

Upton seniors boogie night away at 2nd annual Senior Soirée

By Upton Senior Center

The Upton Senior Center was full of disco fever on April 24 as seniors came together for the 2nd Annual Senior Soirée. The event took place from 5–8 p.m. in the Great Room at the Upton Community Center and guests enjoyed a groovy evening of music, dancing, great food, and plenty of laughs.

This year’s disco theme brought out everyone’s fun side, with many seniors decked out in colorful 70’s-inspired outfits, from tie-dye and bell bottoms to sparkles and platform shoes. The room was filled with energy as guests danced to favorite hits played by fantastic DJ, Ron Auger Productions.

“It was such a fun night,” said Sue Briggs, an Upton resident. “The music was great, everyone was dancing, and it was



David and Jeannie Brooks having fun at the photo wall.
Photo courtesy of Upton Senior Center

wonderful seeing so many people dressed up and having a good time.”

The evening included hors d’oeuvres, a delicious dinner from the Country Club Souper, and desserts topped off with a chocolate fountain that quickly

SOIRÉE

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Mendon Historical Society slideshow brings Mendon's history to life



Historic photos and artifacts are just some of the items highlighted in the Mendon Historical Society's digital slideshow. Image source: <https://bit.ly/MendonHistoricalSocietyMuseumSlideshow>

As communities across the nation prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, the Mendon Historical Society is reminding residents that America's story often starts right here at home.

A digital slideshow by the Mendon Historical Society Museum

offers residents a visual journey through the town's rich past, showcasing photographs, artifacts, documents, and exhibits that help tell the story of one of Massachusetts' oldest communities.

SLIDESHOW

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Sustainable Upton new community sensor network tracks local air quality

Nipmuc students get hands-on experience with data

By Laurie Wodin
Sustainable Upton

There are few things more important to our health than the air we breathe, and now Upton residents are taking the first steps towards monitoring local air quality.

Nearly two years ago, the Upton Board of Health, in partnership with Sustainable Upton, received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for 10 Purple Air monitors. This means we are now part of a global effort to monitor air quality, and that Upton's real-time air quality levels are now publicly available on the PurpleAir map. This map shows readings from monitors across the world and provides students at Nipmuc Regional High School with

hands-on experience handling data relevant to their daily lives.

The effort started in October 2023, when local resident Peter Friedland was concerned about smoke coming from North American wildfires and asked the Board of Health about purchasing an air quality monitor. Upton's first monitor was installed at Nipmuc by Chris Carron, town and schools IT Tech, who continued to oversee all monitors in public buildings. Wondering if any other locals had the same concerns, Peter began working with Sustainable Upton to make this information available to the community. Together, they reached out to MassDEP and contacted Allison Langone, Community Monitoring Supervisor, who offered indispensable help interpreting

the data. In May 2024, longtime Board of Health Administrator Diane Tiernan received a MassDEP grant for 10 monitors, naming Sustainable Upton as partners and installers. At this time, Keenan Segenchuk, a recent local graduate from WPI with his B.S. in Computer Science, joined the team. With our newly acquired tech expertise, Sustainable Upton began installing the new monitors, analyzing data, and designing a website to inform citizens on this hyper-local data.

Recently, we launched Upton-Air.com [be sure to use the dash to reach the correct website]. There, you can check current and historic air quality data for all 10 air monitor locations in Upton, sign up to be notified when air pollution exceeds a



Upton's air quality monitor map can be found at <https://upton-air.com/>. Map by Keenan Segenchuk. Photo credit: Laurie Wodin

specified level, or find more information about health risks and local air quality trends.

Currently, we report the concentration of very small airborne particulates in the air (PM2.5 readings), but we hope to monitor other types of air pollution in the future. These small particulates include emissions and wildfire smoke, but also natural pollution like dust and pollen. We've found that air pollution is a little higher around main roads and in low-laying land where it's harder for pollution to dissipate. For instance, the average PM2.5 readings at Oxcart farm, Rockwood Mead-

ows, and Touchstone School are around 5.8 micrograms per cubic meter, whereas the stoplight by Kiwanis Beach and the Community Center average 17% and 34% higher, respectively. We are happy to report that Upton's average air quality lies firmly within the "good" range, though there are days where people with sensitive respiratory systems may want to avoid outside activity.

MassDEP is currently offering a new grant round for air quality monitors, and any town may apply a <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-massdep-air-sensor-grant>.

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SOIRÉE
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became a crowd favorite. Prizes were also given out for best costumes and best dancers.

“It’s an event not to be missed,” said Upton Senior Pam Freedman. “So many smiles and happy people enjoying being together and dancing to the music.”

The event was made possible through the generous support and hard work of the Friends of Upton Seniors (FUSE). Special thanks also go to the Bloomer Girls for the delicious dessert, and Upton Hoofbeats 4H Club for creating the beautiful corsages that added an extra special touch to the evening.

“We are incredibly grateful to all of the volunteers and community groups who helped make this evening such a success,” said Tania Paparazzo, Director of Elder and Social Services. “Seeing so many people come together to celebrate, laugh, and dance was truly special. We look forward to continuing this tradition in the



FUSE President Steve Rakitin and Eileen Rakitin on the dance floor.



Good friends, John and Gail Heald, Jane Whitney and Harvey Baler, enjoying a fun night together.

years to come.”

“We had guests in their 70’s, 80’s and 90’s dancing and hav-



Joan and Brian Clark won “Staying Hippy” costume prize.



Cathie Gebo, Annette Castonguay, Nancy Adams, Margaret Samarco, and Diedre Bernier celebrating a night out with friends. All photos courtesy of Upton Senior Center

port such a special event!”

For more information about programs and events at the Upton Senior Center, please visit the center or call 508-529-4558.

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SLIDESHOW

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The nearly 10-minute presentation highlights the many treasures housed at the Mendon Historical Society Museum on Hastings Street, where volunteers work to preserve local history for future generations. The slideshow offers a nostalgic look back in time.

Items featured include furniture; textiles; clothing, shoes and boots, hats, handbags, hand fans; jewelry; household items, china and stoneware, butter



churn and stamp; salt box; crafting and sewing items including samplers; stationery and books; school supplies (including an abacus), sports uniforms, class pins and rings; business items including Lowell's Dairy, Miscoe, and a 'Mendon Bank' \$5 bill; bootmaking industry tools; photographs and albums (one from 1850), camera, stereographs; military uniforms, equipment, regalia; old town documents; and much more.

Founded in 1896, the Mendon Historical Society is dedicated to

preserving the town's historical records, buildings, photographs, and artifacts. The museum is located at 15 Hastings Street and serves as a repository for generations of local history, providing residents and visitors with a glimpse into the community's evolution from its earliest days through the modern era.

The museum is open for tours every Tuesday from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and the 4th Sunday of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments can also be made by emailing mendonhis-



toricalsociety@gmail.com.

The video was produced by the Blackstone Valley Art As-

sociation and can be found at <https://bit.ly/MendonHistoricalSocietyMuseumSlideshow>.

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Letter to the Editor:

On behalf of the Upton Historical Society, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many local businesses and organizations that generously supported Upton Historical Society's Antique Appraisal Day held on May 2. Thanks to their contributions, our raffle featured an exciting array of prizes and helped make the event both enjoyable for attendees and successful in raising important funds to preserve and promote Upton's rich history.

We are especially grateful for the support of regional attractions such as the New England Botanic Garden, Southwick's

Zoo, and the Boston Red Sox. Our local restaurants also played a major role with generous contributions from Morgan's Harbor to Hill Seafood Market, 110 Grill, Upper Crust & Co., Maya, Red Rock, Dairy Queen, and Main St. Pizza.

In addition, we deeply appreciate the generosity of local service providers including Upton Dental Care, MGM Auto Repair, Hair Affair, Shear Excitement, Ray's Automotive, and Black Door Yoga. Retail and grocery businesses such as Target, Koopman Lumber, White Belle, Trader Joe's, Shaw's, Price Chopper, and

Dunkin' also contributed to the success of the event.

We would also like to recognize the unique items donated by Petal & Crumb, Red Barn Roasters, and Jack's Abby Craft Lagers, which added to the excitement of the raffle.

The generosity of these sponsors truly reflects the strength and spirit of our community. Their support enables the Upton Historical Society to continue its mission of preserving and sharing our town's history for future generations.

We encourage residents to support these businesses as a way of thanking them for their



ongoing commitment to our community.

Sincerely,
Barry Lynn
Sponsorship Chairman
Upton Historical Society

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Thriving after gray divorce



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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There’s a growing trend of divorce among those ages 50 and older, often called “gray divorce.” While finding yourself in this situation can feel overwhelming, it also can be an opportunity to reclaim your independence and create a life that reflects your dreams and values.

Today, one-third (36%) of divorcing adults are 50 or older (The Journals of Gerontology, 2022) and 77% of women who experienced gray divorce remain single 10 years after divorce (“Repartnering following gray divorce,” 2019). While that might sound surprising, many women view this as a time to focus on goals, dreams and well-being without compromise.

Of course, there are financial realities to consider. Women older than 50 often experience a 45% drop in their standard of living after divorce (compared to 21% for men), and household income can fall by 23% to 40% in the first year (“The Economic Consequences of Gray Divorce for Women and Men,” 2020). So, building financial confidence isn’t just important; it’s empowering.

If you are 50 or older and recently divorced, take the following steps with your financial

advisor. You don’t have to do it all at once; small steps can help lead to greater financial security over time.

- 1. Find a financial advisor who truly listens.** If you’ve ever felt unheard or dismissed, don’t settle. Your future deserves someone who respects your voice.
- 2. Get clear on your finances.** List your assets, debts, income and expenses to understand your financial situation — the first step toward taking control.
- 3. Create a flexible plan.** Include your current needs, short-term goals and retirement aspirations. Instead of feeling intimidated, you can let a financial advisor help make this simple and manageable.
- 4. Learn about money.** Read, attend workshops and join online communities focused

on women and finance. Every bit of knowledge adds confidence.

- 5. Build an emergency fund.** Work toward having three to six months of living expenses in a low-risk, liquid account. This may take gradual, consistent contributions, but ultimately, this cushion can help provide a sense of security as you navigate your new circumstances.
- 6. Review insurance and your employer benefits.** Make sure your medical insurance coverage is adequate. Consider long-term care insurance to help preserve your retirement assets.
- 7. Estate planning.** Work with an attorney to review beneficiary designations on bank and brokerage accounts while updating your will, powers of attorney and, as needed, a revocable living trust.

8. Social Security. If you were married 10 years or longer, understand your rights to Social Security benefits from your ex-spouse.

Rather than being the end, gray divorce can represent a new chapter. The future is yours to shape, and it can be as bold, bright and fulfilling as you want it to be.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

9 Milford Street, Upton • 508-529-6272 • UptonLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 9-8 • Mon., Fri. & Sat. 9-4 • Sun. CLOSED

By Upton Library Staff
LIBRARY SUMMER READING PROGRAM
Summer Reading Program Begins! – June 15, all day
It's the Annual Summer Reading Program! This year's theme is Plant a Seed, Read! Register online or at the circulation desk, and be sure to visit the library to pick up your packet of materials. Keep reading and join us for special events throughout the summer. Our program begins June 15 and ends Aug. 8. This program is for all ages.

Kickoff Event: Mini Golf at the Library! – June 15 at 4 p.m., ages 5 to adult
Join us for mini golf inside the library after it closes for the day! One Up Games will be on-site to run an indoor mini golf course for the Kickoff Event for our Annual Summer Reading Program. Please register each child and adult who will be golfing. Registration is required. Time slots are in 15-minute increments, so choose a time that's best for your group. Library services will not

be available during this event, but you are welcome to come early and socialize while waiting for your start time. This program will be welcoming children ages 5 and up, including teens, adults, and senior citizens. *This program is generously sponsored by The Friends of the Upton Town Library!*

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY NEWS
Reading with Friends
Come join the Friends of the Library for Reading with Friends! Reading with Friends is a quiet reading group where you can bring your own book, have some refreshments and chat with other readers, then spread out and read on your own in our lovely library. Upcoming dates for this are June 25, July 30 and August 27.

Museum Passes
Looking for something fun to do this summer? Come check out the museum passes, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. We have an assortment of 10 passes, offering discounted admissions to all sorts of great area attractions!

Book Donations
Thanks to all who supported the Friends' spring book sale- it was one of our best ever! Don't forget to check out our ongoing book sale shelves, located to the right just inside the main library doors. Donations of books in good, saleable condition are accepted all year round.

CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS
Read Around the Town: Kelly's Family Farm – June 17 at 10 a.m., ages 3+

Join us for a storytime at Kelly's Farmstand in Upton! Workers will join us for stories, songs, and rhymes all about plants. Learn all about your favorite fruits and veggies and what happens at the farm stand. Kelly's is located at 146 Milford St. in Upton. This is an outdoor event, so please bring your own chairs or blankets. Registration required.

Summer StoryWalk Begins – June 20, all day, ages 3+
Stop by the VFW Playground anytime it's open to enjoy the library's Summer StoryWalk,

"And Then Comes Summer" by Tom Brenner. A StoryWalk is a self-guided picture book activity, put together with separate story page panels that families can enjoy one at a time with their children. No staff is involved with this event, so enjoy it any time that fits your schedule! *Enter our QR code at the end of the story and enter for a chance to win a copy of the book! This program will run through Aug. 1.

4-H Babysitters' Course - June 22 & 23, 1-5 p.m., ages 11 to 16

This babysitting course is taught by an instructor from the Massachusetts 4-H Foundation. Participants will learn the responsibilities of babysitting, as well as the skills needed to become good babysitters. The course will help develop confidence in handling situations that may occur when babysitting. Upon completion of this course, youth will receive a Babysitters' ID card and a Certificate of Completion. This course is held over the course of two afternoons; participants must attend both sessions. The cost of this course is \$50. A check made out to UMASS must be brought on the first day of class.

Hands on Nature: Our Pollinators! - June 24 at 6 p.m., ages 5 to 12

Join Heather Simpson from Hands on Nature, as we learn about the fabulous pollinators of New England! Discover the wonderful things our butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds do to help our planet thrive. Learn who our pollinators are and how they help our planet. Includes pollinator activity! This is a lecture style program with a short activity at the end. Registration required.

Vegetable Tote Stamping - June 29 at 1 p.m., ages 3 to 12

Join us for a story and craft about veggies! We will be stamping vegetable prints on tote bags, using fabric paint and cut up vegetables for this activity. This activity may get a little messy! Caregivers should attend this program with their child and plan on assisting them. Registration required.

NEW! Family Music & Movement - July 6 at 9:15, ages birth to 5

We are bringing a new music

program to the library! Join us as we change our format and time to welcome Brenda Lau from Apple Tree Arts! This program features the Musikgarten curriculum, with instruction that is just right for each age level—from your baby who benefits from a live music environment, right up through preschool-age children who delight in exploring dramatic play in a musical context. Singing, moving, and exploring rhythm instruments are all a part of this event. Registration required.

NEW! Parody Playhouse - July 11 at 10 a.m., ages birth to 6

We are bringing a quarterly Saturday music program to the library! Join us for our first session as we welcome Erica Leigh from Parody Playhouse for a morning of musical fun! Ideal for kids up to age 6, Parody Playhouse's performance will include kid-friendly versions of popular songs that help teach kids important social-emotional skills. Put on your dancing shoes and get ready for a show that combines music, education, and hands-on fun! Registration required.

DIY Insect Habitats - July 7 at 10 a.m., ages 3 to 12

What kinds of structures make good habitats for our buggy friends? Find out and create your own at this insect-themed event. Adults must attend and assist their children with this building project. Registration required.

Mass Audubon: Life Under a Log - July 8 at 6 p.m., ages 5 to 12

Mass Audubon visits the library for an informational event about "Life Under a Log"! We will meet specimens such as beetles and worms, all while learning about the importance of decomposition in our local ecosystem. This is a lecture-style event. Registration required.

For a full list of events at the Upton Town Library please visit us at

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Summer cleanout is greener with Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe walking through your basement has gotten difficult or there is no more room in the attic? Perhaps you are planning to move, and you need to de-clutter before your open house? Figuring out who to call can be challenging. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2005. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with eight trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools,

hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truck-load of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you



call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay. And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices, so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal. Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply



involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can

handle everything! Contact Affordable Junk Removal and Dumpster Rental and let a local small business take care of everything for you. Call Jay Schadler at 774-287-1133 or visit us online at AffordableJunkRemoval.com.

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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.

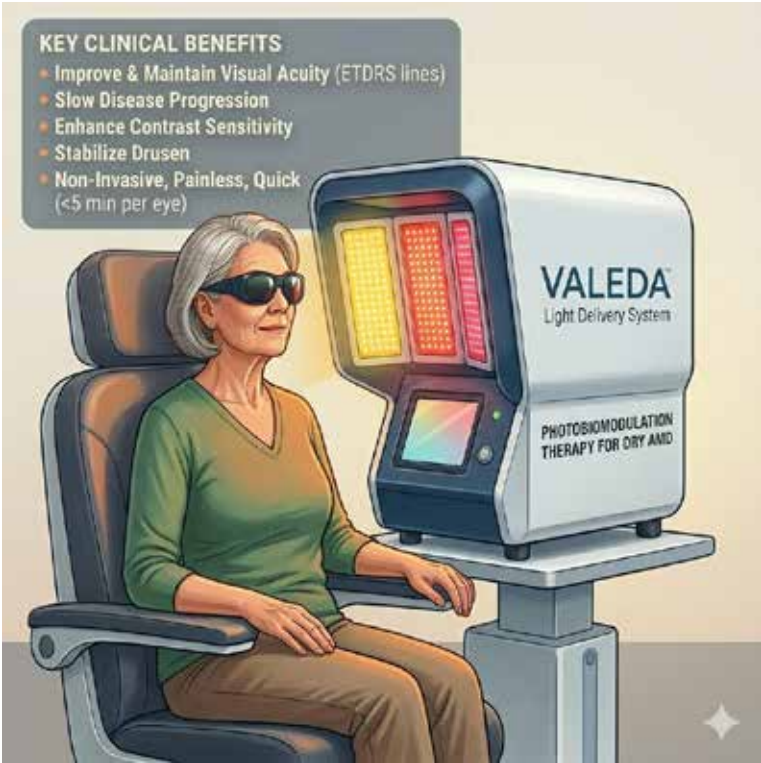
Photobiomodulation works by using specific wavelengths of light to stimulate retinal cells and improve cellular function deep within the retina. Scientific research has shown that PBM may enhance mitochondrial activity, reduce inflammation, improve blood flow, and decrease oxidative stress — all factors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

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



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 evaluation. 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

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Local resident takes the helm at Postal Center USA in Whitinsville



WHITINSVILLE — Akansha Jain, a proud resident of Upton since 2019, has acquired Postal Center USA at 1225 Providence Rd., Whitinsville — and she's ready to make her mark on the community she calls home.

"We love this neighborhood," says Jain, who lives with her husband and two children — a 12-year-old daughter at Miscoe Hill Middle School and an 8-year-old son at Memorial Elementary. "We wanted to grow our roots here and be a part of something meaningful. Owning this store felt like the perfect way to do that."

Postal Center USA has long been a go-to resource for residents across Northbridge, Upton, Grafton, Milford, and surrounding towns. Under Jain's ownership, the center continues to offer comprehensive shipping services through FedEx, UPS, USPS, and DHL, along with

Amazon return drop-offs, copying, faxing, document scanning, secure shredding, and mailbox rentals.

Jain has wasted no time putting her stamp on the business. The store has undergone a modern upgrade, now featuring self-checkout capabilities to make visits faster and more convenient. The welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere reflects her vision for the space.

A firm believer in investing in the local community, Jain has already hired three employees from the neighborhood and is actively looking to grow her team. "We employ local talent and we're always looking for good people," she says.

Postal Center USA is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Visit the store at 1225 Providence Road, Whitinsville, or online at www.postalcenter01588.com.

EYE

continued from page 8

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 8.

Area food pantries offer services to residents

The following food pantries offer services to area residents. Each location has varying hours and requirements so be sure to confirm information before seeking services.

UPTON
Upton Community Center Food Pantry, 9 Milford St.
Hours: Mon. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Wed. 12-3 p.m., Fri. 10a.m.-1p.m.
Services: Residents may access the food pantry one time each week.
Donations: Financial donations can be dropped at the Senior Center desk Mon.-Fri. from 9a.m.-4p.m. www.uptonma.gov/459/Upton-Community-Center-Food-Pantry
United Parish Food Pantry, 1 Church St.
Hours: Every other Tues., June 23, July 7 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Services: The Food Pantry serves residents from Upton as well as nearby towns. Proof of income or church affiliation is not required. We offer non-perishable food, toiletries, paper products and infant needs. Donations can be dropped off in our donation

shed located outside the church office on 1 Church Street, Upton.
Congregant dinners: Occur on the third Thursday of each month from Sept. to June.
Donations: Can be dropped off 24/7 at the Barnabas Barn along Church St., please check food for expiration dates. www.unitedparishupton.org/food-pantry
St. Gabriel's Food Pantry, 151 Mendon St.
Hours: Mon. & Wed. 9:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Tues. & Thurs. 9:15 a.m.-12 p.m.
Services: Helping parish families in need. www.stgabrielsma.org
Daily Bread Food Pantry, 21 Exchange St., Milford
Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 6-7:30 p.m.
Services: For Milford, Hopedale & Upton residents only; proof of address and household member info required.
Donations: Monetary donations accepted at "donate" tab on website www.dailybreadfoodpantry.org/
Source: www.uptonma.gov

MENDON
Mendon Food Pantry, 62 Providence St.
By appointment only, call 508-478-6175 for assistance.
Services: For Mendon residents in need who receive fuel assistance, SNAP (food stamps), are unemployed, and/or receive aid to dependent children or to those who are disabled and/or unemployed. Referrals from area churches, social agencies, or concerned citizens regarding seniors and families in need will also be accepted. Client names shall be kept confidential.
Donations: Non-perishable food products are accepted (check expiration dates) during Senior Center hours, preferably 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monetary donations (checks preferred) and BJ's gift cards are also accepted.
For details, visit <https://www.mendonma.gov/253/Food-Pantry-Thank-You-for-Your-Support>.
Source: www.mendonma.gov

NEXT COMMUNITY SUPPER ON JUNE 18

The United Parish Church in Upton offers a community supper on the third Thursday of each month from September through June at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., which includes a delicious and nutritious meal. The next supper will take place on **June 18** when they will be serving shredded Hawaiian chicken with side salads and watermelon. Everyone is welcome. RSVP is requested but not required. Please call the church office at 508-529-3192 by June 12 to make your reservation. If you forget to reserve, please come anyway. We always make extra and would love to serve you.
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Upton Men’s Club awards \$1,000 to Upton Police comfort dog program

By Bob Drainville
Upton Men’s Club

Here at the Upton Men’s Club, our core mission has always been simple: service to the community. Whether we are hosting senior dinners, organizing the town’s Fireworks Festival, or funding local scholarships, we are always looking for ways to make Upton an even better place to live. That is why we are incredibly proud to announce our recent \$1,000 donation to the Upton Police Association to support K9 Koda and the department’s Comfort Dog Program!

Recently, the Upton Police Department reached out to us to share the incredible impact of their Comfort Dog Program. This initiative is specifically designed to strengthen community relationships, support mental health, and provide essential emotional assistance during times of crisis.

Koda isn’t just a friendly face at the station; he is a vital re-



(L to R): Upton Police Chief Nicholas Palmieri, Officer Ciara O’Connor, K9 Koda, Upton Men’s Club Members; Bob Drainville, Brad Webster, Nate Hahn, and Matt Ronzio.

source for our town. As the department shared with us, Koda offers reassurance and a calming presence during difficult situations, including traumatic incidents, school visits, community outreach events, and interactions with individuals experiencing acute stress.

Because the Comfort Dog Program is primarily funded by donations, community support is essential for Koda’s ongoing care. Our \$1,000 grant will go

directly toward maintaining and growing this program, helping to cover necessary expenses such as food, medical care, equipment, and specialized training. We are honored to help sustain an initiative that directly benefits individuals of all ages across Upton.

For more information about upcoming events, membership, and how you can help us make a difference, visit www.uptonmen-sclub.org.

Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
05/22/2026	6 Myrtle St.	\$555,000
05/22/2026	27 Taft Ave.	\$350,000
05/21/2026	17 Hartford Ave. W.	\$505,000
05/20/2026	17 Forest Park Dr.	\$800,000
05/19/2026	55 Northbridge Rd.	\$725,000
05/15/2026	111 Providence St.	\$1.60 mil
05/01/2026	3 Daniels Rd.	\$800,850

Date	Upton	Amount
05/21/2026	68 Pearl St.	\$900,000
05/15/2026	18 Boot Shop Rd. #40	\$864,900
05/13/2026	72 Main St.	\$478,000
05/08/2026	6 Fieldstone St.	\$439,500
05/07/2026	6 Sawmill Brook Ln.	\$1.50 mil
04/30/2026	51 Knowlton Cir.	\$545,000
04/30/2026	10 Mechanic St.	\$835,000
04/29/2026	78 Milford St.	\$832,000

Source: zillow.com / Compiled by Upton & Mendon Free Press



The 2-bed, 2.5-bath, 2,229 square-foot home at 6 Fieldstone Drive in Upton recently sold for \$439,500. It was sold by RobynSoldMyHouse.com. Photo source: Robyn Nasuti

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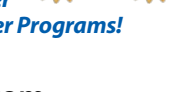
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Upton Senior Center programs and activities, June & July

Lunch Trip - Fri., June 12, at 11:30 a.m. Join us at George's Surf and Turf in Mendon for some fresh seafood and other delicious menu options, while spending time with friends. Rain date: June 24. Sign up by June 10.

Mindful Meditation- Fri., June 12, at 1 p.m. Calm your mind and body so you can acknowledge and accept your thoughts, feelings, and sensations through Mindful Meditation with Robin Natanel.

Dementia Friends Training- Tues., June 16, at 3 p.m. Join Tania Paparazzo, Director of Elder and Social Services who will talk about dementia and the ways you can support those living with it. In this 1-hour information session held at the Upton Community Center, you will:

- Learn the 5 key messages about how dementia affects people.
- Gain insight into communication changes.
- Find out how you can make a difference by turning your understanding into action.

Join the global movement to change the way people think, act, and talk about dementia! This training is open to all community members, regardless of age. To sign up, call 508-529-4558.

Smiles and Sunshine at the Memory Café - Wed., June 17, at 2 p.m. Memory Café is a safe, welcoming space for people experiencing memory changes, as well as their caregivers, family members, and friends. Join us as we welcome in summer with lawn games, summer treats, laughter, and connection. Come enjoy a relaxing afternoon filled with fun, friendship, and sunshine! RSVP by June 12.

Scams Targeting Older Adults Presentation - Tues., June 23, at 1 p.m. Join Kevin Donohue, from the Office of the Worcester County District Attorney and Detective Bergstrom, of the Upton Police Dept., for a presentation about common and emerging scams targeting seniors and how to protect yourself from becoming a victim. RSVP by June 19.

Blood Pressure Checks - Wed., June 24, at 12:30 p.m. Stop by or make an appointment to have your blood pressure checked by Nurse Debra!

Birthday Bash - Fri., June 26, at 12:30 p.m. Join us for our Birthday celebration. \$5 fee includes lunch, cake & ice cream. Free for Upton seniors with birthdays in June. Register by June 25.

Trivia with the Upton Town Library - Mon., June 29, at 12:30 p.m. Put your knowledge to

the test at Trivia Time with the Upton Town Library! Enjoy some friendly competition and challenge yourself with questions covering a variety of topics. Register by June 28.

Game Shows to Go - Tues., June 30, at 2 p.m. Ready to be the star of the show? Game Shows to Go is coming back to the Upton Senior Center for another rousing set of "LIVE" game shows. Your friends who've attended before have all said, "what a great program, we laughed, we used our brains and we all had fun!" Now's YOUR chance. Join us for a fast-paced afternoon of TV game shows! You'll play as teams and all the members of the winning teams earn prizes. Sign up today for this FANTASTIC event! *This program is supported in part by a grant from the Upton Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.*

Aging Together Support Group - Every other Wednesday at 10 a.m. from July 8 to Oct. 14 We're pleased to offer a second session of our support group beginning this July, facilitated by MSW student Sophia LeBlanc. This closed group will include up to 12 participants and provide a supportive space to explore the emotional, practical, and mean-

ingful aspects of growing older. Each session will feature guided conversation, reflective prompts, and opportunities to share at your own comfort level. Consistent attendance is encouraged to help build comfort, trust, and openness within the group.

Interested participants should contact Sophia by June 18 at 508-529-4558 or sleblanc@up-tonma.gov for a brief intake.

Upton Food Pantry
Do you need food assistance? The Upton Community Food Pantry is open to all Upton residents. Hours of Operation: Mondays 9:30-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays 12-3 p.m. Fridays 10

a.m.-1 p.m.

Are you unable to come at these days and times? Transportation or home delivery available on request. Call for more info or to make an appointment: 508-529-4558. The UCC Food Pantry is seeking donations:

- Condiments (mayo, relish, BBQ sauce)
- Snacks (crackers, pretzels, popcorn, granola bars, snack packs, nuts/trail mixes)
- Baked beans
- Dish Soap
- Cleaning supplies (Lysol wipes, cleaning spray, floor cleaner)
- Gift cards & monetary donations also accepted

Hearts, Hugs & Hope: Alzheimer's support group sponsored by Cornerstone at Milford

Upcoming Support Group Meetings: July 14 at 6 p.m. and August 11 at 6 p.m.

Both are sponsored by Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living and Memory Support Community, 11 Birch Street, Milford.

Each month's group for caregivers meets on Zoom. Dealing with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia isn't easy, so it is helpful to share your con-

cerns and personal experiences with others who completely understand what you're going through. You will also learn about proven strategies to help you better care for your family member. Contact Director of Compass Programming Jenn Hozempa at jhozempa@cornerstonemilford.com for more information and the Zoom link.

This group meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

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Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

29 North Avenue, Mendon • 508-473-3259 • TaftPublicLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues. & Wed. 10-7 • Thurs. 3-7 • Fri. 12-5 • Sat. 9-12 • Sun. & Mon. CLOSED

ADULT AND TEEN PROGRAMS JUNE 2026

Upcoming Events:

Adult Handcrafting Group

Join the Adult Handcrafting Group on Wednesday, June 17 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on! Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. No registration is required. Crafts are NOT supplied.

Slow Flow Yoga for Adults and Teens

Join Katie Aissis from Sprouting Tree Yoga for Slow Flow Yoga. This Vinyasa style yoga class links breath to movement in a dynamic sequence of postures. Participants will build strength while also finding moments throughout the practice to quiet the mind and rest the body. This class is appropriate for all levels, and no previous yoga experience is necessary. Please bring your own yoga mat. Join us on Tuesday, June 16 at 7 p.m. Registration required.

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club is led by Library Assistant Kris Heumann. The group typically meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Upcoming book club discussions are as follows:

The Measure by Nikki Erlick and *The Fountains of Silence* by Ruta Sepetys on Sept. 14

The Woman in the Library by Sulari Gentill on Oct. 12

West with Giraffes by Lynda

Rutledge on Nov. 9

The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell by Robert Dugoni on Dec. 14.

Adult Book Club books can be picked up at the downstairs desk. For additional information on upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259.

Awards Book Club

Hosted by Taft Library Assistant Jane Blackwood, the Awards Book Club meets on a quarterly basis to discuss fiction award winners of the year. Jane selects from the books that took home the coveted Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Booker Prize and more! Stop at the downstairs circulation desk to request the latest Awards book for discussion. The current book in the Awards Book Club discussion series is *Angel Down* by Daniel Kraus, winner of the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Discussion will be on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 7 p.m. Contact the library at 508-473-3259 for further information.

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club is led by Library Director Andrew Jenrich. Over the next few months, the club will be tackling the following books:

A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon by Kevin Fedarko. Discussion will be on Thursday, Aug. 27 at 6:30 p.m. downstairs in the library.

Material World: The Six Raw

Materials That Shape Modern Civilization by Ed Conway. Date TBD. Dates of discussion for some of the upcoming books are to be determined. The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club typically meets on a quarterly basis. Those interested can request a copy of the next book at the downstairs circulation desk. The new slate of nonfiction titles for 2026 into 2027 will be decided following the book discussion in August.

German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun! Lead by Library Assistant Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. The group will meet next on Monday, July 27 at 6 p.m. There is no meeting in June. Contact the library at 508-473-3259 for additional details. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

2026 Challenge Book Club

The library has begun a new book talk series revolving around a monthly challenge prompt. Participants are encouraged to share the title or titles (and brief synopsis) of a book they've read or would like to read centered on the prompt. Prompts for the next few months are as follows:

June: A book set in summer
July: A book under 200 pages
August: classic or modern classic

The group typically meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Taft Public

Library meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. downstairs in the Art Holmes Community Room, unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. If you plan on attending, call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library website.

TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS JUNE 2026

Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website: www.taftpubliclibrary.org and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.

Itty Bitty Storytime

Itty Bitty Storytime is designed for our youngest patrons birth to 3 years old. Join us for a lot of fun on Tuesdays & select Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Story & Craft Time

Join us for Story and Craft Time! Perfect for the preschool-aged child! Join us on June 16 and 30 at 10:30 a.m.

Alphabet Storytime

Each week we will focus on a different letter. We will read a couple of books, sing songs, and learn about the letter of the week! Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Please note there is no Alphabet Storytime June 17.

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins

Join Deb Hudgins on Tuesday, June 23 at 9:15 a.m. for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants

& preschool).

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins & Coffee and Conversations at the Taft

Join Deb Hudgins on Wednesday, June 17 at 9:15 a.m. for a 30-minute music and movement theme-based program which features singing and guitar music for young children (infants & preschool). Coffee & conversations is from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. on Wednesday, June 17. Join us for an informal playtime where families will be able to build social connections and learn about early childhood development and family-friendly resources. The library will supply Muffin House Muffins!

The BaNannies

The BaNannies are a mother/daughter duo who bring children's songs, both old and new, to life! With their silly and interactive songs, they'll have your littles singing and dancing along! The BaNannies will visit Taft on Monday, June 15 at 10:30 a.m.

Tutors with Tails

Meet Sprite! Sprite is a therapy dog who loves children and love books. Sprite and her owner Janet will visit Taft on the last Tuesday of each month. Register today for the opportunity to read to Sprite! Spots are limited. Register today for this fabulous program that takes place the last Tuesday of every month.

Flying High Dogs

High flying, dynamic & thrilling! Mike is a world record holder and multiple time world finalist in K9 frisbee. Mike and his 4 flying high frisbee dogs are the #1 dog entertainment act in the world! Please join us on Tuesday, June 30 at 6:30 p.m. at Veteran's Park (behind Town Park). No registration required. Please bring a blanket or chair to sit on.

Summer Reading registration June 16

We've been working all year for summer reading! This year's program is sure to be one for the books! Registration will start on Tuesday, June 16. Visit our website for more information on all programs and how to register for prizes. For every three hours of reading, children through grade 4 will be able to pick from our treasure chest. For every three hours of reading, patrons grades 5 to 12 will be able to redeem for a weekly gift card prize.

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Upton Historical Society to host Westboro Speedway remembrance event

July 14 program to feature special guests, race car



At the July event, guests will see an original race car once owned by Connie Lajoie and driven by Tucker Summers. Photo source: Upton Historical Society

The Upton Historical Society will host a special program, “Remembrances of Westboro Speedway, from an Upton Perspective,” on Tues., July 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Upton Community Center, 9 Milford St., Upton.

The event will celebrate the lives and racing careers of George “Tucker” Summers and his son, Ricky Summers, both well-known champion drivers on the local racing circuit.

The evening’s program

will feature members of the Summers family, the sons of a former owner of Westboro Speedway, and former pit crew members sharing memories and stories from the speedway’s racing days.

Also featured across the parking lot at the VFW Car Show will be an original race car once owned by Connie Lajoie and driven by Tucker Summers, displayed in its original racing condition.

‘Wanderings with Wayne’ on June 18

World hiker will also share remembrance of 2nd Lt. Richard Rand

The Upton Historical Society will present a special community event, Wanderings with Wayne – World Hiker, on Thurs., June 18, at 6:30 p.m. at Upton Town Hall.

The evening will feature acclaimed world traveler and Upton native Wayne Garland, who will share stories and reflections from his global hiking journeys, bringing audiences along on a vivid exploration of

landscapes, cultures, and personal discovery gathered from trails across the world.

Interwoven with the presentation will be a meaningful remembrance of 2nd Lt. Richard Rand of Upton, who lost his life during the Vietnam War. His service and sacrifice will be honored as part of the program, connecting local history with broader global experiences, and paying tribute to

a member of the community whose legacy continues to be remembered.

This event is designed not only to inspire through travel storytelling, but also to ground those stories in reflection on history, service, and the individuals from Upton whose lives have shaped the town’s story.

The program is open to the public.



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Nipmuc Class of 1966 to hold 60th Reunion June 20

The Nipmuc Regional High School Class of 1966 will hold its 60th Reunion on Sat., June 20, at 6 p.m. at Red Rock Grill and Bar, 66 West Main St. in Upton.

The class held its 55th there and had such a great time, they decided to go there again for their 60th. Outdoors, casual, and like last time, everyone orders for themselves off the menu and pays their food and drinks.

Although we are individually ordering and paying off the menu, the owners of Red Rock would like a count so they can make appropriate accommodations for staff, space requirements, etc. If you're attending, please email the number in your party to Larrypearson48@gmail.com.

Upton Heritage Day to be held Sept. 26

Upton Heritage Day will be held on Sept. 26, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Town Common. Vendors, crafters, artisans, businesses, and entertainers interested in participating should contact uptonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com or 508-529-6600.



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OBITUARY

Mary-Elizabeth Houskeeper

Mary-Elizabeth "Meg" Houskeeper, 94, of Upton and formerly of West Hartford, Connecticut, died peacefully at home on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10, 2026, surrounded by her family. She was the wife of the late Robert M. Houskeeper, who passed away in 2020. Their life together began after meeting at a USO dance while Bob was stationed at Stewart Air Force Base in Newburgh, and she loved him dearly throughout their 64 yearlong marriage and the years following his death.

Born in Ridgewood, New Jersey, she was the daughter of the late George and Mary (Hastings) Gordon. Meg grew up in Newburgh, New York, in a multi-generational home. She was raised by her mother and her grandparents, James and Isabella Hastings, along with her Uncle Charlie who lived next door. She was especially close to her grandfather, James.

During the Depression, Meg's family rented out rooms in their home. This experience sparked her lifelong interest in people; she spent much of her childhood on the family stoop talking to the various renters coming and going. She truly enjoyed learning about others and could strike up a meaningful conversation with anyone she met.

Meg graduated at the top of her class from Mount Saint Mary Academy ("The Mount") and earned her de-

gree in Library Science from SUNY Geneseo. She worked as a school librarian in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, and later for many years at the Smith and Charter Oak Elementary schools in West Hartford where she made many lifelong friends, three of which would visit her every year through the remainder of her life despite having moved to Massachusetts.

She was a voracious reader of espionage novels and historical biographies, but she was most passionate about her own family history. As the family historian and a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), she made sure the stories of the family's ancestors were passed down to her children and grandchildren. In her free time, she tended to her "English gardens", intentionally wild and chaotic flower beds where she loved seeing what would pop up each spring. She was also a talented knitter, making many blankets, hats, hoodies and other handmade clothing for her family over the years.

Meg was an only child, but she leaves behind a large family. She is survived by her children: Marshall Houskeeper and his wife Jean, of Upton; James Houskeeper and his wife Lynn, of Bolton; Mary Rivera and her husband German, of Upton; and her former son-in-law Michael Donelan, of Newport, Tennessee.

She was the grandmother



of eight: Rebecca Flaeter and her husband Joe, Sarah Leacu, Ashley Donelan and her wife Jill, Bridgette Donelan, Patrick Donelan, Katie Houskeeper, Susie Houskeeper, and Hope Rivera. She was the great-grandmother of six: Benjamin, Abby, and William Flaeter; George and Julia Leacu; and Mary Mae Donelan. She was predeceased by two great-grandchildren, Alexander and Bradley Leacu.

Her funeral service and burial in Lakeview Cemetery, Upton, took place on Tuesday, May 19.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the West Hartford Public Library Foundation (www.westhartfordlibrary.org/library-foundation)

Mother: I love you...
Child: How much do you love me?
Mother: Down to the monsters, and up to the sky!
Child: Does the sky ever end?
Mother: No, it keeps going, and going, and going...

Funeral arrangements are under the care of the Pickering & Son Upton Funeral Home.

For her online tribute, please visit www.UptonFunerals.com



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Pet of the month: Sydney



For information on meeting Sydney at the Milford Humane Society please visit us at www.uptonmendonfreepress.com

Mendon Senior Center programs for June

Stroke Awareness
Thurs., June 11, at 10:30 a.m.
This Stroke Awareness educational program will cover the signs and symptoms of a stroke. Our presenter Elizabeth Ryan, MSN, RN, AGACNP-BC is the Nurse Practitioner/Stroke Program Manager of the UMass Inpatient and Outpatient Neurology. Please register to attend this informative program.

Senior Van Transportation
Our van service is available Monday thru Thursday for trips to medical appointments, local shopping or just coming down to the Senior Center. Our friendly drivers Wayne Phipps and Paul Sarah are available to pick you up at your home and take you where you need to go within a 15-mile radius. If you have any mobility issues, the van does include a lift, and our drivers are trained in wheelchair securement. Please call Shawna Timperio at the center 508-478-6175 ext. 3 to make your ride reservations, 48 hours or more in advance. Rides are based on availability. Medical appoint-

ments take priority. Ride donations are \$1 for local roundtrip rides/\$4 for out-of-town rides.
New Players Welcome!
The Mendon Senior Center offers a variety of recreational activities including:
Cribbage - *Wednesdays 9:45 a.m.* The Cribbage group is always looking for new players, stop in Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m., all levels welcome.
Hand, Knee and Foot Card game - *Tuesdays 1 p.m.*
Mah-Jong - *Wednesdays & Thursdays 1 p.m.*

Please check our schedule regarding days, times, and availability. Want to learn how to play any of these games; give us a call, we're excited to teach you.

Digital Equity ~ Lend Your Voice
Join the Town of Mendon and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission in a conversation on internet service, device access, and digital skills. We want to hear from you about your experiences on Mon., June 15, from 1 p.m. to

2 p.m. at the Mendon Senior Center at 62 Providence St. Prepare to join us for an Ice Cream Social! \$25 gift cards to Muffin House Café will be handed out to attendees, while supplies last. For more information, visit: bit.ly/mendondigital, or reach out to Gloria Agossou at: gagossou@cmrhc.org

Sharing Strength ~ Support Program
The Mendon Senior Center continues to host Sharing Strength; a supportive program led by Counselor Gail Bourassa, LMHC of My Choice Therapy. The group, using everyone's experience, will explore topics related to health and wellness such as stress, hobbies, coping, routines etc. Upcoming scheduled dates on Thursdays are 6/11 and 6/25 at 11 a.m. Please contact director Amy Wilson Kent at 508-478-6175 ext. 1, if you are interested in attending. Open to all seniors.

Tri Valley Lunch Menu
Thurs., June 11: Marinated Pork Loin and Cornbread Stuffing
Tues., June 16: Birthday Bash!

Thurs., June 18: Juneteenth Holiday Observed ~No Meal Served
Tues., June 23: Ziti with Meat Sauce & Mozzarella Cheese
Thurs., June 25: Hot Dogs, Baked Beans & Coleslaw
Tues., June 30: Soup du Jour & Tuna Salad
Meals are served at 12 noon. Cost is \$3 donation per meal. Reservations must be made at least 48 hours in advance. Transportation is available, please call Shawna to schedule.

June Birthday Bash
Tues., June 16, at 12 noon
This month we're thrilled to welcome Tom Esparnet and Andy, who will entertain us with guitar and drum selections that are sure to brighten the room and lift every spirit and maybe even have you on your feet. Before the show, our cooks will serve a hearty meal—perfect for catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. Whether you're celebrating a June birthday or simply looking for a cheerful afternoon out, you're warmly invited.

"Are You Game?" – Bingo!
Thurs., June 18, at 1:30 p.m.
While the Senior Center and Town Offices are closed that day. The Friends are letting the good time roll. If you are ready to have some fun reserve your spot by calling the Senior Center at 508-478-6175 or stopping in to sign up. \$5 fee (used entirely for prizes and payable by registration date). Registration deadline Tues., June 16 - You must be registered to play. Eight games with prizes based on attendance. We welcome both seasoned players and curious newcomers.

Friends Dine Out
Wed., June 24 at Beef Barn, North Smithfield, RI
Carpool with friends from the senior center one Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. or meet at the restaurant at 12 noon. The cost of lunch is your responsibility but the company is free! Please sign-up at the senior center.

MENDON SENIOR CENTER
continued on page 17

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Upton’s Fransen one of two BVT Superintendent’s Scholars

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) seniors Justin Fransen of Upton and Evan Griffin of Hopedale were recently honored as the school’s 2026 Worcester County Superintendents’ Association (WCSA) Scholar Award recipients at the WCSA’s annual recognition luncheon.

They are also recipients of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) Award of Academic Excellence. The honor, commonly known as the Superintendent’s Scholar Award, is presented annually

to two seniors who exemplify the school’s commitment to cutting-edge career technical training and rigorous academics. Evan Griffin is the class valedictorian, and Justin Fransen is the salutatorian.

Both students demonstrate exceptional academic achievement and strong contributions to their school community.

Justin Fransen

Justin Fransen is a distinguished student in the Engineering & Robotics program at BVT. He was named a Commended Student in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship

Program, serves as captain of the varsity lacrosse team, and is a member of the National Honor Society and the math team. He has competed annually in SkillsUSA, advancing to the National Leadership and Skills Conference Championships in 2024, where he placed sixth, and earning a gold medal in Mechatronics in 2025.

He is also a John & Abigail Adams Scholarship recipient and has earned Commendation List honors every term of his high school career. Through BVT’s cooperative education program, he is employed at Primetals in Sutton, where he applies his mechanical engineering skills.

Justin plans to pursue both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in electrical engineering to further advance his technical expertise.

Evan Griffin

Evan Griffin excels in the Information Technology program at BVT, earning more than 10 industry certifications. He serves as captain of the varsity



High School seniors Justin Fransen and Evan Griffin have been named BVT’s recipients of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Award of Academic Excellence. Photos source: BVT

golf team and is a member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. He also helped establish and grow the school’s chess club.

He earned a silver medal in Internetworking at the 2025 SkillsUSA State Leadership & Skills Conference. A John & Abigail Adams Scholarship recipient, Evan has achieved Commendation List honors every term. He also volunteers with Project Just

Because and Learning First Charter Public School.

Evan plans to continue his career and technical education by pursuing a degree in computer science or cybersecurity at a four-year university.

“Evan and Justin demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to their career and technical education,” said Principal Michele Denise. “We are proud to have them represent BVT and look forward to their continued success.”

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MENDON SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 15

What's Cooking with Betsy and Dona

Fri., June 26, at 12:30 p.m.

This month we will be featuring a guest chef, our very own Hala Megalaa who is originally from Cairo Egypt and will be demonstrating and giving us an opportunity to taste some of her favorite foods from Egypt. We will be serving Haftah, (seasoned beef meat rolls), tahini dressing, Egyptian bread, chicken kabobs, Greek salad with lemon and olive oil dressing and white cake for dessert. Her presentation will be tasty and not at all spicy.

History Series: Mendon's Role in the Revolution: Beyond the Battlefield

Tues., July 30, at 2 p.m.

Our June event will highlight Mendon's Role in the Revolution: Beyond the Battlefield. The American Revolution wasn't fought only on distant battlefields. Here in Mendon, ideas, decisions, and actions helped shape the path to independence. From the bold Mendon Resolves to the safeguarding of munitions and the leadership of local citizens, this presentation uncovers the important role the town played in a pivotal moment in history. To register, stop

by the center or call at 508-478-6175 ext. 3.

Calling all Readers...

Senior Center library volunteer Barbara Lawson asks, if anyone has books with a copyright date of 2022—2026 that you are done with, please drop them off at the senior center. This will help keep the shelves refreshed by adding to the selections available. Next time you come in, why not take a moment to see if there's a book or puzzle you might enjoy? After hours, visit our Little Library at the senior center gazebo.

Having trouble making ends meet?

The Mendon Food Pantry, located at the Senior Center, is open to Mendon residents in need one Friday per month by appointment. Deliveries for orders are also available for residents with ambulatory or transportation issues. Upcoming dates are July 3 and Aug. 7. For more information or to make an appointment call Amy Wilson Kent at 508-478-6175, ext. 1.

Medicare Savings Programs

Apply to Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) now to save thousands a year on Medicare costs. What are Medicare Savings Programs? Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) will pay for some or all of Medicare premiums, deductibles, copay-

ments, and co-insurance. Depending on your income, MSPs will pay for your Medicare Part A & B premiums and cost sharing, or Medicare Part B premium, as well as lower your prescription costs. This is not an insurance plan. There is no asset limit. Who qualifies? Medicare beneficiaries who meet the following monthly income limits: at or below \$2,993 (individual); at or below \$4,058 (couple). Call the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to make an appointment with a SHINE Counselor.

Prescription Drug Safe Disposal

Do you have old prescriptions at home, and you do not know what to do with them? The Mendon Police station has a Med Rx Return drop box, located at the entry to the station. The box is intended for the environmentally safe disposal of expired or unused medications. Below is a list of accepted medications that can be Disposed of in drop box: prescriptions, prescription patches, prescription ointments, over the counter medication, vitamins, samples.

The Plymouth Harbor Cruise,

Pilgrim Belle Tour

Fri., Aug 7

Join the Mendon Senior Center on Fri., Aug. 7, for a relaxing summer day in Plymouth! Start the day with a delicious buffet lunch at the historic Dan'l Webster Inn. The Inn is recognized as a top 1% restaurant in the country. Next, we head over to Plymouth Harbor for a 75-minute narrated harbor cruise aboard the Pilgrim Belle, a Mississippi-style paddle wheeler. You will take in view of landmarks, while hearing about this historic town & seaport.

Cost is \$135 per person (due upon signing) Board the Motorcoach at the Mendon Senior Center. Trip departs 9:45 a.m. and returns approximately 6:15 p.m. For reservations, contact Beverly Fior at 508-473-8382 or drop by the senior center to register. Make Checks payable to 'Friends of Mendon Elders' and mail to 62 Providence St., Mendon, MA 01756. Trip is operated by Bloom Tours.

Ask the Assessors Senior Means Tested Real Estate Tax Exemption (Circuit Breaker)

Applications are available at the Assessor's Office in Town

Hall for the Senior Means Tested Real Estate Tax Credit derived from qualifying for the 2025 Mass State Income Tax Filing Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. The deadline for submitting the applications is Sept. 30, 2026.

Any Mendon resident aged 65 or older as of Jan. 1, 2025, who has applied for and received the Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit when they filed their calendar year 2025 State Income Tax return is eligible to apply for this exemption. It does not replace any existing senior exemptions but will be given as an additional exemption. As with all property tax exemptions, applicants' financial information is kept completely confidential.

It is the Board of Assessors' goal to have this exemption factored into the third and fourth quarter tax bills that are mailed in late December each year. If you have any questions about the new exemption, please contact Principal Assessor Sherrie Bates at 508-473-2738 or assessor@mendonma.gov or Taxation Aid Committee Chair Kevin Rudden.

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SPORTS

Nipmuc Softball succeeds despite tough slate

NRHS battle-tested after several close losses

By Chris Villani

At the start of the season, Nipmuc head softball coach Stephanie DeBaggis predicted her team would finish around .500 and play a lot of close games - that is exactly how the season turned out.

"The girls had such great success last year, and most of them are young so they might have thought it was going to be a little bit easier," DeBaggis said. "I had to reinforce to them that we are in a new league and we also searched for a lot of difficult opponents."

She added, "We wanted to see better teams and better pitching, that was our big goal."

Nipmuc lost seven games this spring by either one or two runs, strengthening the notion they can compete with anybody. The team played in a brand new league after previously competing in the Dual Valley Conference (DVC) and DeBaggis said they have benefitted from having a tougher schedule.

"When you play some power-



Nipmuc seniors Savannah Carr, Sierra Lopes, and Kira DeBaggis were the driving forces behind the softball team's offense. Courtesy photo

Senior Kira DeBaggis finished the regular season batting over .400 and approaching 100 career hits. She hit six home runs, and led the team in RBIs. Carr also hit well over .300, as did fellow senior Sierra Lopes. The trio did well to step up after Nipmuc graduated three seniors from a team that put together a long playoff run last year.

"My three seniors this year never had to be in charge before, but they figured it out," DeBaggis said.

In addition to the seniors, sophomore Teagan Bykowski has stepped up behind the plate, her coach said.

DeBaggis said that Nipmuc started the year with the goal of being in every game and not letting mistakes disrupt their focus. She said they have done well to achieve those objectives, even if it meant a few more losses.

"As fun as the DVC was, we had an inflated record at times because some of the teams were not as strong," DeBaggis said, adding that this year has still been enjoyable.

"They are having a good time, my team really loves each other," she said. "There are only 12 of us, and they do a good job picking one another up."

houses and lose 1-0, 3-2, or 3-1, those are still successes," DeBaggis said.

Several players put together standout campaigns. Senior Savannah Carr and sophomore Charlotte Leitch handled most of the pitching duties and both of them turned in stellar performances throughout the spring.

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SPORTS

Stellar season for Nipmuc Girls LAX

Nipmuc racked up 16 wins in regular season

By Chris Villani

The Nipmuc girls lacrosse team put together a 16-2 regular season on the strength of experienced veterans and talented younger players.

Head coach Grace Merten had to use several eighth-grade players on last year's squad, and the crop of freshmen this year was experienced and ready to take on bigger roles.

"I knew we were going to be good," Merten said. "It was a matter of the younger girls figuring out their place on the team and becoming more confident. But they adjusted very well." She added, "They are confident now, and it shows."

The young players have had the benefit of following the example of the more experienced members of the team.

"For almost every senior, we have a freshman who plays the same position and has been mentored by their older teammate," Merten said. "It just kind of happened naturally because they play the same position."

One of those seniors, Jayden Lilburn, is committed to play lacrosse in college. She was the team's leading scorer this year, and Merten said she won an "insane amount" of draw controls.

Senior defender Maddie Weibe and senior attack Riley Collura were two more highly important players. Merten praised Weibe for her

leadership and said Collura was the team's primary assist player this year, feeding her teammates for scoring opportunities.

Junior Ana Tengler is another strong defensive player who played a big role this spring in front of goalie Charlotte Corbin, another junior who drew high praise from her coach. "Part of the reason we have had the success we had is because of her," Merten said.

Merten said the team started to gel after scoring some wins over powerhouses like Wayland and Dover-Sherborn, the latter of which won three state titles in a row.

"We told them they had a ton of potential, and I think they knew it, but it can be tough to really believe until you see the outcome of that potential," Merten said. "We started winning those games and they realized they had the ability to go far. We realized the potential that we have."

Coming into the year, Nipmuc had never made it two rounds in the postseason, and that goal was still top of mind for Merten and her team as the tournament began.

But she emphasized that the team likes to focus on the process of becoming better.

"We like to set small goals," she said. "And, every time we achieve them, we set another one."



Jayden Lilburn was Nipmuc's top scorer this season. Courtesy photo

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