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Norfolk residents renew calls for action on Kingsbury Pond

By GRACE ALLEN

The body of water known as Kingsbury Pond existed long before Norfolk did, but in the last 60 years it has been shrinking substantially.

And residents are raising the alarm.

"The pond needs a plan because it's dying," said John Griffin, who has lived near Kingsbury Pond since 2002.

He and other residents say they have seen the pond change dramatically, with receding water levels affecting wildlife habitat and recreational use. They are urging local and state officials to move beyond discussion and commit to actionable steps to stabilize and restore the pond.

A pond in decline

If this all sounds familiar, it's because we've been here before. Since at least the 1990s, Norfolk residents and abutters have formed groups to urge action and lobby officials to assess what interventions, if any, could help halt or



An aerial view of Kingsbury Pond in Norfolk shows exposed shoreline around parts of the pond. Residents have voiced concerns about the pond's declining water levels. (Staff photo)

KINGSBURY
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McCreedy is first from KP to attend Naval Academy *Top-notch athlete in wrestling, football*

By KEN HAMWEY

STAFF SPORTS WRITER

It's Anchors Away for King Philip's Griff McCreedy who's been accepted to the United States Naval Academy.

The 18-year-old native of Norfolk will be the first KP student to attend the Academy in Annapolis, Md. Brett Mazur, a 2017 KP graduate, also was accepted but opted to attend West Point.

McCreedy's credentials are dynamic and no doubt played a key role. He had a 4.28 GPA, was 45th in a class of 297, took five AP courses and a college-level course, was vice president of his class, and was a two-time National Honor Society student.

The 5-foot-9 McCreedy also excelled in athletics. He was a

two-time captain in wrestling and he also competed as a line-backer in football.

"When I was in the second grade, I wore a Navy Midshipman's costume for Halloween," McCreedy said. "To go to the Naval Academy has been my goal since I was eight years old. My dad (Bradley) is a 2001 graduate of the Naval Academy, and all my academic and athletic achievements have been tailored with the Academy in mind."

When McCreedy received an email on May 5, informing him that he no longer was on a waiting list, big smiles replaced doubt. "I was extremely happy

ACADEMY

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Norfolk Lions to host 35th annual Community Day on June 13



The Norfolk Lions Club will host its 35th annual Community Day on Saturday, June 13, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at WT Holmes Transportation, 22 Myrtle St., Norfolk.

The family event will feature more than 50 local businesses, organizations and community groups, along with activities including bounce houses, touch-a-truck, a live reptile show, caricature drawings, a shark tooth exhibit, birdhouse building, children's games, a pie-eating contest, a foam attraction and the Lions' golf ball drop.

Entertainment throughout the day will include performances by Ivy Music Company, Exhale dancers, Medfield dancers, a talent show winner, a banjo band and a steel drum

band. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

The Norfolk Lions acknowledge and thank this year's sponsors, including premium event sponsors Robert Roofing & Gutter, Mosquito Authority, Franklin Plumbing & Heating, and Wrentham Co-operative Bank. Event sponsors are Santander Bank, Molly Maid, the Law Office of Justin Puhlick, Marshfield Star Market, Honey Bean Café, A. Julian Plumbing & Heating, MJ Henry & Associates, OneLocal Bank, Carpentry by Tom Antonellis, Norfolk Department of Public Works, Norfolk Recreation, and C&C Ice Cream Truck.

Annual sponsors recognized by the organization are 1776 Financial, WT Holmes Transportation, Anderson Electrical,



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Parking is \$15 per car on the day of the event, or \$12 in advance through the Norfolk Lions website at norfolklions.org.

Back by popular demand, take a chance on a lucky golf ball, link also available on the website.

The event also offers an opportunity for residents to learn more about the Norfolk Lions Club and volunteer opportunities in the community.

Guest Column

1776 in stone

The forgotten walls of Wrentham and America at 250

By LT. COL. A. FAITHFUL
RETIRED U.S. MARINE

Published under a pen name at the author's request.

I was born not far from here in Attleboro, Massachusetts.

Years later, after serving two decades in the United States Marine Corps and spending much of my adult life away from New England, I eventually found my way back home. Today I live near Cook's Hill in Wrentham, where old stone walls disappear quietly into the woods surrounding Bungay Swamp.

Like many New Englanders, I had spent my whole life seeing old rock walls scattered through forests and fields without thinking much about them. But the longer I walked these woods, the more the walls began to feel like something more than scenery.

This July Fourth, America turns 250 years old.

Across the country there will be fireworks, parades, and celebrations marking the birth of the nation. Yet here in the woods near Bungay Swamp stand quieter reminders of that same story — old stone walls likely built around the same time America itself was coming into existence.

That realization changes the way you see them.

Suddenly, the walls are no longer decorative pieces of old New England scenery. They become connected to the generation that built the country itself.

Not only the famous names remembered in textbooks.

But the ordinary families who cleared hard ground by hand, season after season, stone after stone, while a young nation slowly took shape around them.

The land around Wrentham was shaped thousands of years ago by retreating glaciers that left endless stone scattered throughout the soil. For early New England farmers, survival meant constant labor. Fields had to be cleared manually, and every spring frost pushed more stone upward from the earth.

Generation after generation, families removed rock from their fields and stacked it by hand into walls that slowly spread across the countryside.

Every one of those stones was lifted by somebody.

The walls were never built for beauty. They were built because the land demanded it.

By the early nineteenth century, New England was covered by an astonishing network of

STONE

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The wings behind the band Copilot

From KPHS to Boston Calling, local songwriters and musicians take flight

BY RAGA CHILAKAMARRI

On a rainy Friday night in March, seconds after Ry McDonald introduced his band to columns of seated tables at The City Winery in Boston, the tinny, incredulous voice of a seven-year-old cried out, “Are you guys *actually* copilots?”

McDonald just grinned and declared, “I love this. The whole performance will just be a Q&A,” later riffing, “similar to Microsoft’s AI, we’ll answer all your questions,” earning a loud chuckle from the charmed audience.

The pop-rock band Copilot exuded the easygoing energy of a group that’s been playing together for ages. And at its helm are two alums from King Philip Regional High School: Ry McDonald and Maggie Hall. Their set opened with McDonald casually noodling the guitar before Hall’s steady, powerhouse voice snapped the room to attention. Throughout eight songs, three singers traded lead, effectively ramping the energy for upbeat shouts and mellowing down for soulful ballads.

The Boston-based band kept busy in 2025: they released the EP titled “Vroom Vroom, Etc.,” performed at popular music festival Boston Calling, and launched a GoFundMe campaign to support their forthcoming album, raising over \$30,000 with the help of an angel investor.

McDonald and Hall both graduated from KP in 2010. While acquainted, they were not close friends. In fact, they probably would’ve made an unlikely duo back then, like in a teen movie where the confident kid in a rock band persuades the sweet, shy jock to sing with him.

“I remember Ry was the guy who came out with his guitar and sang in front of the class,” Hall said. “I [thought he was] the most talented kid in our grade...but I was a closet singer at that point.”

“I wasn’t the best student,” McDonald explained. “But I found out very early on that if I ever brought my guitar in for a class project, the teacher would just give me an A.”

McDonald was raised in Norfolk and inherited his knack for guitar from his musical parents who sang in a cover band, rehearsing on Thursday nights, and playing gigs some weekends in local spots around Wrentham. McDonald would accompany them to shows and, by age 12, started performing a couple of songs between their sets.

“They always had the equipment around,” McDonald said. “So, when I was in high school, I knew I could borrow the PA [speaker] my parents had and bring it to a party and play music.”

The name “Copilot” alludes to a McDonald family memory. Before semi-annual road trips down to Florida, his uncle would make 250-song cassette mixes that served as the car’s only soundtrack. “It was my first time hearing a lot of the music that made me want to be a musician,” McDonald said. “And the only time my dad would let me stay up late... He’d say, ‘you can come be my copilot while we drive.’”

Meanwhile, softball defined much of Hall’s identity growing up. Hall, née Quealy, originally from Plainville, was an all-star pitcher who helped her team clinch the Hockomock league title all four years, earned a full-ride sports scholarship to UMass Amherst, and was inducted into KP’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 2023. Her 15-minute walk home from school became her daily singing time, and she even declined offers for rides so she could have the time for herself.

“Though my neighbors later told me, ‘We could always hear you,’ and I was horrified,” Hall shared with a laugh. “Me practicing *The Star-Spangled Banner* by myself.”

“There were little traces of Maggie’s singing power but they were hidden,” McDonald added.

Though Hall kept her passion and talent for singing largely private, Peter Tileston saw it. The longtime King Philip choral director led the school’s music program for more than 27 years before retiring in 2010. Hall participated in choir



King Philip High School alumni Maggie Hall, seated, and Ry McDonald, center, helped lead Boston-based band Copilot from local gigs to stages including Boston Calling. Other band members, from left, are Dylan Allwine, Austin Beveridge, Jake Machell and Jack Snow, seated. (Photo by Brandon Johnson)

throughout high school and worked with Tileston individually in preparation for districts auditions.

“Right from the beginning, Maggie displayed a talent with her voice and her ear,” Tileston said. “She always sang right in the center of the pitch and... [was] a leader for the rest of the kids because she followed my directions and she changed them and got better.”

Despite their shared musical interest, the future bandmates did not connect until 2016 when McDonald saw a video Hall had posted on Facebook of herself singing and, impressed, reached out to her.

“I would text her pretty much every day and [ask], ‘Do you want to come hang out and we’ll sing?’” McDonald said. “Then we just started doing that all the time.” And almost a decade later, they have not stopped.

Their first show was at The Gavel in Wrentham center and, while singing in public was natural for seasoned McDonald, Hall recalled feeling “terrified.” She’d joined an acapella group her junior year of college, but harmonizing with one other person on stage was a new experience.

“I was so nervous,” Hall said. “But I remember the thrill I would get afterwards.”

Soon, the duo was performing in restaurants and bars across New England and New

York. They eventually recruited bassist Austin Beveridge and drummer Dylan Allwine, both of whom McDonald had met while studying Music Business at Northern Vermont University (then named Lyndon State College) and in 2017 recorded their first album in an Airbnb. By 2018, they’d added vocalist Jake Machell and lead guitarist Jack Snow—and thus, the crew was complete.

When it came to composing original lyrics, McDonald already had a host of songs from previous projects but knew Hall’s emotive voice called for new material, encouraging her to write from a “real place” and as much as she could.

“I came in with just a true blank slate,” Hall said. “I’ve learned so much from Ry about songwriting and saying something that people have said in so many songs but [thinking about] how do you make it unique to you or how do you sing it differently. And I think Ry always challenged that part of myself in particular which is really cool.”

“I think with most creative acts where people are doing things for the first time, you just kind of guide and encourage and show a little belief and you get there,” McDonald said, and that philosophy clearly shines in Copilot’s collaborative, no-secrets approach to songwriting where everyone contributes lyrics. Bassist Austin Beveridge,

for example, wrote “Bang Bang Boogie,” on the latest EP. Working with Sam Kisserer, the producer behind Lake Street Dives’ *Bad Self Portraits*, marking a turning point: the band’s first time recording with someone who wasn’t a friend or classmate.

Keeping a band together is notoriously difficult, especially a six-piece for eight years, but Copilot has maintained the same core members since assembling. McDonald said the trickiest hurdle is often scheduling around other jobs, partners, families, and homes scattered across Massachusetts.

“Every time I’m on stage, I call the boys my ‘merry men,’” Hall said. “I don’t think I was prepared for the family I would gain.”

Copilot is currently working on their third album. “We’ve approached the writing process differently,” McDonald said. “We love playing live, we thrive in a live space, we built the band in order to be a really strong live band...this go-around we’re recording with a click track but keeping things as live as possible...trying to mess with it on the go so we can transfer our live show onto a record.”

Until then, you can catch Copilot at their concerts across the Eastern seaboard: <https://www.copilotband.com/shows>.

KINGSBURY

continued from page 1

reverse the pond’s deterioration. Historical accounts and local records indicate that the pond was once significantly larger—commonly cited at roughly 26 acres—and has since shrunk to 9 acres.

Formed thousands of years ago, Kingsbury Pond is a glacial kettle pond, meaning retreating, melting glaciers created a depression that filled with groundwater. But unlike ponds fed by major streams, Kingsbury is primarily tied to the surrounding aquifer and precipitation. And therein lies the problem.

A significant decline in water levels was documented beginning in the mid-1960s, coinciding with the start of nearby municipal groundwater pumping in Franklin and regional drought conditions. The USGS, hydrologists and water resource agencies broadly agree that groundwater pumping can affect groundwater-fed ponds if they are connected to the same glacial aquifer.

In an interview, Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen said the pond’s decline cannot be viewed through that lens alone. He pointed to recurring drought conditions, climate pressures and the geological nature of kettle ponds. Hellen’s academic background is in geography and early in his career he worked for the state’s Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, where he helped support development of Massachusetts’ drought management plan in the late 1990s.

Officials in Franklin have long maintained that the town meets state requirements for managing its water supply, including mitigation measures that return treated wastewater to the ground. However, critics argue that while large volumes may be recharged overall, only a small portion appears to return to the specific aquifer that feeds Kingsbury Pond, raising questions about whether those efforts meaningfully benefit the pond itself.

What the science shows

What has renewed residents’ attention is a 2023 U.S. Geological Survey study examining Kingsbury Pond and nearby groundwater withdrawals, offering the clearest scientific assessment to date of the factors affecting the pond.

The study found that Kingsbury Pond is hydraulically connected to the same aquifer tapped by Franklin’s municipal wells, meaning groundwater pumping can directly influence pond levels. Researchers concluded that Franklin’s FR-04 well, which began operating in 1964, is the largest single contributor to lowered water levels at Kingsbury, with FR-05 also having an impact.

USGS modeling estimated that under conditions without pumping from the nearby wells, Kingsbury Pond’s average water elevation would be about four feet higher than it is under recent

pumping conditions. The report also found that while pumping is a significant factor, it is not the only one; precipitation, drought conditions, septic recharge and broader hydrologic patterns also affect the pond.

Hellen emphasized that point, noting Massachusetts is already in a Level 2 drought and warning that continued dry conditions could worsen underwater stress and that drought and broader climate change trends are affecting water bodies nationwide.

Questions about mitigation

A separate technical review prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection examined Franklin’s mitigation efforts—primarily the return of treated wastewater to the ground to offset water withdrawals. While Franklin cites more than 300,000 gallons per day of mitigation recharge, that review found only a fraction—about 14,000 gallons per day—appears to reach the specific aquifer area that feeds Kingsbury Pond.

For residents pushing for action, that distinction is critical.

The issue also remains under state permitting review. On May 13, 2025, MassDEP requested additional information from Franklin, including justification for its requested water withdrawal capacity and an evaluation of whether pumping from Wells 4 and 5 near Kingsbury Pond could be reduced. Franklin responded on Oct. 6, 2025, seeking to retain its full 3.44 million gallons per day authorization and arguing that current operations are already optimized as much as practical.

According to Hellen, Franklin has invested heavily in water infrastructure improvements over the past two decades, including leak reduction and water main upgrades, and noted the town relies entirely on groundwater. “We are doing everything we can



A 1945 land plan depicts Kingsbury Pond with a larger footprint, a more irregular shape, and a separate small adjacent water feature. A recent aerial image shows a smaller visible area of open water and broader exposed shoreline. (Staff photo; historical image courtesy of Save Kingsbury Pond)

to protect every drop of water,” he said.

For Griffin and other residents, the key issue is whether Franklin will be required to formally address the state’s concerns. “We want to see an actionable plan,” he said. “The science is there.”

State and local officials respond

The findings have renewed questions about whether current mitigation efforts are sufficient, and whether state regulators or lawmakers will pursue measures to protect the pond moving forward. When reached for comment, State Senator Becca Rausch said “Everybody needs clean, accessible water. I remain committed to environmental protection and sustainability. My team and I are reviewing the matter and continuing to have conversations with stakeholders.”

State Representative Marcus Vaughn, whose House Bill 1061 would require a state study of Kingsbury Pond and the impact of nearby public wells, said in an email that residents’ concerns warrant serious attention. Vaughn said the issue deserves continued state oversight, updated hydrological review and transparent environmental analysis, and that if science shows groundwater pumping is materially contributing to the pond’s decline, mitigation measures or

permit adjustments should be considered. He also pointed to broader regional growth pressures, particularly in Franklin, and said communities should have meaningful recourse when neighboring water withdrawals affect shared environmental resources.

Norfolk officials are also preparing a local response. In an email, Town Administrator Rob Garrity said the Select Board is discussing formation of a Kingsbury Pond working group. The proposed group would include concerned residents, board members and others with relevant scientific or public policy expertise to advise town leadership, gather information about the impacts of declining water levels, increase public awareness, and help coordinate future action.

“Ideally we will be able to chart a path forward with Franklin and the State that ensures clean and safe drinking water for Franklin, while restoring and protecting the important natural resource that is Kingsbury Pond,” Garrity said.

Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen said he and Garrity have also discussed a possible public information session later this year.

In the meantime, residents have turned to the Facebook group, Save Kingsbury Pond, to share updates, organize advocacy efforts, and keep public attention focused on the issue.

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Platinum Physical Therapy: Keeping Norfolk moving, one patient at a time

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Tucked into the heart of Norfolk, Personal Best Physical Therapy, now known as Platinum Physical Therapy, has quietly built a reputation over the past nine years for something that goes beyond treatment plans and exercises. It's about helping people get their lives back.

The tone feels different right away. Patients don't ever feel like they are just a number. It's personal. Every person is given one-on-one attention for a full 40-minute session, creating the space to really understand what's going on, not just physically, but holistically.

It's a philosophy rooted in compassion, but also in empowerment. That approach starts with listening first.

"We really take the time to understand every symptom the patient is experiencing, as well as a picture of what their day-to-day is like. So many factors can contribute to physical pain, such as strain on a joint, twisting an odd way, or even holding stress in the muscles," shares Courtney

Doxsee, PT, DPT, and Regional Director for Platinum.

"It's important to see the whole picture. We want people to be able to live their lives in the best way possible, and that starts with being physically able to do the things they enjoy."

There's a strong belief here that movement is essential to quality of life, and that most people have more control over their health than they realize. Genetics may set the stage for some, but they don't dictate the outcome. The team works to help patients take ownership of their progress, building strength, resilience, and confidence along the way.

That's especially true when it comes to strength training, which is something the clinic is particularly passionate about. Too often overlooked or underestimated, strength training plays a critical role in long-term health, from injury prevention to bone density to everyday function. At Platinum PT, it's not about lifting something heavy for the sake of it, it's about building a body that supports the life you want to live

Business spotlight

and functions the way you need it to, when you need it to.

For those dealing with pain or injury, getting started sooner rather than later can make all the difference. It's difficult to book an appointment quickly with primary care physicians due to demand and other factors. Platinum PT encourages patients to begin care as soon as something feels "not quite right". That early access can be key in preventing minor issues from becoming more serious, and potentially more difficult to resolve. They accept most insurance plans, helping make care more accessible when it's needed most.

Within the clinic, the experienced and dedicated staff treat patients with conditions ranging from neck or hip pain to headaches and vertigo. They help people with physical pains, neuromuscular disorders, trau-



The team at Platinum Physical Therapy is ready to help patients move better, feel stronger, and get back to doing what they love every day.

matic brain injuries, arthritis, and even balance issues. Additionally, patients also have access to specialized services, including a dry needling specialist and a TMJ specialist, allowing for more targeted treatment options under one roof.

After nearly a decade in Norfolk, the demand for this kind of personalized care has only grown. This summer, Platinum PT is expanding into the adjacent open space, creating more room to treat patients while maintaining the same level of individualized attention that has defined their work from the beginning.

With hours that run from 7:40 a.m. to 6:40 p.m. Monday

through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, the clinic is designed to fit into real-life schedules, because staying active, recovering from injury, and feeling strong shouldn't be out of reach.

At its core, Platinum Physical Therapy isn't just about rehab. It's about helping people keep moving forward: stronger, more capable, and more in control of their health than they thought possible.

Platinum Physical Therapy is located at 65 Holbrook St. in Norfolk, MA. Learn more about their services and treatment options at www.platinumptma.com or by calling 508-426-5470.

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Freeman-Kennedy band earns 14th consecutive gold medal at MICCA Festival

The Freeman-Kennedy Elementary School Advanced Band recently brought home another gold medal from the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) Festival, extending a winning streak that now spans 14 consecutive years.

Under the direction of John Fouracre, the ensemble performed before a panel of adjudicators at one of the state's most competitive music festivals.

The gold medal marks the band's 17th MICCA appearance overall — a record that includes three silver medals and 14 golds in a row.

Over the years, Freeman-Kennedy's Advanced Band has performed at some of New England's most prestigious venues, including Symphony Hall in Boston, Mechanics Hall in Worcester and Groton Hill Music Center in Groton.

Fouracre has led the band



The Freeman-Kennedy Advanced Band, under the direction of John Fouracre, won the school's 14th straight gold medal at the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Festival.
(Photo courtesy Norfolk Public Schools)

program at Freeman-Kennedy throughout the gold-medal run, building a tradition of musical excellence that continues to distinguish the school throughout the region.

"What Mr. Fouracre and

these students have built over 14 years is extraordinary," said Superintendent Dr. Ingrid Al-lardi. "Fourteen consecutive gold medals doesn't happen by accident — it takes discipline, dedication and a teacher who

shows up every single day committed to bringing out the best in young musicians. We are incredibly proud of the Advanced Band and grateful to have Mr. Fouracre leading this program."

Trinity Church to host indoor yard sale June 20 in Wrentham

Trinity Church, 47 East St., will host a large indoor yard sale on Saturday, June 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A wide variety of items will be available for purchase, including CDs, collectibles, crafting supplies such as fabric and yarn, games, glassware, home décor, holiday decorations, Halloween costumes, household items, jewelry, kitchen items, office supplies, pictures and frames, bicycles, tools, small furniture, toys, small electronics, tableware, vases and videos. Shop for Father's Day gifts!

The sale will also feature gently used household textiles, including area rugs, blankets, bedding, comforters, curtains, linens, scarves, tablecloths, ties and towels.

Computers, televisions, printers and VHS videos will not be available.

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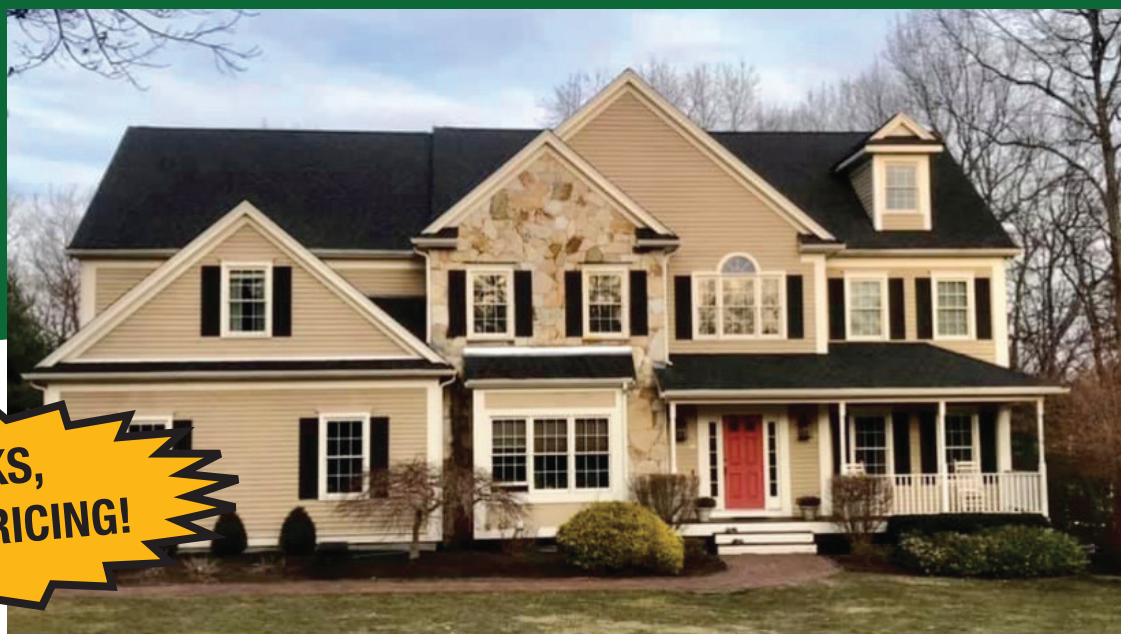
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Your Money, Your Independence

Avoid the F.I.R.E. trap: Why true independence is flexible



Glenn Brown, CFP

In the world of personal finance, few concepts have captured the public imagination quite like the “FIRE” movement (Financial Independence, Retire Early). The premise sounds intoxicating: live in extreme frugality, sacrifice your lifestyle to save half your income, hit a precise mathematical milestone, and exit the workforce forever.

It looks perfect on a spreadsheet. But as a Certified Financial Planner, I see a glaring, human flaw in this hyper-fixation on a “magic number.” It turns money into a rigid prison rather than a tool for living.

True financial independence isn’t about hitting an artificial finish line and pulling up the drawbridge; it is about building a life flexible enough to handle reality and generous enough to share.

The myth of the flat-line life

The fundamental math of traditional FIRE assumes your life will remain perfectly linear. It projects your future based on your current lifestyle, locking you into a permanent state of hyper-calculated spending to protect your safe withdrawal rate.

But life does not stay flat. A rigid financial plan leaves absolutely no room for the unpredictable, beautiful, and sometimes expensive shifts in our personal journeys.

What happens if you choose to care for aging parents down the road? What if you want to fund a loved one’s education, marry someone with a different financial reality, or navigate a medical curveball? If your financial plan breaks the moment your life expands, it isn’t independence. It’s a self-imposed constraint disguised as freedom.

Reclaiming the power of flexibility

Instead of racing toward an arbitrary retirement date, a healthier approach is to design a wealth strategy around being “Work Option-Ready.”

Financial independence shouldn’t mean doing nothing; it means having the power to choose what you do, when, and with whom.

When you build a plan focused on flexibility rather than an escape hatch, you don’t have to view your career as a prison sentence to endure. You gain the agency to take a sabbatical, pivot to a lower-paying but more fulfilling role, or launch a passion project. Money is a tool for personal sovereignty, not just a metric for tracking how quickly you can stop contributing your talents to the world.

The generosity premium

Perhaps the deepest flaw of the hyper-frugal milestone mindset is its inherent

isolation. When your entire identity is wrapped up in protecting a fixed lump sum, spending money becomes a chronic source of anxiety. This often forces people to say no to shared experiences or decline opportunities to support their community because any extra expense threatens their spreadsheet.

True wealth is social, not just mathematical. A sophisticated financial plan accounts for a “generosity premium.” It explicitly builds in the margin required to share your success, support causes you care about, and show up financially for the people in your life when it matters most.

True independence means having enough abundance to be altruistic without compromising your future.

convince you that financial success is a race to a rigid finish line. The goal of comprehensive financial planning isn’t to cross an artificial boundary and stop living; it is to ensure your financial foundation is strong enough to weather life’s changes and flexible enough to let you live and give abundantly.

That is the kind of financial independence worth pursuing.

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

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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King Philip DECA members earn honors at international conference

King Philip Regional High School’s DECA chapter earned multiple honors at DECA’s International Career Development Conference, held April 25-28 in Atlanta.

King Philip students were recognized as international finalists in several categories, including community awareness, community giving, sales project, innovation plan, international business plan and integrated marketing campaign product.

The chapter also earned top-five international finishes

in business services operations research, startup business plan and international business plan, with one team placing second in buying and merchandising operations research and another taking first in startup business plan. One King Philip student also received a DECA Inc. scholarship and was recognized on stage in Atlanta.

According to DECA, more than 21,000 students competed for international honors at the conference.

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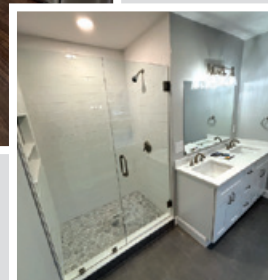
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Wrentham’s Water Division named a top performing public water system

The Town of Wrentham’s Water Division was honored recently as one of the Commonwealth’s “Top Performing Public Water Systems.”

Wrentham’s Water Division was one of nine “Medium and Large Community Systems” in Massachusetts named a 2025 Public Water System Award recipient by the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).

Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Brian Antonioli and Assistant Director Christopher Cassidy attended the awards ceremony, hosted by MassDEP and Commissioner Bonnie Heiple on Tuesday, May 5, in Shirley. The event celebrated National Drinking Water Week by recognizing more than 200 public water systems and operators at the 40th Drinking Water Awards Day.

“The award itself is in recognition of five consecutive years with no violations, errors



Wrentham DPW Director Brian Antonioli and Assistant Director Christopher Cassidy, center, attended an awards ceremony, hosted by MassDEP. Wrentham’s Water Division was one of nine “Medium and Large Community Systems” in Massachusetts named a 2025 Public Water System Award recipient. At left, Jim McLaughlin, the Southeast Regional Drinking Water Section Chief, and at right, Bonnie Heiple, MassDEP Commissioner. (Photo Courtesy Town of Wrentham)

and having all required reports submitted in accordance with MassDEP requirements on time,” Cassidy said.

The event honored 42 systems, four operators, two towns, and two childcare advocates for demonstrating excellent service, leading con-

servation efforts, and showing a strong commitment to water quality in 2025.

“Water is our most valuable resource,” said Commissioner Heiple. “MassDEP is proud

WATER DIVISION
continued on page 20

Rooted in Wrentham: New exhibit celebrates local artists and inspiration

A new exhibit at the Old Fiske Museum will explore the connection between Wrentham and the artists inspired by the town’s landscape, history and daily life.

“Rooted in Wrentham: Celebrating Local Talent and Place” will feature work by artists who live in Wrentham as well as those drawn to capture the town’s character through their art. The exhibit includes works in paint, photography, sculpture and mixed media.

According to organizers, the exhibit reflects the influence of Wrentham’s farmland, historic town common, neighborhoods and seasonal rhythms, highlighting the relationship between community, place and creative expression.

The exhibit opens at the Old Fiske Museum, 55 East St., on Sunday, May 31, from 1 to 4 p.m., and will remain open Sunday afternoons through Nov. 15. An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, May 29, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Admission is free, and all are welcome.

Stony Brook Camera Club announces June programs, end of season schedule

The Stony Brook Camera Club will conclude its 2025-26 season with two June programs before meetings resume in September.

The club meets Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in person and virtually from September through June. In-person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main St., Franklin.

Upcoming June programs include:

- June 4: *Women vs. Men* member competition
- June 11: Business meeting and end-of-year dinner

The Stony Brook Camera Club offers programs including guest speakers, competitions, image studies, and discussions related to photography, along with photography activities and workshops throughout the year. The club welcomes members of all skill levels.

For a calendar of events and membership information, visit the club’s website at stonybrookcc.com.



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Five questions that could change how you see retirement



Todd Miller, CFP®

FINANCIAL FOCUS®
Provided by Edward Jones

Saving for retirement is important, but it's only part of the picture. If you're within five to 10 years of your target retirement date, it's time to start thinking about what you actually want your retirement to look like. After all, getting to

retirement isn't the end goal — it's what you want to do once you're there that matters.

Start by asking yourself these five questions.

When do you want to retire?

The age at which you retire matters more than you may realize. Retiring early sounds appealing, but it means saving more and having less time to do it. It can also create gaps in health care coverage and income before key benefits kick in. For example, Social Security benefits can begin at 62, but at a reduced amount. Full benefits are available between ages 66 and 67, depending on birth year, and waiting until 70 means the maximum benefit. Medicare doesn't start until age 65, and penalty-free withdrawals from retirement accounts generally aren't allowed until age 59½.

For couples, timing gets even more complicated. Staggering retirement dates can sometimes maximize benefits; in other cases, retiring at the same time works better.

A financial advisor can help you sort through these decisions and find the approach that makes the most sense for your situation.

How do you want to spend your time in retirement?

Many new retirees are surprised to find that having unlimited free time feels disorienting rather than freeing. Thinking ahead about how to fill the days with meaningful activity — whether that's travel, volunteering, pursuing hobbies or spending more time with family — can make the transition smoother.

It helps to sketch out what a typical week, month or even first year might look like. If there are big gaps, it's worth thinking now

about what might fill them in rewarding ways.

Where do you want to live as a retiree?

Some retirees stay put, while others downsize or relocate entirely. Either way, it's wise to consider whether a chosen location will work well as you get older, taking into account factors like proximity to family, access to health care, cost of living and climate.

What will your retirement lifestyle cost?

It's not uncommon for retirees to discover that their travel, entertainment or leisure expenses were higher than expected. The more active and involved you plan to be, the more you will likely need to budget.

Does your retirement involve giving back?

Retirement often brings both the time and motivation to be more generous. Whether the goal is helping family members, donating to charity or volunteering in the community, it's worth defining those goals and building them into an overall plan.

Now that your vision is taking shape, turn it into a plan. Work with your financial advisor to align your savings with the life you want — and revisit that plan as your priorities evolve so your retirement keeps pace with you.

Todd Miller, CFP®

O: 781-652-9573 call or text
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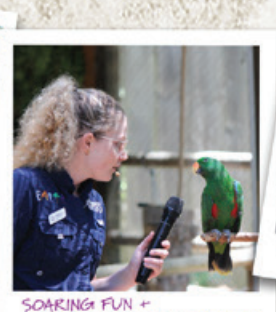
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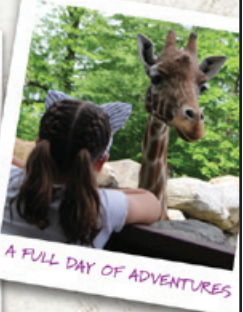
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Summer worship series begins June 28 at First Universalist Society in Franklin



The First Universalist Society in Franklin will hold a Summer Sunday Worship Series each week from June 28 through Aug. 30. Sunday services begin at 10 a.m. and will feature lay leaders exploring the theme “Choosing Hope,” with a focus on practices, places, and texts that provide sustenance and inspiration. Cookies and conversation will follow each service.

First Universalist Society in Franklin is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut St., Franklin. The minister is Rev. Beverly Waring. More information is available at FUSF.org, by emailing info@fusf.org, or by calling 508-528-5348

Norfolk solar farm: Town orders safety review of proposed batteries

By JOE STEWART

A fire safety engineering firm hired by the Town of Norfolk has found that NextGrid’s permit application for a battery storage system (BSS) at the Pond Street solar farm is incomplete and that key documents still need to be filed before the project can move forward. The same firm was hired by NextGrid to perform a plume study.

The firm, Jensen Hughes of Westborough, delivered its findings to the town on May 6. The review was commissioned by Norfolk as part of the permitting process for the battery energy storage system, known as a BESS, that is part of the Pond Street solar project.

Fire code review

Jensen Hughes examined four categories of documents that fire code requires before a large battery installation can be permitted: site and layout plans, two hazard analysis reports, and an emergency response plan.

The emergency response plan, which covers how personnel and responders would handle fires, equipment failures, and other emergencies, passed review. The plan meets the requirements of NFPA 855, the national fire safety standard for battery storage systems.

The other submissions fell short.

The site plans were found to be incomplete as they do not identify how many battery containers will be installed, how far apart they will be placed, or how they relate to electrical equipment, exit pathways, and roadways. Jensen Hughes stated that this information is needed to assess whether fire could spread from one battery unit to another.

In addition, NextGrid was required to submit two hazard mitigation analyses: one covering the battery itself and one covering the specific site. Jensen Hughes noted that NextGrid provided some documents, but that they were incomplete.

The report concluded that all missing items must be submitted and approved before the project can proceed.

The plume study

Separately, NextGrid commissioned Jensen Hughes to analyze what would happen if a battery malfunctioned and released toxic gases. That report examined a scenario in which one battery module fails - a so-called thermal runaway - and gases are vented through the top of the container.

The study found that the most hazardous gas released in such an event is carbon monoxide which rises quickly after it exits the container because it is released upward at high

temperature. Modeling showed that concentrations dangerous to human health would remain within about 25 feet of the exhaust point but would not reach ground-level breathing height at that distance.

The report used conservative assumptions, including the worst 5 percent of wind conditions recorded at Norwood Memorial Airport over 20 years.

Background

The Pond Street site has been under construction since the project received town approvals in 2022. Panels and battery containers have not yet been installed. The site involves approximately 25 acres and is designed to generate about 6 megawatts of electricity for the grid.

As we reported in February, a resident group called the Norfolk Commonsense Coalition raised concerns about battery safety, transparency in the approval process, and the cancellation of a planned access road from the Police Department on Sharon Avenue. That road was removed from the plan in 2024.

The batteries planned for the site use lithium iron phosphate chemistry. NextGrid has described this as a safer battery type than other lithium-ion formulations because it requires higher temperatures to reach thermal runaway. The system has received a UL 9540 listing, a certification for energy storage systems.

What Comes Next

Based on the Jensen Hughes review, NextGrid must revise its site plans and submit complete hazard analyses before the fire code permitting process can be completed.

Wrentham to hold voter registration for Town Election

An in-person voter registration will also take place on Friday, June 5 for a Special Town Election on Monday, June 15.

Any Wrentham resident who is not registered and/or will become 18 years of age on or before June 15, 2026 may register to vote. These registrations will

be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Fiske Public Library located at 110 Randall Road. Residents can also register online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR>

Please call the Town Clerk’s office at (508) 384-5415 with any questions.

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Helping students start the college process earlier - without the stress

For years, many families believed the college process truly began during junior year of high school. While junior year is still the most intensive planning period, the reality is that college admissions have become increasingly nuanced and competitive.

Today's students are not just applying with grades and test scores. Colleges are evaluating course rigor, activities, demonstrated interest, academic direction, leadership, and how a student's experiences connect to their intended major. Financial planning and merit scholarship strategy have also become important parts of the conversation much earlier in the process.

Because of these changes, families who wait until spring of junior year often find themselves feeling rushed and reactive. There may still be time to complete applications successfully, but there is often less opportunity to thoughtfully plan, explore interests, strengthen activities, improve academics, or build a balanced college list.

The good news? Starting earlier does not mean students need to "do college admissions" in 10th grade. Sophomore year should still be about growing academically, socially,

and personally. However, it is an ideal time for families to begin organizing, exploring, and creating a loose roadmap for the future. A little preparation now can significantly reduce stress later.

Sophomore year: small steps that make a big difference

Focus on academics first. Grades and course rigor remain the two most important factors in college admissions. Sophomore year is an excellent time for students to evaluate their study habits, seek help early if needed, and think carefully about junior and senior year course selection. Colleges like to see students challenge themselves appropriately over time. A good question to ask: "How much can I push myself without being shoved?"

Begin exploring interests. Students do not need to know their future career path yet. However, sophomore year is a great time to start paying attention to interests, strengths, and curiosities. Exploring potential majors or careers early often helps students make better decisions later about classes, summer opportunities, volunteering, jobs, or

extracurricular involvement.

Start building an activity résumé. Many students wait until senior year to remember everything they have done since freshman year - and quickly realize they forgot half of it. Keeping a simple running list of activities, work experience, leadership roles, volunteering, awards, and accomplishments can make the process much easier later.

Learn the college language early. Terms like Common App, demonstrated interest, Early Decision, merit aid, superscoring, Naviance, Scoir, and weighted GPA can feel overwhelming if families hear them all at once during junior year. Becoming familiar with the process gradually helps families feel more confident and informed.

Visit colleges casually. Families do not need a finalized college list to begin visiting campuses. Touring a few local colleges during sophomore year can help students start identifying preferences, such as, small vs. large schools; urban vs. suburban vs. rural campuses; public vs. private universities; and spirited campuses vs. quieter environments. These early visits often make future college research much more focused and productive.



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

Begin financial conversations. College costs can vary dramatically. Sophomore year is a good time for families to begin discussing affordability, researching merit scholarships, understanding financial aid basics, and setting realistic expectations together. Excellent financial aid resource: studentaid.gov. And It is never too late to start saving - 529 plans!

Determine if you need outside guidance Independent Educational Consultants (IEC) have broad experience in navigating the many aspects of the college admissions process - and help families create timelines, reduce stress, and make informed decisions before the process becomes overwhelming.

The goal of starting earlier

is not to create pressure - but to make the process easier and less stressful. Students who begin thinking about the process during sophomore year often enter junior year feeling more confident, organized, and prepared to make thoughtful decisions - allowing them to spend less time reacting and more time building opportunities that genuinely fit who they are.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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Pamela Storme named Assistant Principal at KPMS

Superintendent Dr. Rich Drolet and King Philip Regional Middle School Principal Michelle Kreuzer recently announced the appointment of Pamela Storme as a new Assistant Principal at King Philip Regional Middle School, beginning in July.

Storme brings more than 20 years of experience in public education and school leadership. For the past three years, she has served as Principal of Joseph L. McCourt Middle School in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Before that appointment, she worked for more than two years as an Assistant Principal at the same school.

Earlier in her career, Storme spent 16 years in the Portsmouth, Rhode Island School District. During that time, she served as Assistant Principal for three years and previously worked as a health, physical education and adaptive physical education teacher.

Throughout her career, Storme has focused on strengthening instruction, supporting student success and building strong family and community partnerships. While serving as Principal at McCourt Middle School, the school saw measurable academic improvement, including double-digit growth in English Language Arts on Rhode Island's RICAS assessment. She also led initiatives aimed at improving student attendance, strengthening school climate and culture and expanding opportunities for student leadership and engagement.

Storme has experience leading professional learning communities, supporting special education programming and supervising and evaluating staff. She has also overseen school operations, safety procedures and budgeting, while working closely with families and community partners to support students.

Storme will join Jay Donovan as one of the two assistant principals at King Philip Regional Middle School, working alongside longtime Principal Kreuzer.



Pamela Storme has been named as a new assistant principal at the King Philip Regional Middle School, effective July 1. (Photo Courtesy King Philip Regional School District)

Storme was selected following a search process that drew 31 applicants. An 11-member screening committee made up of administrators, teachers, counselors, a teacher assistant and support staff participated in the initial review and interviews. The process included a screening interview, a school-day interview at King Philip Regional Middle School and a final interview with the Superintendent.

Storme earned her bachelor's degree in physical education and health education from Rhode Island College and her master's degree in educational leadership from Western Governors University.

She lives in Rhode Island with her husband and two children. She has also coached soccer, softball and baseball and has served as president of her community's local Little League organization.

Federated Church seeks volunteers for meal ministry, donation drive

The Federated Church of Norfolk is seeking volunteers to support its longtime meal ministry at the Food and Friends Soup Kitchen at Centenary Church in Attleboro.

The church has participated in the program for more than 35 years, helping provide meals for those experiencing food insecurity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meals were distributed as takeout, with the church continuing to provide hot meals and take-home totes every six weeks.

As the soup kitchen returns to in-person dining, volunteers are needed to help transport, plate and serve meals in Attleboro. The church is also seeking

donations of casseroles, cookies and bars.

Upcoming volunteer dates are June 20, Aug. 15, Oct. 17 and Dec. 19.

In July, the church will again hold its "Christmas in July" collection drive for area food pantries, accepting donations of nonperishable food, cereal, boxed snacks, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene products and baby diapers.

The Federated Church holds Sunday services at 10 a.m., followed by a coffee hour.

Those interested in volunteering or donating may contact the Federated Church of Norfolk at mail@fcon.org or visit fcon.org for more information.

Norfolk's 17th annual Clean and Green Town-wide Cleanup – thank you

To the Editor:

The Norfolk Grange would like to thank all who helped make Norfolk's recent 17th annual Clean and Green event happen this year. The weather was good despite some early forecasts of rain. We had a good turnout in the celebration of Earth Day and the town-wide cleanup which took place

on Saturday, April 25. Participants collected litter from the streets and public places in Norfolk and brought their collections of trash and recycling to the parking lot of the historic Grange Hall at 28 Rockwood Road. Located there was a large dumpster provided by the Town for trash disposal as well as a dumpster provided by E. L. Harvey of Westborough for single-stream recycling. Participants also received volunteer recognition certificates for their community service.

Thank you to all participants who volunteered to clean the streets and public places in Norfolk this year! We also would like to thank the Norfolk Select Board, the Norfolk Department of Public Works, Norfolk Police Department, Freeman-Kennedy School, and E. L. Harvey Waste and Recycling Services for their support of our event. Again, thank you to everyone for helping beautify Norfolk and for making a positive difference for our environment!

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Field of Flags honors veterans



Norfolk Lions Club's Field of Flags on Town Hill pays tribute to veterans each May. Proceeds from the flag sales are donated to the Fisher House of Boston, a non-profit charity that provides a home-away-from-home for military families (active duty and veterans) receiving treatment at the VA Boston Healthcare System in West Roxbury or at one of Boston's hospitals. There is no charge for any family to stay at the Fisher House.

Fiske Library announces June programs, Summer Reading kickoff

The Fiske Public Library will be closed Friday, June 19, for Juneteenth. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The library is closed Saturdays in July and August.

Summer Reading, themed "Plant a Seed, Read!," begins Monday, June 22, and runs for eight weeks for children and teens up to age 18.

Children's programming includes Mother Goose on the Loose for ages birth to 3 on Tuesdays, June 2, 9 and 30; Pre-school Storytime on Thursdays, June 4 and 11; Baby/Toddler Playgroup on Friday, June 5; Monday Crafternoon on June 1 and 15; and Read to Sophie the therapy dog on Saturday, June 6.

Special youth events include a book bedazzling program for ages 11-18 on June 11; a butterfly exhibit with Winterberry Homestead on June 23; Birds of Prey with Wingmasters on June 24; a family movie on June 26; Book Bingo on June 27; and an Egg Drop Challenge on June 29.

Teens entering grades 7-12 may apply for summer volunteer opportunities at the library.

The library is also participating in a regional Soccer Gnome Hunt from June 1-30 with neighboring libraries.

Adult offerings include weekly free IT help on Tuesdays; monthly spice kits and take-and-make craft kits; a three-week Learn to Sew series beginning June 10; book bedazzling for adults on June 18; Wine Bottle Paint Night on June 25; and the Fiske Library Book Club on June 23.

The library also offers virtual author talks throughout the month.

Registration details and additional information are available at fiskelib.org or by calling 508-384-5440.

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Split ends are one of the most common things we see at b.LUXE, and they're not a sign of failure. They happen to almost everyone, no matter the hair type, the length, or the effort you put into your routine. Knowing what causes them, though, puts you one step ahead.

So what's actually going on?

Each strand of hair has an outer layer called the cuticle, a protective shield made up of tiny overlapping scales. Think of it like shingles on a roof. When those scales get worn down, the inside of the strand becomes exposed, and that's when you start to see fraying, splitting, and breakage.

A few of the biggest reasons for split ends

Heat styling: Reaching for the flat iron or curling wand every morning without a heat protectant slowly chips away at that cuticle. Over time, high temperatures cause real structural damage to the strand.

Color and chemical services: Color services and chemical treatments are some of the most sought-after services we provide, and while they create stunning results, they inherently place stress on the hair fiber. Even with a consistent conditioning routine, some level of breakage is a natural part of the process.

The environment: Sun, wind, hard water, and humidity can quietly sap moisture from your hair over time. UV exposure alone breaks down the natural keratin that keeps hair strong.

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The longer your hair gets, the older those ends are and the more they've been through. By the time your hair reaches a meaningful length, those ends can be two or even three years old. They've seen a lot... and they need more attention, not less.

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"The goal isn't just to grow your hair," says Heather Cohen. "It's to grow hair that actually feels healthy, strong, and looks the way you want it to."

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Our Solution to split ends: Fix the damage. Keep the length. We'll show you how!



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Every client who adds a **Split End Correction Treatment** to their service for the month of June goes home with a complimentary **Oribe Dry Texturizing Spray** in a deluxe travel size. This invisible dry hairspray builds serious volume and texture while tiny zeolite crystal-lines act like sponges, trapping dirt, oil, and odor. Oribe's Signature Complex of watermelon, lychee, and edelweiss flower shields hair from oxidative stress, UV damage, and the breakdown of natural keratin (**furthur protecting those split ends!**) It's vegan, cruelty-free, color-safe, and completely free of parabens and sulfates.

Keep your length, fix the damage. We'll show you how!

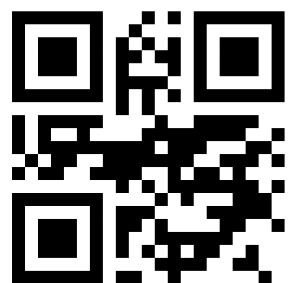
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Student Voice

Behind the curtain at King Philip High School's 'Murder on the Orient Express'

By ALISA KIREYEV

King Philip Regional High School's production of "Murder on the Orient Express" brought together cast and crew to stage Agatha Christie's classic mystery in the Grady auditorium, with performances taking place May 1-3.

Stage manager Pearl Babbitt said the role required ongoing planning and communication with those involved in the production.

"Stage managing requires a lot of planning. It requires a lot of talking as well," Pearl said. "Making sure you're connecting with every single person who is a part of this and listening to other ideas."

She added that maintaining focus and organization during performances was one of the more challenging aspects of the role, noting the difficulty of keeping track of everything while occasionally making split-second decisions.

Actor Liam Derfler-Murphy said the production relied heavily on coordination between cast and crew.

"This show relies so much

on tech elements, especially in lighting and set, but also through props and sound, which made every line and movement so much more important to get right," Derfler-Murphy said.

He added that the final scene in particular required close timing between cast and crew, stating that "it was both challenging but also fun having to line everything up perfectly with each other, and it really added to my job as an actor."

Director Courtney Bottomley said the production required balancing artistic goals with technical confines throughout the rehearsal process.

"There were certain things written into the script that had to happen," Bottomley said. "Once I identified those, it was a matter of remaining flexible with what I wanted versus what we as a tech crew could accomplish."

Bottomley echoed Derfler-Murphy's point that timing between actors and technical elements became a major focus during rehearsals.

"We had a lot of sound cues that were linked with dialogue and lighting cues that needed to

be incredibly precise," Bottomley said. "Because of our schedule, actors do not typically run through these elements until the week of the show."

Technical director Joseph Ferreira said the production required adapting existing stage materials to create a functioning revolve while working within time and space limitations.

"We assumed we'd be using all eight of our already existing 4' x 8' platforms," Ferreira said. "We had to make sure that the walls were braced sufficiently to keep them upright through multiple turns."

Ferreira also noted that the revolve required extensive testing and rehearsal before performances began.

"Getting the 40+ casters to both spin and rotate on cue required considerable use of lubricants and many hours of practicing by the tech staff assigned to the revolve for the show," Ferreira said.

Both cast and crew members said audiences rarely see the coordination required to keep the production running smoothly.

"I think audiences don't real-



Actors onstage during a performance. (Photo courtesy of Courtney Bottomley)

ize how much effort really gets put into all of this," Babbitt said. "People don't see the months of planning, the months of redrawing blueprints, the conversations that need to be had but also the amount of passion put behind this."

"There's so much going on that's hidden from the audience," Derfler-Murphy added. "All they see is a seamless show on the stage."

Nathan O'Sullivan, who served backstage as assistant stage manager, described backstage during performances as highly coordinated.

"Meticulous planning and coordination goes into each piece that's visible in every scene," O'Sullivan said. "During the 30-60 second transitions, about 15 large pieces of furniture, 4 rolling walls, many props, and the platform itself had to be moved."

He said the experience ulti-

mately stood out because of the people involved.

"Honestly, the people," O'Sullivan said. "Directing the technical aspects of the show with Pearl was such a privilege, and everyone else that's involved in the program that we got to work alongside truly made the show what it was."

"We were getting really exhausted, but we still loved what we were doing and we always pulled through," Babbitt said. "It's those kinds of memories that, when I graduate, I'm going to think about."

Derfler-Murphy similarly said the people involved in the production ultimately mattered more than the performance itself.

"For me, drama is far more about the people in it than the show itself," Derfler-Murphy said. "I'm so glad that this show brought me so much closer to such amazing people."

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LIVING HEALTHY

A new era of hope for patients with dry macular degeneration

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

For decades, patients diagnosed with dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) have often faced a frustrating and discouraging reality: there were very limited treatment options available. Unlike wet macular degeneration, which can often be treated with injections, dry AMD — which accounts for approximately 90% of all AMD cases — historically offered little beyond observation, monitoring, nutritional supplements, and lifestyle recommendations. Many patients were told to simply “watch and wait” as their central vision slowly declined over time. Today, however, that reality is beginning to change dramatically.

A groundbreaking FDA-authorized technology known as Photobiomodulation (PBM)

therapy is bringing new hope to patients living with dry AMD. Delivered through the Valeda Light Delivery System, PBM therapy represents one of the most exciting innovations in retina care in many years. For the first time, patients with dry AMD may now have access to a treatment shown in clinical studies to improve visual function and potentially slow disease progression.

Photobiomodulation works by using specific wavelengths of light to stimulate retinal cells and improve cellular function deep within the retina. Scientific research has shown that PBM may enhance mitochondrial activity, reduce inflammation, improve blood flow, and decrease oxidative stress — all factors believed to contribute to the progression of macular degeneration. By improving the health and metabolism of reti-

nal cells, PBM helps support the retina’s ability to function more effectively.

The FDA authorization of the Valeda system followed extensive scientific investigation and multiple clinical trials. The landmark LIGHTSITE studies generated tremendous excitement among retina specialists and ophthalmologists worldwide. In these studies, patients treated with PBM demonstrated measurable improvements in visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, and overall retinal function compared to untreated patients. Many patients gained letters on standardized vision testing, and some maintained these improvements over extended follow-up periods. Researchers also observed signs suggesting slower progression of retinal damage in treated eyes.

For patients who have spent



years hearing that “nothing can be done” for dry AMD, these findings are incredibly meaningful. PBM therapy is changing the conversation surrounding dry macular degeneration and offering patients genuine opti-

mism for the future.

One of the most remarkable aspects of PBM therapy is its excellent safety profile. The

EYE

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LIVING HEALTHY

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a leisurely weekend activity into a source of chronic discomfort. Danny, a 28 year old male, presented to our office complaining of right shoulder pain and stiffness across his lower back following a weekend of golfing with friends. He has been an avid golfer for multiple years, but has never experienced this level of symptoms. After starting a traditional course of chiropractic care, including chiropractic ad-

justments, at-home stretches, and increased hydration, Danny’s symptoms have greatly improved and he is happy to be back on the course pain-free. If you are experiencing these symptoms and are ready to start on your journey to health, call THE HOLISTIC CENTER AT BRISTOL SQUARE located at 1426 Main Street, Walpole. Call (508) 660-2722 to schedule your appointment today.



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

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EYE
continued from page 16

treatment is completely non-invasive, painless, and comfortable. There are no injections into the eye, no surgery, no needles, and no recovery time. Patients simply sit comfortably during a series of light therapy sessions that take only minutes to perform. Clinical studies have demonstrated virtually no significant side effects or safety concerns associated with treatment. This makes PBM one of the safest and most patient-friendly technologies currently available in retinal care. Patients often ask who may qualify for treatment. In general, the best candidates are individuals with early to intermediate dry AMD who are beginning to experience symptoms such as blurry central vision, difficulty reading, trouble driving at night, decreased contrast sensitivity, or distortion in vision. Patients with drusen deposits or non-central geographic atrophy may particularly benefit from evalua-

tion. Determining candidacy requires a comprehensive retinal examination and advanced retinal imaging performed by an experienced eye specialist. Milford Franklin Eye Center is proud to be among the very first centers in Massachusetts — and among the earliest centers in the United States — to offer this revolutionary FDA-authorized technology. In fact, MFEC is the fourth center in Massachusetts to acquire the Valeda PBM system. Remarkably, many major hospitals and eye centers in Boston still do not yet offer this breakthrough treatment. Milford Franklin Eye Center has always remained committed to bringing the most advanced and innovative technologies directly to the communities we serve so patients can receive world-class care closer to home. This commitment to innovation reflects the core mission of MFEC: providing exceptional eye care using the latest advancements in medicine while maintaining the personalized attention and compassion of a community-based practice.

Our goal has always been to empower local patients with access to the same cutting-edge technology available at leading centers across the country, without requiring long-distance travel for specialized care. Patients diagnosed with dry AMD are strongly encouraged to contact our office for an evaluation, consultation, or second opinion regarding PBM therapy. Many optometrists and ophthalmologists may not yet offer this technology or may not yet be familiar with the newest treatment advances available for dry macular degeneration. PBM therapy represents a true revolution in eye care because it offers something patients with dry AMD have rarely had before: hope for preserving — and in some cases improving — vision. Milford Franklin Eye Center is also proud to provide on-site retina specialty care through Dr. Alyse Richard, a highly trained retina specialist dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of retinal diseases including dry and wet macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal

vascular disease, retinal tears, and other complex retinal conditions. Dr. Richard combines advanced subspecialty expertise with compassionate, patient-centered care and is committed to helping patients preserve their vision using the latest evidence-based treatments available today. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with dry AMD, now is the time to learn more about this exciting breakthrough. Early evaluation and

treatment may make a meaningful difference in preserving vision, maintaining independence, and improving quality of life. Time equals vision. Patients are encouraged to contact Milford Franklin Eye Center for immediate appointments and second opinions regarding this revolutionary new technology that is changing the future of dry macular degeneration care. For more details, see our ad on page 16.



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SPORTS

KP softball team aiming for Division 2 playoff run

By KEN HAMWEY

STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The King Philip softball team will be in the playoffs for the sixth time since Kate Fallon-Comeau took the coaching reins.

But, this season will be a little different — the Warriors will be competing in the Division 2 tournament instead of Division 1. “I don’t think it’ll be much different,” Fallon-Comeau said. “It’s all the same because there are good teams in every division. Two top-quality squads in Division 2 that’ll be in contention to win it all are Walpole and Silver Lake.”

The Warriors handled their Division 1 chores admirably, advancing to the state final in 2024 and in 2023 they were a Final Four team. Both times they were eliminated by Taunton.

KP, which had an 11-3 record and a No. 1 ranking in Division 2 at Local Town Pages deadline, is a young contingent but the coach likes her team’s overall strengths.

“We’ve got depth and some experience; we’re skilled and athletic; our team chemistry is very good; and we’ve got one of the best pitchers in the state (McCoy Walsh),” Fallon-Comeau noted. “Our goals at the start of the season were to work hard every day and support one another. We also set our sights on the Kelly-Rex Division title in the ockHHockomock League, strive to win as many games as possible and go deep in the tourney.”

A senior right-hander and a four-year starter, Walsh is one of four captains. “A hard-worker and a leader by example, McCoy relies on a fast ball, riser, curve and change-up,” said



The 2026 King Philip Regional softball team that’s ranked No. 1 in Division 2.

Fallon-Comeau. “Her fastball is her best pitch and her control is excellent. She reached 700 strikeouts in a game against Dighton-Rehoboth and will be playing for Hofstra next year.”

Through April, Walsh had an 8-3 record, an E.R.A. of 1.74 and 134 strikeouts.

The other captains include Ali Gill (senior second baseman), Lauren Griffin (senior first baseman/catcher), and Kiera Lawrence (junior right fielder).

“Ali is another four-year player who also leads by example,” Fallon-Comeau offered. “She hits third in the lineup and has a lot of pop in her bat. She’s also fast on the bases and will be at Colgate next year. Her stats through April include a batting average of .458, 26 RBIs and 9 home runs. Lauren is a vocal captain who’s steady and reliable. A capable fielder who hits fifth, she does a good job at the plate. Kiera is a quiet leader, is commanding in the outfield, gets a good read on the ball, and has a good work ethic.”

Sophomore Cheyenne Murray is a young shortstop who’s “finding her way,” according to her coach. “Cheyenne is playing a position where we had dynamic players in the past,” Fallon-Comeau said. “She makes a difficult play look easy and turns in some spectacular efforts.”

Junior Bailey Cederbaum is KP’s capable catcher. “Bailey is reliable and very solid on defense,” Fallon-Comeau said. “She blocks the plate well and hits eighth. A situational hitter, she gets key hits when we need them.”

Leadoff hitter Annabelle Curran is a top-notch center-fielder for a sophomore. “Annabelle has done a great job in the outfield,” Fallon-Comeau noted. “She’s fast and has great range. Liv Wainwright would have been another plus in the outfield but she fractured her arm in our third game. Hitting .600 when she was injured, she’s probably out for the year.”

Sophomore Reagan Durden, who bats cleanup, is KP’s

designated player and a backup pitcher. “Reagan has given us some solid relief innings in the circle and a strong bat in the lineup,” Fallon-Comeau said. “A line-drive hitter who also hits for power, she keeps the ball in play.”

Junior Kelly Donahue plays third and bats ninth in the lineup. “She’s a solid No. 9 hitter, gets timely hits and is developing into an effective third baseman,” Fallon-Comeau said.

The Warriors have a group of supportive players who deliver results when called on and provide depth. They include juniors Lexi Gebhard and Addie Townsend and freshman Emma Flaherty, Lexie Davis and Livy Wiggins.

“Lexi and Addie are reserve first basemen,” Fallon-Comeau said. “Lexi is a good baserunner and Addie is strong as a situational defender. Emma now is starting in left field and hits No. 2. She’s a capable contact hitter. Lexie is a courtesy runner who’s scored some key runs this year,

and Livy is a reserve at third



King Philip coach Kate Fallon-Comeau, middle, and her assistants Bill Kelley, left, and Clara Pereira, right, are eager for success in the Division 2 State Tournament.

who’s used as a situational runner.”

Fallon-Comeau’s coaching philosophy gets results and it stresses a combination of winning, reaching one’s potential and having fun.

“I drill fundamentals, strive to motivate our players and want them to respect the game,” she said. “And, there are valuable life lessons I hope the girls learn. Some include overcoming adversity, learning to be resilient, becoming good leaders and quality teammates while also accepting responsibility and being accountable.”

If all of KP’s team strengths and its adherence to a team-first approach surface, then the Warriors just might have lots of post-season success. Two other keys for the Warriors are to be peaking at the right time and to stay focused on one game at a time.

“We’re looking to have a strong finish with sights on going deep into the Division 2 tournament,” Fallon-Comeau emphasized. “It will take a full team effort to get us there but we’re up for the task.”

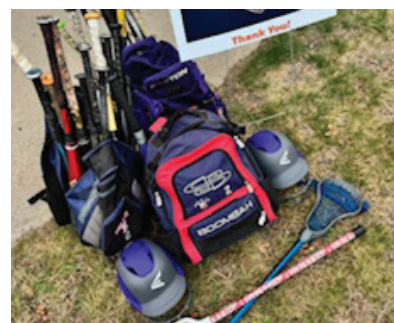
KPHS freshmen launch free sports gear giveaway at Norfolk Community Day

Three King Philip Regional High School freshmen have been collecting gently used sports equipment for a free community giveaway at Norfolk Community Day on June 13.

Tyler Stafford, Braeden Crotty and Ryan Poska created TBR Sports Exchange, an effort aimed at giving used sports gear a “second season” by collecting donated equipment, cleaning it, and making it available to community members at no cost. Items collected include

baseball and softball equipment, hockey skates, soccer and football cleats, tennis racquets, lacrosse sticks, golf clubs and gear bags.

On Norfolk Community Day, TBR Sports Exchange will have a booth under a blue tent with a TBR banner. Community members are invited to stop by and “shop” for equipment at no cost.



SPORTS

ACADEMY

continued from page 1

and pleased,” McCreedy said. “It’s a dream that’s come true.” The email mentioned his acceptance and McCreedy noted that “it was like an anvil lifted off my shoulders.”

His nomination letters included one from Sen Edward Markey, one from Congressman Jake Auchincloss and one from President Donald J. Trump. A nomination from the President is allowed if a parent served in the military.

McCreedy will be leaving for Annapolis on June 25 for six weeks of Plebe Summer (boot camp). When he’s a sophomore, he will commit to major in mechanical engineering.

“The next four years will be a challenge but I’m super motivated to attempt this,” McCreedy emphasized. “My parents (Brooke and Bradley) are very excited.”

KP wrestling coach Mike Poirier isn’t surprised his captain is bound for Annapolis.

“I’m very excited for Griff who’s what you want in a leader,” said Poirier. “He was a great captain and ambassador for our team. He led on and off the mat and excelled in all areas of being a student-athlete. I couldn’t be more proud of his accomplishments, not just on

the mat but what he accomplished on the football field, in school government, and in the classroom. He deserves this because he’s worked super hard.”

Wrestling at 175 pounds as a senior, he finished that season



When he was in the second grade, Griff McCreedy wore a Navy Midshipman’s costume for Halloween. (Contributed photo)

at 39-9. His career record of 118-51 leaves him tied for fourth place for career victories at KP. He reached 100 wins on Jan. 17 in a meet against Danvers.

“Reaching 100 wins and tying for fourth all-time means a lot,” McCreedy said. “It’s something I’ve been working toward since I first stepped onto the mat, and it really comes down to consistency and showing up every day ready to work. There were a lot of tough matches, early mornings, and long practices, so it’s definitely something I’m proud of. It’s not accomplished on your own. My varsity coaches — John Adams and Mike Poirier — and assistants — Chute, DeFelice, Campbell, Cloutier, and Hunter — pushed me to improve every day. And, my teammates made the room competitive and held me to the highest standard.”

McCreedy hopes to wrestle for Navy and he plans to try out as a walk-on. On three separate occasions, he’s attended the Navy SEALs Wrestling Camp and last summer he committed



Griff McCreedy’s credentials include a 4.28 GPA, he was 45th in a class of 297, took five AP courses, was vice president of his class and was a two-time National Honor Society student. (Contributed photo)

to the Naval Academy Summer Seminar.

“I attended the SEALs camp to experience what Navy SEALs’ life and training are like,” he said. “The summer seminar is for prospective academy applicants.”

McCreedy’s 2026 post-season results were good enough to earn him a berth in the All-State Tourney. He was first at the Hockomock League Tourney, third at the Division 2 Sectional, and fifth at the State Tourney. He did not place at the All-State Meet.

“I won the Hockomock League Tournament by beating Aschiwat Dempsey (Sharon), Tiernan Ritson (Canton), and Wanderson dos Santos (Milford),” he said. “At the Sectional, I beat Brody Conneely (Norwood) in the quarterfinals, lost to dos Santos (Milford) in the semifinals, beat Ritson (Canton) in the consolation of 4, and finally beat Brajae Walton (Wayland) to take third place.”

At the States, McCreedy



A Family Affair: Griff McCreedy’s family was all smiles when the news broke that he had been accepted to the Naval Academy. Back row, from left, his father Bradley and his mother Brooke. Front row, from left, McCreedy, his sister Grace, and his brother Jack. (Contributed photo)

placed fifth. He beat Brandon Silvestri (Reading) in the round of 16, lost to Cyrus Jones (Sharon) in the quarterfinals, beat Fionn Coughlin (Salem) in the consolation of 8, beat Jeremiah Delgado (Chicopee) in the consolation of 4, lost to Kevin Ozulumba (Ashland) in the consolation semifinals, and beat dos Santos (Milford) in the 5th/6th place match to qualify for All-States.

At All-States, he did not place, finishing with a 1-2 record. He lost to Jacob Borawski (Williamstown), beat Ozulumba (Ashland) in the consolation of 8, then lost to Isaac Hartshorn (Great Barrington).

“I went into the Hock Tourney with a lot of motivation because I had lost to dos Santos at a dual meet earlier in the year,” McCreedy said. “I had prepared for another physical match with him and ended up beating him, 2-1, in the finals. At the Sectional, I had a do-or-die mindset. I knew if I

was eliminated, my career was over and I wouldn’t have lived up to expectations. Fortunately, my motivation helped me to advance to the All-State tourney.”

McCreedy recalled the advice he heard as a freshman from coach John Adams. “He told us before Sectionals to give it your all so we didn’t have any regrets and that stuck with me,” he noted. “I did just that and left everything I had on the mat.”

McCreedy’s mat strengths include top-notch skills, a relentless work ethic, mental toughness, and determination. He’s also coachable and athletic. His favorite maneuver is a fireman’s carry, which is a takedown move that starts with a leg grab.

“Griff excelled because of his high wrestling IQ and toughness,” Poirier emphasized. “He was able to get himself out of some difficult positions within a match and came out on top. His

ACADEMY

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STONE

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stone walls stretching across farms, pastures, forests, and property lines. Some of the walls surrounding Wrentham today may have been rising from the earth while the colonies themselves were moving toward revolution.

While ideas like liberty and independence were being debated in meeting houses and colonial assemblies, ordinary families here in Massachusetts were still carrying stone from the soil one piece at a time.

America was being built in both places simultaneously.

One through ideas.

The other through labor.

That may be part of why these walls still feel significant today.

They remind us that civilizations are usually built slowly — through discipline, sacrifice, endurance, and ordinary people willing to carry difficult responsibilities without recognition.

In some places near Cook's Hill, the walls now run through dense woods that likely did not exist when the stones were first stacked there. Much of New Eng-

land was heavily cleared during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before forests slowly reclaimed the land again.

The farms disappeared.

The trees returned.

The walls remained.

That image has stayed with me ever since returning home to Massachusetts after my years in the Marine Corps.

There is something about coming home after decades away that changes the way you see the land itself. You begin to realize that places carry memory long after the people who once occupied them are gone.

Most of the men and women who built these walls will never be remembered by name. There are no statues marking where they worked. Yet their labor still shapes the landscape around us more than two centuries later.

Especially as America approaches its 250th birthday, that feels important.

Modern life encourages us to think in short timelines — news cycles, election cycles, immediate results. But the stone walls of New England remind us that things worth building usually require patience measured across generations.

They remind us that America is more than politics or slogans.

At its best, America is an inheritance — something received, preserved, and handed forward.

Encouragingly, some of the wooded land surrounding these old walls near Bungay Swamp has recently been preserved through local conservation efforts by the Town of Wrentham. In doing so, the town has protected more than open space alone. It has helped preserve physical reminders of the generations that shaped this landscape long before our own.

The walls are part of that inheritance.

And like every inheritance, they ask something of us in return.

Not nostalgia.

Not blind patriotism.

But stewardship.

Gratitude.

Responsibility.

Two hundred and fifty years later, the stones still stand beneath the trees.

Silent witnesses to the generations that built a country stone by stone.

Opinions expressed in the Guest Column do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

Special June events at Norfolk Senior Center

The Norfolk Senior Center has a full slate of June programs, including lectures, music, crafts and special events.

Highlights include the Passing of the Town Cane ceremony honoring Norfolk's oldest resident, Raymond V. "Bucky" Calleaux, on Wednesday, June 3, at 11:30 a.m.; a Massachusetts Bar Association Elder Law program on Friday, June 5, at 1 p.m.; and a World Cup-themed lecture exploring the history and cultural significance of soccer's biggest tournament on Thursday, June 11, at 1 p.m.

Other featured events include a virtual D-Day commemoration on Monday, June 15, at 11 a.m.; a Father's Day ice cream social on Tuesday, June 16, at 12:30 p.m.; a meet-and-greet with Norfolk Building Commissioner David Kulikowski on Thursday, June 18, at 1 p.m.; and a historical presentation, "Abigail Takes You From Revolution to Declaration," on Wednesday, June 24, at 1 p.m.

Creative and entertainment offerings include a drumming circle on June 9; music performances by Jonathan Keezing (June 10), The Rob Show (June 23), and Tom Cleverdon and grandson Liam (June 25); plus a Titanic-themed presentation on June 30.

Recurring offerings include exercise classes, card games, art programs, wellness services, veterans and social groups, weekly lunches, and transportation services. The center also offers several trips in June, including visits to the Attleboro Garden Tour, Capron Zoo, and New Pond Village.

Most programs are free, but registration is requested or required for many events. Contact the Norfolk Senior Center for details.

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WATER DIVISON

continued from page 8

to recognize our systems and operators who provide superior service, keep Massachusetts residents safe, and improve our resilience."

Besides overseeing the Water Division, the Wrentham DPW provides a wide range of services to residents, including snow and ice removal, storm-water drainage, vehicle fleet maintenance, maintenance and improvements of roadways, and ground main-

tenance of the cemeteries, the town common, and Sweatt Park.

"The Wrentham Department of Public Works strives to deliver high-quality municipal services to our residents and businesses," said Town Manager Michael J. King in a statement. "The dedication, professionalism, and teamwork demonstrated by our Water Division staff ensure that the community continues to receive clean, safe, and reliable drinking water. We are proud to recognize them for this well-deserved achievement."

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ACADEMY

continued from page 19

grit and determination were unmatched. Even when he was down big in a match, I never count Griff out.”

McCreedy relies on a style that’s tactical and patient but he can shift gears and get aggressive. “I’m aggressive when I see an opportunity to take advantage of my opponent,” he said.

A three-year varsity football player, McCreedy, whose hobby is skiing, went from reserve to starter last fall, getting lots of playing time when linebackers Kyle Danson and Brodie McDonald were injured.

“My first start was against Norwood and I tied for most tackles (6), two of which were for losses,” he noted. “And, against Milford, I got my first interception. I was on the team as a sophomore when we beat Marshfield in the Super Bowl. But, against North Attleboro in the Super Bowl, I started the entire game at outside linebacker in our 21-10 victory.”

McCreedy called the state title “an amazing feeling.”

“It’s so cool to achieve our goal and it was surreal to play at Gillette Stadium,” he said. “Our team worked so hard starting last January and we got the job done.”

McCreedy relies on a competitive philosophy that emphasizes winning and reaching one’s potential. “But, I can learn a lot about life when I lose a match,” he offered. “Life lessons I’ve learned in sports are to develop a strong work ethic, be able to overcome adversity and know that failure can be valuable because it teaches how to be resilient.”

McCreedy has all the attributes to be a top-notch Navy Midshipman. He’s a high-character individual, an inspiring team-first player, and he’s very intelligent. He’s also mentally tough, determined and has a relentless work ethic.

And, when he arrives at Annapolis later this month, instructors, classmates and teammates will get an up-close view of what desire, dedication and devotion look like.

SAFE Coalition to host sober prom night for Norfolk County teens

SAFE Coalition will host “Night to Remember,” a free, sober prom night celebration for high school students, on Saturday, June 13 from 8 to 11 p.m. at their office in Franklin.

Prom season is widely recognized as one of the highest-risk times of year for teen substance use. This event offers Norfolk County teens a safe, fun, and welcoming Saturday night alternative during this critical window.

“We know that protective factors like positive peer environments and community connection make a real difference,” says Director of Adolescent Wellness Emma Kelley. “Night to Remember gives teens a space to celebrate safely with their peers, and it gives parents peace of mind during a time of year that can feel especially uncertain.”

The glow-and-neon themed evening will feature a live DJ, a mocktail bar, snacks, a photo booth, games including cornhole and oversized Jenga, glow bracelets, temporary tattoos, and prize giveaways.

This event is part of SAFE’s ongoing substance use diversion and prevention work with adolescents and reflects the organization’s commitment to providing community spaces where teens can gather safely and confidently.

“Humans need connection, fun, and celebration, and teens are no different,” says Adolescent Wellness Instructor Mikaela Weinstein “Our goal was to create a space for our community that embodies all of this without having the added pressures of substance use.”

Registration is free and required by Thursday, June 11. Spots are limited. Parents, guardians, and teens can register at <https://tinyurl.com/safeprom>.

Night to Remember is made possible by the generous support of the Lawson Charitable Foundation, Community Health Systems Foundation, and Rockland Trust.

About SAFE Coalition SAFE is a Franklin-based nonprofit providing substance use prevention, recovery support, and mental health services across more than 55 communities in Massachusetts. Founded in 2016, SAFE works to ensure that individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health challenges have access to the resources, education, and support they need. Learn more at <https://safecoalitionma.org>.

State awards \$5 million in fire equipment grants

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that 307 Massachusetts fire departments will share \$5 million in grant funding to support the purchase of firefighter safety equipment.

Locally, the Norfolk Fire Department received \$19,000, while the Wrentham Fire Department was awarded \$15,250.37 through the program.

The funding comes through the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program, which reimburses departments for nearly 100 types of equipment. Eligible items include hoses and nozzles, turnout gear, radios, thermal imaging cameras, hazardous gas meters, hand tools, and extrication equipment.

According to the state, the equipment purchases can help departments meet Occupational Safety & Health Administration and National Fire Protection Association safety standards.

The most commonly funded items in this year’s grants include hoses and fittings, gloves, hoods, coats, boots, helmets, gas detectors, and protective gear such as SCBA facepieces and ballistic equipment.

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First quarter real estate activity mixed

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported mixed but generally stable real estate activity in Norfolk County during the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.

The Registry recorded 23,802 documents from January through March, a 5% increase from the first quarter of 2025. March was the busiest month, with 8,812 documents recorded, up 15% from March 2025.

Property sales activity, however, declined. The Registry recorded 3,252 deeds, down 5%, while deeds recorded for consideration — representing actual sales — fell 7% to 1,346.

Despite fewer sales, the total volume of commercial and residential sales rose 5% to \$1.75 billion, while the average sale price increased 13% to \$1.3 million.

Mortgage activity also increased, with 4,137 mortgages recorded, up 26% from the first

quarter of 2025. The release attributed the increase in part to lower mortgage interest rates compared with the same period last year.

Foreclosure activity declined. The Registry recorded 11 foreclosure deeds, down from 18 a year earlier, while notices to foreclose dropped 4%, from 69 to 66.

O'Donnell said limited housing inventory continues to affect the number of sales, while demand remains strong,

Norfolk County real estate activity up in April

Real estate activity in Norfolk County increased in April, according to data released by the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.

The Registry recorded 9,468 documents in April, up 9% from the 8,671 recorded in April 2025 and 7% higher than March.

A total of 1,424 deeds were recorded, an 8% increase from April 2025. Of those, 688 were property sales, up 11% year over year and 40% higher than March.

Mortgage activity also rose, with 1,640 mortgages recorded in April, a 14% increase from the same month last year,

though down 2% from March.

The average sale price for commercial and residential properties was approximately \$1.15 million, down 17% from April 2025 and 9% from March.

Foreclosure activity remained relatively low. Five foreclosure deeds were recorded in April, down from six a year earlier, while notices to foreclose increased from 20 to 23.

"April 2026 demonstrated robust real estate activity," Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell said in the release.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is based in Dedham.

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Temple Etz Chaim volunteers lend a hand at Medway Community Farm



Volunteers from Temple Etz Chaim Sisterhood and the broader Temple Etz Chaim community participated in a Mitzvah Day service project at Medway Community Farm on May 3, helping clear debris from fields in preparation for the planting season. The cross-generational WRJ Day of Action effort brought community members together for a day of service and fellowship. (Photo courtesy of Karen Dauer, Temple Etz Chaim Sisterhood, Franklin)

Dan Sieger elected VP of Charles River Watershed Association’s board of directors

Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) elected Dan Sieger of Norfolk as vice president of its board of directors at its 60th annual meeting on March 27.

Daniel is an environmental and public policy professional with over a decade of experience in government and consulting. He served in senior environmental leadership positions under two Governors, including Chief of Staff for the Department of Environmental Protection, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Policy, and Massachusetts Undersecretary for Environmental Affairs.

As Undersecretary, Dan was responsible for the day-to-day management of Massachusetts’ four environmental agencies, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agricultural Resources, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. In addition, Dan was responsible for

leading priority environmental initiatives, including developing a proposed multi-state program to reduce transportation emissions and permitting the country’s first utility-scale wind farm.

After leaving government, Dan worked for VHB as a permitting consultant for large-scale real estate projects and currently works for RWE, a global clean energy developer, leading the development of their New York Bight and Gulf of Maine Off-shore Wind Projects.

Formed in 1965 by a group of concerned citizens who raised alarm about the declining health of the Charles River, CRWA is one of the oldest watershed organizations in the country. In the 60 years since its founding, CRWA has guided the transformation of our river from the “Dirty Water” of the past—rife with industrial pollution, sewage, trash, and even cars—to the Charles River of today, one of the cleanest, most celebrated urban rivers in the country.

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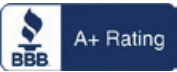
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