly it is an investment in the nearly 2000 students in Bellingham—most who cannot vote.

We have to rely on each other. And thankfully, there is recent evidence of consistent support for our municipality.

There is a word that describes the insistence of the people who have made their way to the polls throughout the years. That word is pride.

There was pride on display in 2020 when the residents supported the 1.5 million dollar override (during a worldwide pandemic with 44 million people out of work). There was pride in 2024 when residents approved an override to support our fire department and there was pride at a town meeting in 2025 when the residents supported a 1.5 million dollar upgrade to the police department.

These decisions are emblematic of folks in town investing in their community. Six years, three decisions by the residents. Police. Fire. Schools. Priorities on EVERY level. An emphatic statement of the people, for the people and by the people. Evidence of what matters in this town. Proof that your vote counts. That your community matters.

As John Adams once said, "facts are stubborn things." And the residents of Bellingham seem stubborn in their intent to support municipal services. And that is just the type of "stubborn" we need in a town that values police, fire and schools.

Sincerely,  
 Erik Ormberg  
 103 Farm Street

# From the Town Clerk

There are a lot of important dates coming up at the Town Clerk's office! We're busy preparing for the Annual Spring Town Meeting. A reminder that the deadline to register to vote for the meeting will be May 18th. If you have any questions about your registration status, you can check online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/voterregistrationsearch/>. Though the meeting will be broadcast, Massachusetts General Law does not allow for remote participation, so it's important to be there to make your voice count. The meeting will be held at the Bellingham High School auditorium at 60 Blackstone Street at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27th.

The deadline has passed to pull and return papers for the June 2nd, 2026 Local Election. The last day to withdraw or object is April 30th, but as of press time, the following residents will be on the ballot. (Note that an asterisk indicates no one has returned papers for that seat). The Select Board has voted to approve Voting by Mail (no-excuse early voting) for the June election.

Ballots can't be ordered until after that April 30th deadline, so I expect they'll be in by the second week of May, and we will turn them around as fast as we can for those who have applied for a Vote by Mail ballot. To receive a Vote by Mail ballot, you must complete and an application and return it to the Town Clerk's office. Those applications can be found on our website at [bellinghamma.org](http://bellinghamma.org), or you can register online through the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office.

The last day to register to vote for the Local Election is May 22nd, and the last day to apply for a Vote by Mail ballot is May 26th. Meet the candidate events will be held at the Senior Center on May 19th at 10 a.m., and at the Bellingham Public Library on May 7th at 6 p.m, and all are welcome at both.

Thank you, and as always please call us at 508- 657 – 2830 or email at [townclerk@bellinghamma.org](mailto:townclerk@bellinghamma.org) with any

questions. We're looking forward to a smooth, safe election!

Amy Bartelloni  
 Town Clerk

- Select Board, 2 positions, 3-year terms**  
 Michael J. Hennessey (I)  
 Kimberly L. O'Neal
- Planning Board, 1 position, 3-year term**  
 \*
- Planning Board, 1 Position, 1-year term**  
 Patrick Sullivan
- Library Trustee, 2 Positions, 3-year terms**  
 Macala Lamour (I)  
 Lynn M. Miller
- Library Trustee, 1 Position, 1-year term**  
 Laura Caitlin Bracey
- School Committee, 1 Position, 3-year term**  
 Beverly Pierce (I)  
 Dustin Leo Gee
- Housing Authority, 1 Position, 5-year term**  
 Debra K. Sacco
- Constable, 2 positions, 2-year terms**  
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June 27<sup>th</sup> will be a great time to check out the Waterlilies.



### ENTER TO WIN TICKETS TO SOUTHWICK'S ZOO!

Find the Hidden Animals in This Month's Editorial Pages! There are 10 animals scattered throughout this issue's articles. Scan the QR code below and submit the list of animals you have found for your chance to win a Grand Prize of a Family 4-pack of general admission tickets to Southwick's Zoo during the 2026 season. Multiple runner-up 2-pack general admission tickets will be awarded. Submit by June 12, 2026 to be included.



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### CHAMPIONS

continued from page 1

season, the Bellingham team's athleticism shone through, as in its first invitational competition, the Winter Wonderland at Billerica Memorial High School on February 7th, the team not only achieved first place in the coed division, but the highest score overall on that day, becoming grand champions of the competition. The very next day, they'd win first place at the Ram Rumble competition at La Salle Academy in Providence, RI.

One week later, Bellingham Cheer, the only D-4 team at the Tri-Valley League Championship, would take second

place. Then, on February 20th's Heart of the Hill at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, in Dudley, Mass., they won first place, followed by a first-place reign at the Scituate Invitational on February 22nd.

The month of March saw more success for the team. On March first, BHS cheerleaders won first place in the Small Coed Division at the Massachusetts State Athletic Association (MSAA) South Regional Championship, followed by another first-place win at the MSAA High School Cheerleading State Championship a week later.

At that competition, notes Elliott, "In small coed, we had Divisions 2, 3 and 4, and we



BHS Varsity Cheer took first place in their division at the MSAA High School Cheerleading State Championship at Worcester State on March 8th. Back row, from left, Assistant Coach Jackie Dembushack, Assistant Coach Tori Huth, Miley Elliott, Ella Blintten, Bridget Walsh, Devin Healy, Maddie Egan, Ava Kilroy, Olivia Walker, Assistant Coach Ashley Johnson, Asst. Coach Madison Elliott Front row: Assistant Coach RYANNE HAYNES, Natalie Doran, Lyric Healy, Abigail Walker, Coach Tracey Elliott. Photo by Melanie Walker

beat all other competitors with the highest score," she says.

Nationals in Orlando came the following week, and the team worked hard to fundraise for the cost of the trip.

"We had some amazing sponsors that really helped us out," says Elliott, who just finished her 11th year coaching BHS Varsity Cheer. Next year will be her 29th year of coaching, including high school, all-stars and now, she says, college.

Elliott says she's grateful to her leadership team, which includes Assistant Coach Ashley Johnson, who works alongside Elliott for Bellingham High School, as well as four other assistant coaches, BHS alum Madison Elliott, who currently cheers at UConn, BHS Alum RYANNE HAYNES, who cheers at Providence College, former

All-Star cheerleader Victoria Huth, of Uxbridge, and Jaclyn Dembushack, former Norton High School coach.

"It's wonderful having so many coaches that can come and help. I'm very lucky to have (former team members) come back and want to be a part of it," says Elliott, adding, "I'm pretty connected to my athletes ... We're family for life, and I think we all support that."

This year's team, with 10 who competed, had Abigail Walker and Lyric Healy as captains.

"Lyric is on the quieter side, and Abby is a little more outspoken, but together they worked well," says Coach Elliott. The team, which included a range of ages, from one 7th grader to three seniors, were together seven days a week at some points. In addition to cheering on at least one other sports game a week, they'd practice five days, with some weekends seeing more than one competition. In the off season, they stay in shape in the weight room and work on team building in the summer, before practice resumes in August.

"We had a motto: 'stronger together,'" says Elliott, "We decided we weren't letting up; we were going to win this season." And win they did.

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# Bellingham's annual cleanup yields 232 bags of trash and over 100 volunteers

By DAVID DUNBAR

More than 100 volunteers fanned out across Bellingham on Earth Day last month to pick up trash. They collected 232 big, black bags of stuff people thoughtlessly tossed out of their car windows onto the streets.

Volunteers spent about four hours on a Saturday morning being transported by GATRA buses to the messiest streets like Center, Maple, and Hartford, and wearing bright yellow shirts began picking up and bagging refuse. It was capped off with a thank-you lunch at Town Hall. All those bags of refuse will be hauled away by EL Harvey and properly disposed.

The cleanup was organized by the Board of Health, and directed by Health Agent



Collecting trash along Center Street in Bellingham are (from left) Jenn Ginn, Mike Ginn, Dan Howard, and town Health Agent Dylan Labonte. Every year, the Board of Health sponsors the town's Earth Day Cleanup event which this year drew more than 100 volunteers.

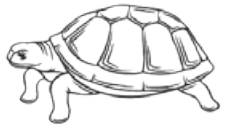
Dylan Labonte, with cooperation from other town departments. Volunteers included Bellingham High School football players, track stars, and cheer leaders.

"Everything went very smoothly," says Labonte, "and it would not have been possible without the massive volunteer support from the Town." He also thanked local pizza and coffee shops and supermarkets for "their generous donations of food and beverages."

"The very first Earth Day was April 22nd, 1970, and by the twentieth century, more

than 200 million people across 141 countries participated," explains Labonte. "I think it is an extremely important event to remind folks that they have the power to make a difference in their communities."

Where we as a community have been through so much these past few years, this event reminds us that we are able to still come together as a community to achieve a common goal, regardless of people's backgrounds.



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## St. Vincent de Paul clothing drive May 2nd & 3rd

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, St. Blaise Conference will be having a clothing drive the weekend of May 2nd and 3rd at St. Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham. The donation trailer will be parked at the back of the St. Blaise parking lot. The trailer will be open for donations 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday (5/2) and 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Sunday (5/3). We will accept all clean usable clothing and shoes,

bagged and boxed, and also, this year, boxed up books. We cannot accept furniture, household appliances or bric-a-brac.

This is one of the conference's main fundraisers. All proceeds are used locally to assist Bellingham residents, regardless of faith. Assistance is provided for heating, gas, electrical bills, rent and other necessities.

So, start your spring cleaning now and gather up your no longer

wanted but still usable items and help our neighbors in need.

*Happy Mother's Day!*

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# A day of color & connection: Join in the 2nd Annual Sam Hughes Color Run & 5K on June 20th

By JENNIFER RUSSO

On June 20, the streets of Bellingham will fill with color again, with bright bursts of powder in the air, laughter as friends ensure others are covered in color, and a community coming together for something that goes far deeper than a typical 5K run.

The second annual Sam Hughes Memorial 5K and Colorful Fun Run isn't just about miles or finish lines. It's about remembering a young man whose absence is still felt throughout the community and creating something meaningful in his name.

Sam Hughes passed away in March 2024 at just 19 years old after a long struggle with mental illness. In the wake of that loss, the Hughes/Buckley family and a number of close friends set out to build something that could carry forward his spirit in a way that felt true to who he was. They landed on a color run.

It made sense. Sam loved bright colors, and the idea of a run filled with them felt less like a somber memorial and more like a reflection of joy and honor for someone so loved. His kindness and humor permeated everything and everyone around him, so clouds of color in the air and brightening everyone's clothing is fitting.

Last year's inaugural event drew neighbors, classmates, and strangers together. This year, organizers are hoping to build on this connection, with even more people participating and connecting with each other. Sam's Memorial 5K and Colorful Fun Run welcomes participants of all ages and abilities. Participants can run, jog, walk, or just come to support something that matters.

The race will have water stations, after-race snacks, rock painting, temporary tattoos, and prizes will be presented to the top 3 overall male, female, and non-binary finishers, as well as the first-place finisher in various age groups (18 and under, 19-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65+)

Proceeds from the run go toward the Sam G. Hughes Memorial Scholarship at Worcester State University, helping future students pursuing degrees in the fields of Psychology, Health



Sciences, or Biology, with a focus on a career in the Mental Health space. The family felt it was a great way to honor Sam's name in a lasting, meaningful way. But just as important as the fundraising is the quiet, ongoing work of bringing mental health into the open and making space for conversations that too often go unspoken.

The color run doesn't try to tie everything up neatly. It doesn't pretend that loss makes sense. What it offers instead is something simpler and, in its own way, more powerful: a chance to be together, to remember, to move forward, and to make a difference, side by side.

Registration is open now, and those who can't attend are encouraged to donate or share the event to help extend its reach.

On June 20, the colors will fly again. And for a few hours, at least, grief and joy will exist in the same space, carried forward by a community that refuses to forget and wants to make a true impact on getting people the help they need, when they need it.

Learn more about and sign up for Sam's Memorial 5K and Colorful Fun Run, see a course map, or donate at this website: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Bellingham/SamsMemorial5KColorfulFunRun>. For more race-day information, you can also go here: <https://app.smorc.com/n/1hu6m>.

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# Saving for Retirement: Are You Guessing or Planning?



Todd Miller, CFP®

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Let's say you dream of spending your retirement mornings on a warm beach, coffee in hand, waves rolling in. To get there, you had a simple plan: save \$1 million and buy the beach house you always wanted.

But when retirement arrives, reality hits. After accounting for keeping your current home, everyday expenses and health care, \$1 million doesn't stretch

as far as you thought, and the beach house remains a dream. The problem wasn't your discipline – it was that your number was never really your number. It was arbitrary, not anchored to what your ideal retirement would actually cost.

How can you make sure your retirement number is right for you?

A solid savings goal starts with a clear picture of the retirement you want. Think through where you plan to live, whether you'll keep your current home or downsize, how much you plan to travel, if you'll help children and grandchildren financially and what health care might cost you later in life. Build a realistic monthly budget, then multiply by 12 months to find your annual need. Adjust this amount for inflation until the first year of retirement.

Then, multiply that figure by 25 to get a sense of how much may be needed to save. It's a formula based on the idea of withdrawing 4% annually from your savings, assuming you retire in your mid-60s. If you

need \$60,000 a year, your target is around \$1.5 million. You may need more or less depending on your lifestyle, health, unexpected expenses, Social Security benefits and other income. No single rate or strategy will work for everyone. A financial advisor can help you determine your number and strategy.

Once you know your target, the path forward becomes clearer. Here are a few tips for next steps:

**Start early.** The sooner you begin saving, the more time compound interest has to work in your favor. Small amounts set aside automatically each paycheck have the opportunity to grow significantly over decades.

**Live below your means.** Spending less than you earn is one of the most powerful wealth-building habits. When your income rises, save and invest the difference instead of upgrading your lifestyle.

**Keep your debt under control.** Since credit cards and other high-interest debt can slow your progress, pay

off balances monthly when possible.

**Invest consistently.** If your employer offers a 401(k), aim to contribute at least 10%-15% of your salary, and increase your contributions after every raise. If you max out your 401(k), a traditional IRA or Roth IRA may offer additional tax-advantaged growth (eligibility and contribution limits apply).

**Boost your income when you can.** Develop new skills, ask for a raise or explore a side income. Every extra dollar saved moves you closer to your goal.

The difference between a retirement you love and one full of compromises often comes

down to the planning you do today. Know your real number, build a solid plan and get the right help along the way.

For more information contact: Todd Miller, CFP Office: (781) 652 - 9573 call or text Email: Todd.miller@edwardjones.com

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Municipal Spotlight

# 155th Memorial Day ceremony scheduled for May 17

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By **KEN HAMWEY**,  
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

Bellingham's 155th Memorial Day ceremony will be held on Sunday, May 17, starting with a parade that will begin at 1 p.m. at the Memorial School.

Both the parade and the ceremony at the Town Common will focus on the holiday's theme — celebrating the 250th anniversary of America.

"The Memorial Day weekend is a time to remember and honor the service and sacrifice of Bellingham residents who honorably served their country

line up and form the marching order," he said.

Those marching in the parade include the Army and Marine Color Guards, the Bellingham High School Band, the Sudbury 4-H Fife and Drum band, the Blackstone-Millville Middle School Band, the Assabet Valley Marine Corps Junior ROTC, the Henry Knox Color Guard, Mass. State Police Pipe and Drum Band, military vehicles from the Plymouth area, the Old Colony Bagpipe Band, the Douglas High School Band and members of the Bellingham Select Board.

Also participating are the Colonial Navy Fife and Drum Corps of Fall River, Greater Rhode Island Fire Pipe Band, Bellingham Library staff, Bellingham Police and Fire, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Bellingham High athletes, Thanks to Yanks, and Milford veterans.

In addition to a dozen classic cars and trucks, floats in the parade will include the Bellingham DPW, Milford veterans, Bellingham Women of Today, Bellingham Senior Center, Bellingham VFW and its Auxiliary. Also, Chevy's Ice Cream, Bellingham Parts Plus, Charron Tree Service, American Legion, Memorial/Veterans Day Committee, and a town officials float.

Retired educator Lori Fafard and Grade 4 students at the Memorial School will carry signs that are replicas of memorial square servicemen who died while defending their country.

The ceremony will begin at 2 p.m. with a wreath-laying to honor Bellingham servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice from the Civil War to the Vietnam War. A prayer will be offered at the War Memorial near the Route 140 entrance followed by "Amazing Grace"



**Major Thomas Hathaway, Operations Officer of the 25th Marine Regiment at Fort Devens, will be keynote speaker for Bellingham's 155th Memorial Day ceremony, to take place on May 17th.**

from the Revolutionary War to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq," said Jim Hastings, chairman of the Memorial and Veterans Day Committee.

The keynote speaker will be Major Thomas Hathaway, Operations Officer of the 25th Marine Regiment at Fort Devens. A group of Bellingham veterans will serve as grand marshals.

The parade route will start at the Memorial School and continue along Route 126 to Bellingham center. Hastings is requesting that parade participants refrain from parking at the school's lot. "It will help if people are dropped off so there'll be room for parade participants to

**MEMORIAL DAY**  
*continued on page 13*

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*Your Money, Your Independence*

# Grads: Don't Pay the Comfort Tax, Invest in the "Struggle"



**Glenn Brown, CFP**

Every commencement season, a familiar debate plays out: move back home to save money or head to a cramped apartment on a diet of ramen and determination?

On a spreadsheet, the live-at-home option looks like a win. By eliminating rent and utilities, the theory suggests you can save \$20,000 to \$40,000 in your first year.

Sorry Grads, but this premise rarely becomes reality. It's ironic: you rolled your eyes at professors steeped in abstract theory, yet here you are committing the same nonsense.

### The Myth of Boomerang Savings

When the Bank of Mom and Dad subsidizes your life, psychological urgency evapo-

rates. Without the boundary of a rent check, savings leak into high-end gyms, trips, subscriptions and tech. The justification is: "I'm suffering enough by living at home; I deserve this." Instead of a surplus, you entrench expensive habits you can't afford once you leave.

To build financial independence, you first need to take flight. Just as a plane needs the resistance of wind to generate lift, you need the friction of real-world expenses to get off the ground. Living at home removes headwinds and leaves you idling on the runway while your peers are taking off.

### The Geography of Opportunity

High-rent brain-hubs trigger the Agglomeration Effect, forcing you into a network of mentors and peers that hometowns lack. Research shows physical proximity leads to faster promotions and better career matching. You can't effectively network from your basement with AI; career-defining windows of opportunity open when you are present, both at work and socializing outside of it.

Furthermore, roommates are a masterclass in negotiation. Sharing a kitchen, bathroom and utility bills teaches conflict resolution and accountability. These soft skills create an independence gap between those

who handle their own friction points and those who have them smoothed over by parents.

### The Real Cost of Entry-Level

Manage your burn rate without suffocating your future. Aim for the 30% Rule: keep all housing costs under 30% of your gross income. In the Boston-area, this means Davis Square or Allston/Brighton, not splitting a Seaport two-bedroom.

Parents, if your graduate is complaining of costs and can't get ahead, don't pay their rent as it kills urgency. Instead, offer a one-time "get out of jail" card for a true crisis. This provides security without removing the daily incentive to work hard to change outcomes.

### Independence is a Habit

Living at home for "just a year" often turns into three. Grads, when you live like Boomers in a cozy setup, you lose the primary engine of growth: discontent. If you aren't bothered by your surroundings, you won't hunt for a promotion or take a career risk. The most effective career coach is a little room you're desperate to leave; that daily friction creates an obsession with progress and a determination to never return.

### Advice to Class of 2026

**To the parents:** Supporting independence means letting them struggle. The best gift this May isn't their old room back (or worse, refinishing the basement); it's the belief that they are capable of building their own independence.

**To the graduates:** The money you think you'll save at home comes at the cost of your ambition. Renting a room you can barely afford in a city that excites you is a form of aggressive investing; you are betting on your own ability to grow into future expenses.

Go find the cramped apartment. Deal with noisy roommates. The struggle of your 20's is how you get a 2X-5X return in your 30's. Financial indepen-

dence isn't something you're given; it starts by choosing to outgrow the Comfort Tax.

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

*Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, [www.PlanDynamic.com](http://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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Amy Azza, Esq

Amy N. Azza, experienced attorney of 24 years, is accepting new clients for their estate planning needs for wills, trusts, powers of attorney and health care proxies.

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WHY YOU NEED A WILL

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WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY


A health care proxy is a document that names someone you trust as your proxy, or agent, to express your wishes and make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

WHY YOU NEED A DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

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# The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

## When Your Hair Stops Feeling Like You

It doesn't usually happen all at once.

It's subtle at first.

Your hair doesn't fall the same way it used to.

Your ponytail feels a little thinner.

The volume you used to count on just... isn't there.

You try a new product. Switch your shampoo. Blame the weather. Blame your water.

But something still feels off.

And eventually, the thought crosses your mind:

**Why doesn't my hair feel like mine anymore?**

At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, this is one of the most common conversations we have with our clients. Not always out loud. Sometimes it's said quietly. Sometimes it's not said at all.

But we see it.

"We can usually tell within the first few minutes," says owner Heather Cohen. "A guest will sit down and say, 'I don't know what's going on with my hair lately,' and what they really mean is... something has changed."

And they're right.

Hair changes more than people expect it to. It responds to hormones, stress, age, illness, and lifestyle. Even subtle shifts in your body can affect the thickness, texture, and manageability of your hair.

The challenge is, most people don't have the language for it.

So it gets labeled as frizzy. Flat. Thin.

Or the one we hear most: "I just have bad hair."

But that's almost never the full story.

"Hair doesn't just suddenly become 'bad,'" Heather explains. "There's always a reason. And once you understand that, everything starts to make more sense."

Sometimes, it comes down to the haircut. A shape that works with your natural texture, not against it, can completely change how your hair behaves day to day.

For curly and wavy hair especially, our signature b.LUXE Curly Cut is designed to enhance your pattern, shape, and overall fullness. This multi-stage cutting approach is tailored to how your curls actually live, helping bring back movement, definition, and that effortless bounce so many clients feel they've lost. It also includes a styling lesson, so you can recreate the look at home!

It can also be your routine. Many clients jump from product to product hoping for a change, but small adjustments in how you blow dry or style your hair can make a bigger difference than switching products ever will. At your next appointment, ask your stylist to walk you through their techniques so you can recreate that fresh-from-the-salon feel at home.

And sometimes, the issue starts at the scalp.

The scalp is skin, and just like the skin on your face, it can become congested. Product buildup, hard water minerals, and excess oil can block follicles and weigh hair down, leading to that dull, limp feeling so many people describe.

At b.LUXE, our Scalp Spa Treatments are designed to gently exfoliate, reset, and rebalance the scalp so hair can grow and perform the way it's meant to. With consistent treatments and the right at-home clarifying care, many guests begin to notice improved fullness and a healthier texture over time.

And then there are the moments when the change feels different. More noticeable.

You see more hair in your brush. A little less density at your hairline. Not dramatic. Just enough to make you pause and think... Okay, something is definitely going on.

For many women, this isn't just about hair.

It's about identity.

We hear it every day:

"My hair is so limp lately."

"I don't know how to style it



## SOMETHING'S OFF

why doesn't my hair feel the same anymore?

bLUXE.com

anymore."

"I used to love my hair."

And underneath all of that, there's often something deeper. A quiet disconnect from the version of yourself you're used to seeing.

The good news is, there isn't just one solution.

There are options. More than most people realize. And you don't have to navigate it alone.

After taking a closer look at your scalp health, haircut, and routine, we can guide you toward personalized solutions, including our wig and topper services for those experiencing thinning or looking for added fullness and flexibility.

"We're not here to change how you look," Heather says. "We're here to help you feel like yourself again."

And if you're thinking, I'm not there yet... you're not alone.

Most people aren't. Until they are.

And when they are, the most common thing we hear is:

"I wish I had known about this sooner."

If your hair has been feeling different lately... harder to manage, less full, not quite like it used to... You don't have to figure it out on your own.

Sometimes, all it takes is the right conversation.

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# Bellingham receives over \$18K in firefighter safety equipment

BOSTON, MA – State Rep. Michael Soter (R-Bellingham) is proud to announce that five fire departments within the 8th Worcester District have been awarded a combined \$72,445.79 through the Fiscal Year 2026 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program. These state funds, made possible by the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Legislature, provide critical support for local departments to acquire life-sav-

ing tools and protective gear.

The town-by-town breakdown of the FY26 awards is as follows:

- Town of Bellingham: \$18,270.00
- Town of Blackstone: \$15,284.95
- Town of Medway: \$14,234.05
- Town of Millville: \$9,972.82
- Town of Uxbridge: \$14,683.97

The Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program is a competitive, reimbursement-based

initiative that makes approximately \$4.99 million available statewide to fire departments in every city, town, and district in the Commonwealth. The primary goal of the program is to help local departments comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and OSHA standards by funding the purchase of personal protective equipment and safety tools.

# Garden club awards scholarship, to hold plant sale

The Garden Club of Bellingham, MA is pleased to announce its first recipient of its REESE Scholarship. The 2026 award recipient of the \$500 scholarship is Michaela Cole, who attends the University of Maine.

"It's so wonderful to be able to support young people in their goals to contribute to a more sustainable future and the environment," said Mickey DeFosses, of Bellingham Garden Club of MA.

On Saturday, May 9th, pickups will take place at 200



Michaela Cole has received the first Garden Club of Bellingham, MA REESE Scholarship.

Center St, Bellingham from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. for the 2026 Annual Plant Sale. Payments are due by Saturday, May 2, 2026. For inquiries or questions, please contact: bellinghamgardenclubofma@gmail.com.

Pre-purchase order forms here: <https://forms.gle/s3XA6k1WLhJojCBaA>

# Franklin PorchFest 2026 June 6th- still accepting bands

Get Ready .... PorchFest 2026 is Coming! The Town of Franklin will be filled with music as PorchFest returns on Saturday, June 6. The event runs from 12–6 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, June 7th.

Registration is now OPEN for both bands and porches! Sign up using the Band Signup or Porch Signup tabs on our website, <https://franklin.porchfest.info>.

This years' event is shaping up to be our biggest yet. Musicians and bands of all genres will be performing on porches

and patios throughout Franklin's Cultural District. This walkable event is also the perfect opportunity to check out our local shops and restaurants. The Town Common will feature opening and closing ceremonies, Food Trucks, and picnic tables. Public bath-

rooms will also be available. Stay tuned; we'll be posting updates on our website. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram. You'll find all the information needed to celebrate an amazing day of live music in Franklin!



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**Please help keep our local waters clean:**

- Test your lawn soil and calibrate your spreader.
- Use fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides sparingly. Sweep any overspray back onto the lawn.
- Mow 2.5 to 3 inches high with a sharp blade to encourage dense growth and deter weeds.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to lessen the need for fertilizer.
- Never discard yard waste down storm drains or into waterways.
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LIVING HEALTHY

# Over 50 and Tired of Reading Glasses? Refractive Lens Exchange May Be for You

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

If you are over 50 and constantly reaching for reading glasses, you are not alone. Age-related vision changes, especially presbyopia, make it harder to focus up close. Refractive Lens Exchange, or RLE, is an advanced surgical option that can significantly reduce or eliminate your need for glasses for both distance and near vision.

### What is presbyopia?

Presbyopia is a natural part of aging in which the eye's lens gradually loses flexibility. This reduces the ability to focus on close objects, especially when reading, using a phone, or working on a computer. It typically begins in the early to mid-40s and progresses over time, often leading to increasing dependence on reading glasses

or bifocals for nearly all near tasks.

### What is Refractive Lens Exchange?

Refractive Lens Exchange is a procedure in which the eye's natural lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens, commonly called an IOL. The procedure is essentially the same as modern cataract surgery, but it is performed before a cataract becomes visually significant.

Unlike LASIK or PRK, which reshape the cornea, RLE works inside the eye and corrects vision by replacing the lens itself. This allows correction of distance, intermediate, and near vision, depending on the lens selected.

### Who is a good candidate?

RLE is most often recommended for individuals over 50



who are frustrated with glasses or contact lenses. Ideal candidates have difficulty with near vision due to presbyopia and may also have farsightedness,

nearsightedness, or astigmatism. It is also an option for patients not ideal for LASIK because of thin corneas, dry eye concerns, or higher prescriptions.

Candidates should have healthy eyes without significant retinal disease, uncontrolled glaucoma, or other major ocular conditions. They should also understand realistic expectations, including that some patients may still need glasses for fine print or low light tasks after surgery.

### Benefits of RLE

One major benefit of RLE is freedom from reading glasses. Modern intraocular lenses can provide a full range of vision, including distance, intermediate, and near, depending on the chosen lens.

The results are long-lasting because the artificial lens does not age or change. Since the natural lens is removed, patients will not develop cataracts in the future, eliminating the need for cataract surgery later in life.

Many patients report improved clarity, brightness, and contrast with modern lens technology. Daily activities such as driving, reading, computer use, and travel often become easier and more convenient without glasses or contact lenses.

### Insurance coverage

In most cases, Refractive Lens Exchange is considered elective and is not covered by insurance. This is because it is performed to reduce dependence on glasses rather than to treat cataracts. If a cataract is present and affecting vision, insurance may cover part of the procedure like cataract surgery. However, premium lenses and advanced technology upgrades are usually out-of-pocket expenses. Patients should review benefits in advance so they clearly understand expected costs and options.

### Risks and considerations

RLE is a safe and commonly performed procedure, but it carries some risks as with any eye surgery. These include infection, inflammation, or swelling, though these complications are uncommon with modern techniques.

There is a small risk of retinal detachment, particularly in highly nearsighted patients. Some patients may notice glare, halos, or starbursts at night, especially with multifocal lenses.

A later occurrence is posterior capsule opacification, a mild clouding behind the implant that can develop months or years later. This is easily



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**MEMORIAL DAY**

*continued from page 8*

and “Taps.”

After the invocation, Joe and Robbie Oliver will sing the “National Anthem,” followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a reading of the Gettysburg Address.

“Memorial Day is a time to pause and honor the memory of our servicemen and women for protecting us,” said Hastings, who will deliver opening remarks. “If it weren’t for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, we’d be living in a different type of United States. They’re the ones who’ve enabled us to enjoy the freedoms we have today.”

Major Hathaway, a native of Lynnfield, was commissioned into the Marine Corps in 2010 after earning a bachelor’s from Norwich University. He was assigned to 3d Battalion, 3d Marines from 2011 to 2014. During that tour, he served as a Rifle Platoon Commander, Company Executive Officer, and Assistant Operations Officer, deploying once to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and a second time to Okinawa, Japan, as part of the Unit Deployment Program.

Hathaway has served as the Aide-de-Camp to the Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Marine Corps Forces (Pacific, Assistant Operations Officer and Officer-in-Charge of the

Amphibious Raids Branch for the III Marine Expeditionary Force, Expeditionary Operations Training Group, and Battalion Executive Officer for the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines.

Major Hathaway later attended the Naval Postgraduate School, graduating in 2022 with a degree in National Security Affairs and serving from 2022-2025 as an instructor in the Leadership, Ethics, and Law Department at the U.S. Naval Academy. After that tour, he received orders back to Massachusetts to serve as the Operations Officer for the 25th Marine Regiment at Fort. Devens.

The ceremony will continue with the reading of the names of Bellingham veterans who passed away last year, after which Bellingham High students will read the names of all Bellingham residents who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service to their country during the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Finally, the 192-year-old bell at the nearby First Baptist Church will be rung.

The Memorial and Veterans Day Committee encourages those attending the parade to remain for the ceremony. At the conclusion of the event, transportation to the Memorial School will be provided by Vendetti Bus Company, which will be located across from the Town Common.

**EYE**

*continued from page 12*

treated with a quick, painless laser procedure.

**Alternatives to RLE**

Other options depend on age and vision needs. LASIK and PRK effectively treat distance vision but do not correct age-related reading vision loss after the mid-40s or early 50s.

Implantable lenses are typically used in younger patients and do not address presbyopia. Monovision, where one eye is corrected for distance and the other for near, can work well for some patients, but others may not adapt comfortably or may notice reduced depth perception.

**Final thoughts**

Refractive Lens Exchange is a proven option for patients over 50 who are tired

of glasses. By replacing the natural lens with a customized artificial lens, it is possible to restore a broad range of vision and improve quality of life.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we use advanced diagnostics and modern surgical techniques to achieve precise outcomes. All procedures are performed in an accredited surgery center under topical anesthesia with anesthesia professionals present for safety and comfort.

If you are over 50 and frustrated with reading glasses, RLE may be worth considering. A consultation can help determine the best approach for your vision and lifestyle goals.

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# Bellingham Senior Center upcoming events

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

5th Annual Health Fair: Join us on Friday, May 1, for

the Fifth Annual Health Fair from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Ladies Tea: Tuesday, May 12, 12 p.m. There's still time to sign up. Join in the hat contest!

Coffee & Conversation: Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.

Spiritual Book Club: Via Zoom on Mondays at 9 a.m. Discussion will be about *The Courage to Go* by Emily Dobberstein. Please call host Josie Dutil 508-657-2705 to join.

Meet the Candidates: Tuesday, May 19 at 10 a.m. Meet candidates for Bellingham's annual local election June 2nd.

Meditation, it's not what you think: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30 a.m. Each includes a guided meditation, a shorter personal meditation, breathing practice, and discussion. Please call 508-966-0398 to sign up. \$3.

The ABC's and D's of Medicare: Gain a clear understanding of Medicare's health care options, coverage and benefits. Presented by Mass General Brigham Health Plan. Thursday, May 21, at 5 p.m. Please call ahead.

Café et Conversation: Join the group for conversations in French on Thursdays at 9 a.m.

Canadian Citizenship: Bellingham resident Ann Marie Genereux and Annette Smith, the vice president of the American-French Genealogical Society in Woonsocket will present on the new Canadian law on citizenship by descent Friday, May 15 at 1 p.m. Please call ahead.

Hip Hop Square Dance: Put on your cowboy hat and join us on Monday, May 18, at 10 a.m. Made possible by a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council.

Let's Walk! Join Lisa Loo for a fun, safe, wonderful walk at the West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, 518 Hartford Ave. East. Bring a picnic lunch! Meet there at noon on Thursday, May 21.

Jumpin' Juba: Blues-based roots-rock, folk and classic rock for your listening and dancing pleasure featuring Steve Hurl and David Lockeretz. Friday, May 29 at 1 p.m. Free, made

possible by a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council. Please call ahead.

Gardening Goodness: Thanks to all the volunteer gardeners who cleaned up, planted, spread mulch, weeded, chatted a bit, and got organized. But there's more to do. On Monday, May 18, at 1 p.m., we'll finish opening the garden. Call 508-966-0398 if you'd like to join.

VSO Information Table: Thursday, May 14, at 1 p.m. There may be benefits for Massachusetts resident who've left the service. Stop by.

The Philosophy Café: open discussion group led by Bryan Cafferky to share and explore important philosophical topics like truth, beauty, love, life's meaning, and existence.

Thursday, May 14, from 4-5:30 p.m. and each month on the second Thursday.

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**SUBWAY**  
OF MENDON

## BVT band & choir to host concert for all June 2nd

UPTON, MA – The Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Band & Choir will present its Concert for All on June 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the Competition Center at BVT, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. Conducted by Dr. Colton Cox, students will

showcase their musical talents in a dynamic performance.

The music program has received instrument donations from Hungry for Music, as well as grant funding from local cultural councils.

Students, families and community members are invited to

attend the free performance, funded in part by grants from the Grafton, Northbridge and Upton Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



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# FUSF has the Rx for peace and quiet: a walking meditation

Did you know that the First Universalist Society in Franklin has a labyrinth on its grounds? FUSF congregants built a 7-Circuit Classical Labyrinth in 2008 with the generous funding of a Harvard Pilgrim Health

spiritual tool with one path leading to the center and back out again. It is a sacred space where one walks with an open heart and an open mind. The twists and turns provide for a calming walk and/or a reflective journey.



In honor of World Labyrinth Day on May 2, the First Universalist Society in Franklin invites you to add walking a labyrinth to your list of things to try at least once. We hope that it will become an important part of your regular spiritual practice. Our labyrinth, listed on the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator, is nestled

in our beautiful pine grove and open to the general public from sunrise to sundown. The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. Our Minister is Reverend Beverly Waring. For more information about FUSF please visit [fusf.org](http://fusf.org), email [info@fusf.org](mailto:info@fusf.org); or call 508-528-5348.

in our beautiful pine grove and open to the general public from sunrise to sundown.

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

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# Carpenter Ants: A Serious Threat to MetroWest Homes



**Jim Maxxuchelli, owner, WPC Pest and Termite Control**

In Massachusetts, homeowners face unique pest challenges due to our changing seasons and moisture prone climate. While many people dismiss ants as a minor annoyance, carpenter ants are one of the most destructive pests affecting homes in the MetroWest Area.

We regularly see carpenter ant infestations throughout MetroWest—and the damage they cause can be extensive if

left untreated. Said, Jim Maz-zuchelli from WPC Pest and Termite Control, Inc.,

**Warning Signs Home-owners Should Watch For**

- Large black or reddish ants, often active at night, inside your home
- Winged ants (swarmers) appearing indoors in spring
- Piles of sawdust like debris near baseboards or windows
- Faint rustling sounds inside walls
- Ant trails from basements, kitchens, or exterior siding
- These signs should never be ignored—especially in homes with moisture issues or older construction.

**Why DIY Treatments Often Fail**

Over the counter sprays and baits may kill visible ants but rarely address the nest hidden deep within walls or structural wood. In many cases, improper treatment allows infestations to

spread and continue causing damage. Effective carpenter ant control requires professional experience, proper identification, and targeted treatment.

At WPC Pest and Termite Control, Inc., we understand the specific pest pressures MetroWest homeowners face. Our experienced technicians use proven methods to locate carpenter ant nests, eliminate infestations at the source, and help prevent future problems.

If you suspect carpenter ants—or want peace of mind before damage worsens—don't wait.

Contact WPC Pest and Termite Control, Inc. today for a FREE professional carpenter ant inspection and protect your home from hidden structural damage. WPC Pest and Termite Control, Inc. 508-366-1820. [nobugsnopests.com](http://nobugsnopests.com)

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# McGovern leads bipartisan effort for federal focus on diet & chronic disease

WASHINGTON, DC — Last month, U.S. Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA), alongside Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), and Emilia Sykes (D-OH), led a bipartisan letter urging Congressional appropriators to provide essential funding to make healthy food and good nutrition a core pillar of America's healthcare system as part of the FY 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies funding bill.

In the letter to Chairman Robert Aderholt (R-AL) and Ranking Member Rosa De-Lauro (D-CT), the bipartisan coalition emphasized the urgent

need to address diet-related disease and rising healthcare costs through "Food is Medicine" initiatives.

The lawmakers' request for federal funding and an enhanced focus on better nutrition comes amid an on-going surge in the cost of treating diet-related diseases—an increase which is crushing healthcare systems, federal and state budgets, and private employers. Notably, the combined healthcare spending and lost productivity from poor diets and food insecurity are estimated to exceed \$1.1 trillion each year.

The full text of the letter is available at [https://mccgovern.house.gov/uploadedfiles/signed\\_pdf\\_support\\_food\\_is\\_medicine\\_initiatives\\_in\\_fy27.pdf](https://mccgovern.house.gov/uploadedfiles/signed_pdf_support_food_is_medicine_initiatives_in_fy27.pdf)



# Save the date: "You & Me Tea Party" Sunday, May 31st

The Bellingham Women of Today will be hosting a special event for children and adults on Sunday May 31st. Tickets will be limited for "You and Me Tea Party" at G.A.T.E.S 2 Education, in two sessions, 12:30-2 p.m. OR 3-4:30 p.m. located

at 1064 South Main Street in Bellingham. Dress up if you like and join us for food, music & dancing, crafts, and photo opportunities with your favorite person. This would be such a thoughtful gift for a mother or grandmother for Mother's Day.

This will be a fundraiser sponsored by the BWOT. Tickets are limited. For more information about this event and ticket details will be posted on Facebook or you can email us at [bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com](mailto:bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com)

**JOIN BELLINGHAM WOMEN OF TODAY**  
We are always happy to welcome new members, we are open to anyone 18 years or older. Please feel free to attend any of our monthly meetings at the Bellingham Police Depart-

ment conference room starting at 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of the month from September until June. Our next meeting is on Monday May 11, 2026. For information, message us at [bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com](mailto:bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook.

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# BVT students earn 81 medals at SkillsUSA District V competition

UPTON, MA – Students from Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) earned 81 medals at the annual SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Competition held March 11.

A total of 198 students from BVT competed against career and technical education students from six vocational high schools in events designed to test technical knowledge, workplace readiness and safety practices in a variety of trades and

leadership categories.

BVT students earned 33 gold, 27 silver and 21 bronze medals and swept two competition categories. In total, 118 student-competitors from BVT qualified to advance to the SkillsUSA Massachusetts State Leadership and Skills Conference, which will be held May 1 at BVT.

State officer candidate Madison Denise of Upton also advanced and will be joined by 26 leadership competitors and 25 student delegates representing

the school at the state competition.

In Bellingham, the following students earned medals:

Gold: Raegen McAlister, Health Knowledge Bowl.

Silver: Evan Gerrish, CNC 2 Axis Turning Programmer; and Megan Maloney, Baking & Pastry Arts.

Bronze: Demetrius Burton, Cyber Security; Evan Donlon, Internet of Things; Matthew Welch, Urban Search & Rescue; and Thomas Welch, Web

Design.

The complete list of medal-

ists is available at [www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa](http://www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa).

## Hockomock area YMCA promotes two leaders, names new Executive Director at Bernon Family Branch

FRANKLIN, MA — The Hockomock Area YMCA has announced two leadership promotions, recognizing the contributions of long-time YMCA staff leaders Scott Martin and Jen Doherty at its Bernon Family Branch in Franklin.

After more than thirteen years of leadership at the Franklin Y, Scott Martin will transition to the role of Vice President of Enterprise Strat-

egy & Risk for the Hockomock Area YMCA. In this role, he will help guide key strategic initiatives and support the organization's continued growth and community impact across the 16 communities it serves.

Stepping into the role of Branch Executive Director in Franklin is Jen Doherty, who has served as Associate Executive Director in Franklin and has been part of the YMCA

team since 2011.

During her YMCA career, Doherty has held several leadership positions for the past thirteen years, including Membership Experience Director and Senior Member Experience Director at the Invensys Foxboro Branch, before joining the Franklin leadership team.

For more information, visit [hockymca.org](http://hockymca.org).

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# CALENDAR

## May 1

**St. Vincent de Paul clothing drive**, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., St. Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham, accepting clean usable clothing and shoes, bagged and boxed, and this year boxed up books.

**Small Works Reception and Fundraiser**, 6-7:30 p.m., Lotvin Family Gallery, Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, <https://canvas.hopartscenter.org/events/43>

## May 2

**St. Vincent de Paul clothing drive**, 8 a.m. – Noon, St. Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham, accepting clean usable clothing and shoes, bagged and boxed, and this year boxed up books.

**Fairy Walk** 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Holi Festival of Colors Celebration, 12 p.m.-1 p.m., Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Rd., Medfield, Free, [www.bellforge.org](http://www.bellforge.org)

**MassBay Community College Spring Open House**, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., 50 Oakland St., Wellesley, \*Prospective students can RSVP at [MassBay.edu/OpenHouse](http://MassBay.edu/OpenHouse) or email [admissions@massbay.edu](mailto:admissions@massbay.edu).

## May 4

**Nine & Dine**: 12 p.m. shotgun start, Tri-County Regional Chamber Golf Tournament, Shining Rock Golf Club, 91 Clubhouse Lane, Northborough, <https://www.tricountychamberma.org/golf-tournament>

**Book Discussion Group**, 6:30 p.m. in person or on Zoom, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Contact Suzanne at [salpert@cwmmars.org](mailto:salpert@cwmmars.org).

## May 5

**Art of Living: Breathwork and Meditation Workshop**, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

**A Novel Idea Book Club for Adults**, 6:30-8 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, contact Diane Nelson at [dnelson@cwmmars.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmmars.org) *Dear Edward*, by Ann Napolitano.

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting (Zoom)**, “Flower Photography” with Padma Inguva, [www.stonybrookcc.com](http://www.stonybrookcc.com)

## May 6

**BVTi Open House**, 6 p.m., Blackstone Valley Regional Technical Vocational High School, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. Adults 18+ can learn about BVTi’s hands-on training programs in HVAC, plumbing, welding, CNC machine operation, and electrical. Reserve at [info@bvtadulded.org](mailto:info@bvtadulded.org).

## May 9

**Bellingham Garden Club**

**of MA 5th Annual Plant Sale Fundraiser**, purchase & pre-order plants at: [bellinghamgardenclubofma.com](http://bellinghamgardenclubofma.com) for pickup on May 9.

**Red Cross Blood Drive**, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Register at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)

**Norfolk Cultural Council Juried Art Exhibition Reception & Awards Ceremony**, 6-8 p.m., Norfolk Public Library, 2 Liberty Lane, Norfolk, exhibit runs May 2-30

May 11  
**Bellingham Women of Today meeting**, Bellingham Police Department conference room, 30 Blackstone St., Bellingham, 7:30 p.m.

## May 12

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting (Zoom)**, Member Competition- Image of the year, [www.stonybrookcc.com](http://www.stonybrookcc.com)

## May 13

**Bellingham Business Association State of the State meeting**, 5:30 p.m., for location visit Business Association Facebook page.

## May 14

**Ladies of St. Anne Sodality meeting**, 7 p.m., St. Blaise Catholic Church chapel, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham, all ladies over 18 welcome. This meeting will start with praying the rosary.

## May 15

**Exploring Your Canadian Roots After Bill C-3**, 1 p.m., Bellingham Senior Center, 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham

## May 16

**Bellingham Multicultural Festival**, 1-4:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100

Blackstone St., Bellingham

**Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Annual Plant Sale**, before and after each Mass. (4 p.m. Saturday, 7:30 & 10 a.m. Sunday), St. Blaise Catholic Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham

**Franklin Art Association’s Annual “Fakes and Forgeries Art Exhibit” opens**, Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, museum hours. Public reception June 6.

## May 17

**Bellingham’s 155th Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony**, 1 p.m. kick-off from Memorial School, keynote speaker for 2 p.m. ceremony is Major Thomas Hathaway, Operations Officer of the 25th Marine Regiment at Fort Devens

**Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Annual Plant Sale**, before and after each Mass. (4 p.m. Saturday, 7:30 & 10 a.m. Sunday), St. Blaise Catholic Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham

**LiveArts String Quartet**, 3 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central St., Franklin, features masterworks by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schumann. Limited seating. Tickets at [www.Liveartsstringquartet.org](http://www.Liveartsstringquartet.org)

## May 19

**250th Anniversary Book Club**, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library and on Zoom, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham. This meeting we will be discussing parts two and three of David McCullough’s *1776*. Please email Molly Garten at [mgarten@cwmmars.org](mailto:mgarten@cwmmars.org).

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting (Zoom)**, “Planning Astrolandscape Photos” with Manish Mamtani, [www.stonybrookcc.com](http://www.stonybrookcc.com)

## May 20

**Women’s Health Expo**, 2-5 p.m., New England Chapel, 300 East Central St., Franklin, includes health screenings, educational resources, giveaways, and local vendors. Dana-Farber Cancer Institute mobile mammography van 7 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

## May 21

**5th Annual KMA (Keough Memorial Academy) Art Show**, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

## May 26

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting (Zoom)**, Image Makers - Member Presentations, [www.stonybrookcc.com](http://www.stonybrookcc.com)

## May 27

**Bellingham Town Meeting**, 7 p.m., Bellingham High School, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham

**Women of ‘76: A Theatrical Tribute to Lesser-Known Women of the American Revolution**, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

**Bellforge Arts Center Balance in Nature: Mind-Body Movement**, 10-11 a.m., Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Rd., Medfield, Free, [www.bellforge.org](http://www.bellforge.org)

## May 31

**The Bellingham Women of Today “You & Me Tea Party”**, 12:30-2 p.m. OR 3-4:30 p.m., G.A.T.E.S 2 Education, S. Main St., Bellingham. Tickets are limited. Pricing details on Bellingham Women of Today Facebook or email [bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com](mailto:bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com)

## June 2

**Bellingham Town Election**, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Bellingham High School Gymnasium, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham

**BVT Band & Choir Concert for All**, 7:30 p.m. Competition Center at BVT, 65 Pleasant St., Upton



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## BBA plans state of state meeting May 13th & Pridefest June 27th

After wrapping up last month's Bellingham Business Expo held at Bellingham Public Library, the Bellingham Business Association is looking forward to its annual State of the State meeting, to be held Wednesday, May 13th, 6-8 p.m. Visit their Facebook page for the location

and cost. Massachusetts State Representatives and State Senators are invited to attend and can give you important updates on what is happening from a legislative viewpoint in the Commonwealth.

The BBA is also currently accepting nominations for its

annual Unsung Hero award through May 15th. Find the form posted in the comments section of the April 18th post about the Unsung Hero Award on the group's Facebook page.

Coming up is Bellingham PrideFest 2026, which will take place on Saturday, June

27th, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bellingham Town Common, Corner of Routes 126 and 140, Bellingham. The day will include music, entertainment, and family fun in support of our LGBTQ+ community.

Sponsors are still being accepted. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/BellinghamPridefest26>.

For more details and updates on the above information, follow Bellingham Business Association on Facebook.

You can also reach out to Sue at [contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org](mailto:contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org).

## Bellingham Public Library News & Events

For updates about library programs, please visit [www.bellingham-library.org](http://www.bellingham-library.org)

Closed, Monday, May 25th for the Memorial Day Holiday

### Special Programs

**Bellingham Multicultural Festival – Saturday, May 16th from 1-4:30 p.m.**

Celebrate the food, music, art, dance, and various cultural traditions from around the world from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Hosted at the library, this is a true family-oriented, community event and we are looking for community volunteers to volunteer to host an informational table on their native country at the event. If you are interested in participating, please email [library@bellingham-library.org](mailto:library@bellingham-library.org) before May 8, 2026.

This program is sponsored by the Bellingham Cultural Council and the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library.

**Star Wars Day – Monday, May 4th**

Join us for a day-long celebration of all things Star Wars! Activities for all ages!

**Art of Living: Breathwork and Meditation Workshop – Tuesday May 5th at 6:30 p.m., for adults 18+.** Certified instructor Kritika will guide you through simple, effective techniques to help you relax, re-focus, and reset. Bring a blanket for comfort.

**Meet the Candidates – Thursday, May 7th at 6 p.m.** The Library is partnering with

the Town Clerk's Office to host a local candidates forum.

**Red Cross Blood Drive – Saturday, May 9th,** Register at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)

**From Ice Age to Incorporation: The Land that became Bellingham – Monday, May 11th at 6 p.m.**

Join us as Bill Buote takes us on a remarkable journey from glacial ice sheets to the first town meeting in 1719, uncovering the layers of history beneath our feet.

**KMA Annual Art Show – Thursday May 21st at 6 p.m.**

Join us for the 5th Annual KMA (Keough Memorial Academy) Art Show. Refreshments provided by the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library.

**Women of '76: A Theatrical Tribute to Lesser Known Women of the American Revolution – Wednesday, May 27th at 6:30 p.m.**

This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Bellingham Library and the Bellingham Cultural Council.

### Ongoing Children's Programs

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

**Lego Builders – Mondays at 4:30 p.m., for Grades K to 3**  
**Read to Freedom the Reading Dog – Mondays from 5:30-7 pm.**

Check the calendar to sign up for a 15-minute time slot!  
**Sensory Story Time –**

Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m., for children ages 2-5 (younger siblings welcome) Please register for each session.

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

**ART-astic Saturday – Saturday, May 2nd at 11 a.m., for families**

### Adult Programs

**Book Discussion Group – 1st Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.** in person or on Zoom. On May 4th, we will be discussing *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Contact Suzanne at [salpert@cwmmars.org](mailto:salpert@cwmmars.org). June: *Finding My Way* by Malala Yousafzai

**English Conversation Circles, 6 p.m. – May 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26 and 28**

This is not an English class, but a place to practice speaking to become more fluent in the English language.

**Tuesday Fiber Arts & Other Crafts – May 12th and 26th, from 6-7:45 p.m.** Drop in.

**A Novel Idea: A New Book Club for Adults – Tuesday, May 5th, from 6:30-8 pm.** This month's selection: *Dear Edward*, by Ann Napolitano. Please contact Diane Nelson [dnelson@cwmmars.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmmars.org)

**Needlecraft Night – Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m.** All skill levels, bring your materials

**Friends of the Library Monthly Zoom Meeting –**

Tuesday, May 12th at 7 p.m.

To attend, email [library@bellinghamlibrary.org](mailto:library@bellinghamlibrary.org) for the link!

**Library Board of Trustees Meeting – Thursday, May 14th at 7 p.m.,** Conference Room

**Bellingham Genealogy Club – Monday, May 18th at 6 p.m.,** in person or on Zoom. Please email Molly Garten at [mgarten@cwmmars.org](mailto:mgarten@cwmmars.org).

**250th Anniversary Book Club – Tuesday, May 19th at 6 p.m.**

This meeting we will be discussing parts two and three of David McCullough's *1776*. We will be meeting in the conference room and on Zoom. Please email Molly Garten at [mgarten@cwmmars.org](mailto:mgarten@cwmmars.org).

**Virtual Author Talks –**

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

**On Courage, Turmoil, & the Transformative Power of Love with Marjan Kamali – Thursday, May 7th at 7 p.m.**

**How to Robot-Proof Your Kids (& Yourself) with Dr. Vivienne Ming, Tuesday, May 12th at 2 p.m.**

Reshape Your Beliefs and Unlock Your True Potential with Nir Eyal, Tuesday, May 19th at 2 p.m.

**Yoga – Kripalu Yoga for the Seasons: Spring Thaw Slow Flow**

Yoga meets on two Tuesdays this month. Check the library calendar to register.



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## SPORTS

# 'Soccer's Big Event' is coming to 'Boston Stadium'

*Two million people will be looking for things to do in surrounding towns*

BY THERESA KNAPP

Editor's note: Due to copyright issues, the more commonly known name for the football/soccer matches cannot be used

Many visitors know they will not get a ticket but they want to be in Massachusetts to support their team, which is an opportunity for local fan festivals, fan marches, pep rallies, watch parties, and more.

— Greta Teller, Bostonfwc26  
<https://bostonfwc26.com>

by publications outside of the official association. We are calling it "Soccer's Big Event."

The most popular sport in the world is football (or "soccer" in the U.S.) and this year several matches of the global soccer tournament – or "Soccer's Big Event" – will be played in June and July in Massachusetts.

Boston is one of 16 cities across North America that will host matches. Specific dates for the Boston area will be announced closer to the event, but will be between June 13 and July 9.

At a recent Tourism Summit and Legislative Breakfast hosted by the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau, state and local officials explained how Massachusetts is preparing for

the event.

The main speaker at the conference was Greta Teller of "Bostonfwc26," the group that is overseeing local logistics for the world organization. She said there are many ways MetroWest communities can provide experiences for the millions of visitors who are expected to flood the area.

"Two million people are coming, and there are only 740,000 tickets," Teller said. "And many of those people are coming without tickets and will need things to do."

There are opportunities for communities all around Eastern Massachusetts, and beyond, to join in the festivities and revelry, Teller said, adding fans just want to be in Massachusetts to support their team, which is an opportunity for local fan festivals, fan marches, fan zones, pep rallies, watch parties, and more.



"Soccer's Big Event" is coming to "Boston Stadium" in June and July. Image created by Theresa Knapp using ChatGPT

The event, Teller said, will provide a significant boost to hotels, restaurants and other local businesses; and the Bostonfwc is encouraging towns to organize fan festivals and cultural celebrations in the area, and to promote those events through the organization's website and the MWVB (for free).

At the summit, it was noted that MetroWest has the larg-

est population of Brazilians outside of Brazil, Brockton has the largest Cape Verde population outside of Cape Verde, and Worcester is home to a large Ghana population – all of which can be a consideration when organizing activities around Soccer's Big Event.

**SOCCER**

*continued on page 23*

## Spotlight on Bellingham track shifts from girls to boys this year

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Last spring, it was the Bellingham girls' track team that was getting all the attention. This year, it looks as though that awareness may be moving over to the boys' team.

The girls went undefeated and captured the Tri-Vally League Small Division Championship, however with the vacancy of Olivia Carney (the school record holder in the 100- and 200-meter dash and an integral part of the team) things are going to be different this year than they were a year prior. Although early on in the season, the girls' team has already had a tie and a loss.

While the girls seem to be dropping, the boys, who have been a solid .500 team over the years, seems to be moving up in the ranks. This season brings the biggest class of male athletes taking part in track for Peter Lacasse. Bellingham has 70 athletes looking to be part of the biggest boys' team since the Blackhawks posted its highest numbers at 63.

"We're seeing a lot of eighth and ninth graders coming out

for the team for the first time," the Bellingham Coach said. "A lot of football players are also joining the program looking to get stronger and faster."

Last year, the boys' team had a snag, with a lot of athletes being bitten by the injury bug, and it took a toll on the team. This year, with the graduation of a good number of seniors, Bellingham does not have the larger contingency of seniors guiding the team.

Lacasse will be looking to three of his returning seniors to pick up the slack and continue to score those important points meet in and meet out. In addition to being seniors, two of the three are captains: Eli Cowell and Bryan DeAlmeida. Cowell will run the 100 and 400 hurdles while also taking part in the triple jump for the Blackhawks, while his counterpart in DeAlmeida will run the 400 meters and 4x400 relay.

Both captains are chasing school records. In the 400, DeAlmeida currently has posted a 52.1 time with the record sitting at 51.4 so he is definitely in striking distance. Cowell is closing in on the 400-meter

hurdles where he school record is 1:00.23 and the Blackhawk senior is about 1 second off the pace before etching his name into the school record books. According to Lacasse, both athletes are relatively close, and once the weather turns, they should have a really good shot at the two records.

Junior captain Mason Alger takes part in the 100, 4x100 and is the team's best javelin thrower and should be able to qualify for the Division 5 Championship Meet in the javelin and 4x100. The junior is a very hard-working leader for Bellingham.

The third senior who will be counted on to get the Blackhawks into the win column is Jason Greenberg, the team's sprint specialist. He too, like Cowell and DeAlmeida, is chasing not one but two school records this spring. In the 100 Greenberg has a personal best of 11.34 with the record sitting just ahead of that at 11.26 and in the 200 he has run a 23.34 with the school's best time at 22.77. Once again, Lacasse noted that once the weather starts to get warmer, Greenberg's times are definitely

going to drop. All of the above-mentioned school records were all set in the 2014 season and have been standing for the past 12 years.

While the boys are pursuing personal records in their individual events, the girls' team finds themselves in somewhat of a rebuilding year.

"We have a lost a lot of talent, but we still have a good young team," the coach said. "We may only have four seniors, but we also have a good amount of juniors to keep the program going next year. With the rest of the team being underclassmen, a majority of them are eighth graders.

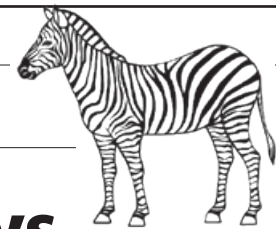
Lacasse will be looking for his throwers to continue putting up the points. Senior Morgan Mooney, also a team captain, will be throwing the shot-put and discus, while senior Audrey Thibeault will hurl the javelin for Bellingham in hopes of consistently scoring.

Not only does the Bellingham coach have a few seniors who can score, he will also be looking for a couple of juniors and a sophomore to aide in the cause. Junior captain Caleigh Hayes

will take part in the 400 hurdles and the 400 while also being the best female high jumper for the Blackhawks. According to Lacasse, she is a versatile athlete who is fast and should be in the top 3 or 4 hurdlers in the TVL this spring.

Emma Carroll, another junior, will ruin both the 100- and 200-meter dashes, where she will typically come in either first or second. Carroll will also be part of the 4x100 relay and should be a top qualifier for the triple and long jumps. Sophomore Elizabeth Glynn will participate in the shot-put, the discus and the 4x100, where she will get Bellingham between 6-10 points per meet.

"The juniors, as well as Liz, should all qualify for the Division 5 State Tournament," Lacasse said. "We are in somewhat of a rebuilding year, so it's not quite going to be like last year and after opening the season with a tie against Medfield and a loss to Dover-Sherborn we are looking to win at least two out of the next three to finish 2-2-1 or possibly 3-1-1."



SPORTS

# BHS nine aiming to improve in a variety of ways

By KEN HAMWEY  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Coach T.J. Chiappone's goals for his Bellingham High baseball team are all about improvement.

Last year, the Blackhawks, who lacked experience and depth, finished with a 3-17 record, were ranked No. 35 in Division 4, and failed to qualify for the state tourney. The 54-year-old Chiappone, who's in his 27th year as head coach, is hopeful better days are ahead.

"Still a young team, we want to improve daily by working hard in practice," Chiappone said. "We also want to improve our record in the Tri Valley League, and we want to improve our division ranking. Hopefully, better numbers will lead to a playoff berth. Another area that needs attention is our execution in the late innings."

After six games, the Blackhawks were 2-4.

For BHS to take a step forward, it will need to rely on 11 returnees that include a group of promising players. Developing team chemistry is also a must. Ace pitcher Payton Young, a senior who won all three of Bellingham's games last year, will be counted on to deliver top-notch efforts.

A right-hander, Young had a 3-6 record last year, but his

earned-run average was 1.99. At the *Bulletin's* deadline, Young, who was a Tri Valley League all-star last, was 1-0 in two starts,



Payton Young is the key starter in Bellingham's pitching rotation.

his E.R.A was 3.36 and he had 9 strikeouts in 8 1/3 innings. He has committed to play for Norwich University in Vermont.

"Payton is effective throwing a fastball, curve and a change-up," Chiappone said. "One of the top pitchers in the league, he averaged a strikeout an inning. Payton has good velocity, locates his pitches well and is mentally tough."

Chiappone will also count on senior right-hander hurler Sam Elliott. "Sam has good movement on his fastball and has a sharp-breaking curve," he said. At deadline, Elliott was 1-2 with an E.R.A of 3.50. He also had 10 strikeouts in 6 innings.

Four other pitchers in the mix are junior Julian Ames, who's been effective in relief, sophomore right-hander Noah Sylvia and freshmen right-handers Luke Proler and Colin Hughes. "They'll be called on to pitch important innings and will be key hurlers in the future," Chiappone offered.

Sophomore Brady Iarussi is handling the catching chores. "Brady has varsity experience," Chiappone said. "He got 68 at-bats as a freshman last year and provided a spark on offense. He's also got a strong arm."

The other infield positions include sophomore Nick Fantini, Elliott, Sylvia and Young at first base; junior Eric Johnston at second; junior Brock Barry at shortstop; and Proler and sophomore Michael Puopolo at third.

"Eric is solid on defense, is a good contact hitter, and he's got a high baseball IQ," Chiappone

said. "Brock has a strong throwing arm and will be counted on to be a run-producer. Sylvia and Fantini are alternating at first and are improving on defense. Elliott and Young can play there if needed. At third, Proler is starting. He hits well, and after five games his seven hits led the team. Puopolo, who's the back-up, also is improving on defense."

Senior captain Conor Reilly is patrolling left field, junior Douglas Walton is in centerfield, and senior Sam Sullivan and Hughes are alternating in right field.

"Conor is strong on defense and is a good base-runner," Chiappone said. "He's a captain who leads by example and communicates effectively. Doug is our leadoff hitter who covers a lot of ground. Hughes reads the ball off the bat and gets a great jump on the ball, and Sullivan's best asset is his strong arm."

Fantini is the Blackhawks' designated-hitter. "A lefty, Nick led the team last year in runs-batted-in and extra-base hits," Chiappone noted. "Batting cleanup this season, he leads the team with 6 RBIs in five games."

Two sophomores round out the roster — Chase Holmes (catcher) and Nate Parmentier (pitcher). "Chase gives us depth at catcher, and Nate is a right-hander who has promise," Chiappone said.

Chiappone also wants his players to experience winning, and he believes winning is the by-product of reaching one's potential and enjoying one's athletic journey.

"Life lessons I hope my players learn are how to overcome adversity, to be resilient and mentally tough," he emphasized. "Other key lessons are how to become a high-quality teammate and how to develop leadership skills."

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# MassBay student team named Global Nominee for NASA Space Apps Challenge

WELLESLEY HILLS, Mass., (April 8, 2026) – Mass-Bay Community College computer science students Jonathan Joseph of Norwood, MA, Richard Juuko of Framingham, MA, Cesar Pimentel of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Pranshu Shah of Bellingham, MA, and Ky Trieu of Hanoi, Vietnam, were named a Global Nominee for the NASA Space Apps Challenge, an international hackathon.

According to the NASA Space Apps Challenge website, the hackathon provides participants an opportunity to engage directly with NASA data and space agency partner data. Teams use these data to address challenges created by NASA experts, with topics including storytelling, software development, astrophysics, space exploration and agriculture.

The MassBay team, known as the MassBay Hackaneers, se-



**MassBay Community College computer science students (left to right) Jonathan Joseph, Cesar Pimentel, Ky Trieu, Richard Juuko, and Pranshu Shah, at the Humansphere Foundation event at Harvard University, November 2025 (Photo/ MassBay Community College)**

lected the advanced challenge titled "A World Away: Hunting for Exoplanets with AI." For their project, the team built and trained a machine learning model using existing NASA datasets to analyze astronomical data and predict potential exoplanets. The model achieved approximately 80% prediction accuracy. The team then implemented the trained model into a website interface, allowing users to interact with the system and test predictions.

The MassBay Hackaneers, all members of the MassBay Computer Science Club, had little prior experience working with artificial intelligence, making the competition a challenging environment filled with rapid learning and experimentation. The team completed the full project in approximately 48 hours. This marks the first time MassBay

has participated in and placed in the challenge.

The NASA Space Apps Challenge is one of the largest global hackathons. The Mass-Bay Hackaneers competed in and won the local Cambridge event, which included students from several universities, including Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The team then advanced to the international judging stage. Following the hackathon, the team was invited to present their project and be recognized at an event hosted by the Humansphere Foundation at Harvard University.

According to the NASA Space Apps Challenge, the 2025 event welcomed a record 114,094 participants and 18,860 teams across 551 local events in 167 countries.



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## My Pinnacle Network plans May networking meetings

My Pinnacle Network's May 2026 business-to-business networking meetings include:

Westborough, Tuesday, May 5, 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Zoom only.

Mansfield, Wednesday, May 6, from 8:30 a.m. -10 a.m. Zoom only.

Marshfield, Thursday, May 7, from 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Zoom only.

Newton, Thursday, May 14, 7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. Zoom only:

If you would like to attend, please contact [admin@mypinnacletnetwork.com](mailto:admin@mypinnacletnetwork.com). There is no charge to visit a My Pinnacle Network meeting.

For information, visit [www.mypinnacletnetwork.com](http://www.mypinnacletnetwork.com).

# Join in the 1st Bellingham Multicultural Festival, May 16th!

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

The inspiration was simple for Bellingham's Multicultural Festival, which will take place on Saturday, May 16th, from 1-4:30 p.m., says Bellingham Public Library Director Bernadette Rivard. "We saw other communities doing it," Rivard explains, "It came up as an opportunity for us to have an event where we focus on different cultures we have in the community. Every culture has dance routines; every culture has music; every culture has food."

Last month, Rivard expressed excitement volunteers from the neighborhood joined her to plan "an event where we could bring the community together by focusing on what unites us, and to learn about other cultures."

With a grant from the Belling-

ham Cultural Council (funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council) as well as help from the Friends of Bellingham Library, the event will include the following, confirmed at press time:

- 1 p.m. – Soccer demonstration by Coach Bresley Pascoal of Brazil Elite Soccer Academy
- 1-4 p.m. - Henna and Face painting
- 1-4 p.m. – Crafts (Rangoli, Diya, make a Flag, Henna Paper)
- 1-4 p.m. – Country tables staffed by community members
- 1:45 p.m. – Children's Indian Dance
- 1:45 p.m. – Bachata/Salsa Dance
- 2:30 p.m. – Performance by the Imperial Lion Dance Team (<https://imperialiondance.com/>)
- 2:30 p.m. – Performance by Brazilian Singer Giovanna

Mendes

3:30 p.m. - Steel Drum performance by Logan Amaral

In addition, the event's food selection will include breads, desserts and drinks from various locations around the world.

"We have commitment from the Curry House," Rivard told the Bulletin, adding that a local licensed baker was donating her time to create a number of different desserts from different cultures.

"We'll also have candy from all around the world and drinks," says Rivard, noting that the Friends of the Bellingham Library was funding refreshments.

The family-oriented afternoon will celebrate the food, music, art, dance, and various cultural traditions from around the world.

The library is still welcoming community volunteers to host informational tables on their native countries. If you are interested in participating, please email [library@bellingshamlibrary.org](mailto:library@bellingshamlibrary.org) before May 8, 2026.

# Franklin Art Association 2nd annual Fakes & Forgeries May 16-June 6

The Franklin Art Association warmly welcomes the public to enter their work into the Second Annual "Fakes and Forgeries Art Exhibit"! The deadline for entries is May 2. This is a free public display featuring artistic reproductions and creative interpretations of masters' artworks by local artists. The exhibit will run from May 16 to June 6 during museum hours at the

Franklin Historical Museum, 80 West Central Street, Franklin.



Rules for entries are; One entry per person. First come/ first served. Fifty entrants maximum due to space limitations. To register, complete this form at : <https://forms.gle/nSjk4b-3Smo8g9TcB7>. Enter quickly!!

This returning show is again a collaboration between the Franklin Historical Museum and The Franklin Art Association. Public reception on June 6th (same day as PorchFest in Franklin), 12-6 p.m. at The Franklin Historical Museum.

Participants are asked to volunteer to help make this event possible. Sign up here: [volunteersignup.org/79KT8](http://volunteersignup.org/79KT8)

## SOCCER

*continued from page 20*

MetroWest Visitors Bureau Executive Director Stacey David said local towns and organizations should think about experiences visitors might enjoy and market them accordingly – anything related to arts, culture, living history, outdoor activities (trail systems) - will be a big draw.

"Think about what you have in your town, and let the MetroWest Visitors Bureau help promote it," said David.

However, the very first action anyone should take, she said, is to change all website references from "Gillette Stadium" to "Boston Stadium," which is what visitors will be searching for when planning their trip.

When creating watch parties and other events, organizers should consult the organization's public viewing regulations, including broadcast licenses, branding, etc., which can be found at <https://bit.ly/FIFA-publicViewing>.

Sen. Becca Rausch, whose district includes Bellingham – just 16 miles from Foxboro where the matches will be played – attended the event and said the Commonwealth is

ready to welcome visitors from around the world.

"I'm thrilled [Soccer's Big Event] is coming to Massachusetts and particularly our region, drawing millions of visitors to MetroWest this summer. Travelers have so much to discover here, from beautiful nature trails to dynamic main streets and cultural treasures. I hope people are excited for the opportunity to welcome the world and showcase our hospitality and history, especially as we celebrate and share the stories of MA250. I stand with my colleague, Sen. Paul Feeney, as he leads the work in the Senate to secure funding for a safe and smooth experience for tourists and residents alike," Sen. Rausch told Local Town Pages, after the event.

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau promotes travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region, which include Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough, according to [www.metrowest-visitors.org](http://www.metrowest-visitors.org).

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For more information, visit [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com) or <https://bostonfwc26.com>

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