

localtownpages Hopedale

Vol. 13 No. 4

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

August 1, 2026

Maersk to open fulfillment center on Plain Street

Company to create 1,000 jobs

By THERESA KNAPP

Global logistics company Maersk is investing \$100 million to open a new 617,000-square-foot fulfillment center at 75 Plain St. in Hopedale, creating approximately 1,000 jobs and establishing what the company says will be its largest shipping facility in New England.

The facility, scheduled to begin operations in late August, "will serve a single large-scale e-commerce customer," according to a press release on www.maersk.com. It is expected to process up to 330,000 items per day at



A rendering of the new Maersk building at 75 Plain St. in Hopedale. Image source: www.maersk.com

peak capacity. Equipped with advanced conveyor and sorting technology, the center will support shipping

and fulfillment operations

MAERSK

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Finding a home in Hopedale

A welcome letter from new COA director

By CLAIRE HILL

People who have lived in Hopedale for years already know there's something special about this town. As someone who moved here only recently, I discovered that almost immediately.

For those I haven't met yet, my name is Claire Hill, and I have the privilege of serving as the new Director of the Hopedale Council on Aging and Senior Center.

About five years ago, my parents relocated to Hopedale as they prepared for retirement, drawn by its safe neighborhoods, excellent healthcare, and welcoming community. Although I spent nearly my entire life in Connecticut, I soon found myself spending week-



Claire Hill, Director Hopedale Council on Aging & Senior Center. Courtesy photo

HOME

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MAERSK

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throughout the Northeast. According to Maersk, Hopedale was selected because of its proximity to major metropolitan areas, including Boston, Providence and Worcester, allowing the company to provide faster and more efficient deliveries across the region. The project marks a significant economic investment for Hopedale and Worcester County. Hiring is already underway, with several positions currently listed at www.maersk.com/careers/ and other employment websites. The site at 75 Plain St. was previously the home of Rosenfeld Concrete before they sold it “to an affiliate of Boston’s

The facility
“will serve a single
large-scale
e-commerce customer.”

www.maersk.com

GFI Partners. The firm paid \$15 million and completed the building in 2024,” according to the Boston Business Journal (www.bizjournals.com/boston). It is about three miles from Route 495. Headquartered in Denmark, Maersk operates in more than 130 countries and employs approximately 100,000 people worldwide. The Hopedale facility is the third in New England, joining Peabody and Windsor, Conn.



Maersk, the global shipping company, is opening a 617,000-square-foot fulfillment center on Plain Street.
Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

HOME

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ends, holidays, and vacations here. Long before I officially moved, Hopedale had already begun to feel like home.

My career has always centered on helping others. Living with disabilities myself, I have dedicated my education and career to supporting people facing similar challenges. I loved my work in Connecticut, but everything changed when my

mother, who was battling kidney failure, was hospitalized at Milford Regional Medical Center. Living three hours away made me realize that time with family is precious, and I wanted to be closer while I still could. That decision led me to Massachusetts and, thanks to a recommendation from a family friend to the job board for Councils on Aging. When I saw the opening in Hopedale, it felt like fate. Since starting in April, I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and encouragement I've received. My predecessor has become a valued mentor. Our Council on Aging Board has embraced new ideas. My fellow town employees have been generous with their support, and the residents who visit the Senior Center have welcomed me with warmth and friendship.

This position has been a gift in more ways than I imagined. My parents have been able to participate in our programs and see firsthand the values they instilled in me: kindness, compassion, and service to others. Every day, I have the opportunity to be creative, build connections, and make a meaningful difference. The greatest reward is watching people come together sharing stories, making friends, trying something new, and finding a place where they feel they belong. That sense of connection is what a senior center is all about. The Hopedale Senior Center offers something for everyone. We host congregational lunches twice a month, and beginning in August we'll launch our new “Cultural Kitchen” series, featuring free, nutritious meals from local businesses. We also offer fitness classes, Tai Chi, medita-

tion, watercolor, literature discussions, bingo, Mah Jong, cribbage, outreach services, and many other programs designed to support healthy, active aging. We're always eager to hear new ideas and collaborate with community partners. Thank you, Hopedale, for welcoming me into your community. I hope to return that kindness by making the Senior Center a place where everyone feels welcome. To learn more about upcoming events and programs, visit us in person at 43 Hope St. (within the Community House), online at www.hopedale-ma.gov/1216/Council-On-Aging, or call 508-634-2208. Life can change in an instant. I'm grateful that it brought me to Hopedale. With kindness and gratitude,
Claire Hill, Director Hopedale Council on Aging & Senior Center

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Hopedale Public Schools Offers Meals at No Cost for All Students

Hopedale Public Schools participates in the **National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program**. As part of this program, **Hopedale JSHS, Memorial and BBC schools** offers healthy meals every school day. The Commonwealth is supplementing National School Lunch Program funds to ensure all students have access to healthy school meals in Massachusetts, regardless of household income. We ask that families complete a Meal Benefit Application as this provides data for school funding and community resources. The results from each Meal Benefit Application is used to ensure sustainability for this program.

Families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals for their children also qualify for Sun Bucks starting in the summer of 2026. Sun Bucks provides extra money for groceries during the summer months when kids aren't in school.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced price meals if the household's gross income is at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2026-2027						
Household size	Maximum Household Income Eligible for Free Meals			Maximum Household Income Eligible for Reduced Price Meals		
	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$20,748	\$1,729	\$399	\$29,526	\$2,461	\$568
2	28,132	2,345	541	40,034	3,337	770
3	35,516	2,960	683	50,542	4,212	972
4	42,900	3,575	825	61,050	5,088	1,175
5	50,284	4,191	967	71,558	5,964	1,377
6	57,668	4,806	1,109	82,066	6,839	1,579
7	65,052	5,421	1,251	92,574	7,715	1,781
8	72,436	6,037	1,393	103,082	8,591	1,983
Each additional person:	+7,348	+616	+142	+10,508	+876	+203

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available in the **Main office at each school and on the website at <https://www.hopedaleschools.org/page/food-services>**.

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. **Contact Cheryl Bober at 1-508-488-5625 or at cbober@hopedaleschools.org** at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced price policy, **the Food Service Director** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to the **PPS Director at 1-508-488-2220 or kcosgrove@hopedaleschools.org**

When known to **Hopedale Public Schools** households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to **Hopedale Public Schools** households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster • Homeless • Migrant • Runaway • Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or • Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits.

For more information, you may call **Cheryl Bober** at 1-508-488-5625 or e-mail at cbober@hopedaleschools.org.

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In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov
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George A. Draper’s will, necktie social, bad check, plant returns to 5 ½ day work week

Series looks at Hopedale in 1920s

BY DAN MALLOY
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

George Albert Draper was the last of the three Draper brothers who had built up the company they inherited from their father when he passed in 1923. No doubt his finances were quite complicated, so it wasn’t until 1926 when the Milford Gazette reported the following:

“Accounts of the Boston First National Bank, recently filed at Worcester Probate Court as trustee under the will of the late George Albert Draper show a fund of \$3,210, 531 [according to an inflation calculator, that would now have the purchasing power of \$60,107,417] for the benefit of Helen Draper Ayer and a fund of \$1,957,894 [\$36,655,603 today]



George Albert Draper with daughter Helen Draper.

for the benefit of Wickliffe P. Draper.”

Other happenings significant enough to print in the Gazette that year include:

“A score of friends tendered Clayton Stevens (8 Soward Street) a necktie social Tuesday evening in celebration of his 17th birthday.”

“Principal W.A. Dennett (5 Dennett Street) and several pupils of the high school inspected Harvard College Saturday morning and attended the Harvard – Holy Cross football game in the afternoon.”

“A house call was sounded on the fire alarm Monday evening to search for John Nicholson (18 Prospect Street) who had been missing since morning. The boy was found in the woods back of the Hopedale House.”

“Harry C. Steele (125 Hoped-

ale Street), a well-known tenor soloist, and Mrs. Ethel Merryman, also of this town (not in street listing book) were arrested in Maine Saturday, when a check on the Fidelity Trust Co. went to protest. They were arraigned in Portland Monday, and the case was continued to give the authorities further time for investigation.”

“Notices have been posted at the Draper plant that all departments will operate tomorrow morning and that in the future the five full day per week schedule will be discontinued for the old 5 ½ day schedule. The plant was shut down yesterday but is in full operation today. With the resumption of the old schedule, pay day will be Saturday morning.”

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



Wickliffe P. Draper, son of George Albert Draper.



The Hopedale House on Dutcher Street was a boarding house owned by the Draper Corporation. In 1926, a boy was reported missing and was later found behind the house.

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Dr. Mark Barsamian brings advanced retinal eye care and personalized treatment to Hopedale

By JESS OMMEN

Patients in need of specialized retinal care now have greater access to advanced treatment close to home with the opening of a new private practice in Hopedale led by Dr. Mark Barsamian, DO, an ophthalmologist and vitreoretinal specialist with more than 15 years of experience.

Dr. Barsamian opened Retina Physicians and Surgeons of New England in Hopedale earlier this year, giving him the freedom to build the kind of patient-centered practice he envisioned. His practice heavily focuses on personalized care, ensuring patients understand their diagnoses and treatment options.

"I take time to listen to my patients and educate them about their retinal conditions," he said. "When a patient has a good understanding of what's going on with their eyes and the treatment choices available to them, they tend to be more engaged with their retinal health, and this can lead to a better result for them. For example, with my diabetic retinopathy patients, showing them pictures of how diabetes is impacting their eyes can serve as additional motivation for them to continue to work on their blood sugars." Dr. Barsamian continued, "It's important for patients to be well informed. In fact, they tell me 'knowing what's going on' puts them at ease."

The doctor's Hopedale office is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that allows him to



diagnose and treat many conditions in the office five days a week. He intentionally leaves room in his schedule for same-day appointments and new patients.

"I respect my patients' time, and I don't believe in overbooking," he stated.

Dr. Barsamian completed a two-year retinal fellowship—the highest level of subspecialty training available in the field—at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and is board certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Ophthalmology.

Since becoming a vitreoretinal specialist in 2010, Dr. Barsamian has focused on diagnosing and treating complex conditions such as retinal detachments, diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration. And, in addition to offering office-based procedures such as injections and lasers, he also performs advanced retinal surgeries for patients warranting such treatment to help them preserve and restore their vision.

His decision to pursue retinal surgery was inspired by a personal experience.

"When I was about 18 years old, my father had bilateral retinal detachments," he said. "His physician was a world-



renowned retinal specialist who examined me because he was concerned I might also be at risk. That experience stayed with me."

While training in ophthalmology, Dr. Barsamian became fascinated by the precision of retinal surgery and the rapidly advancing technology used to perform it, further shaping his passion for the specialty.

In addition to treating patients in his clinic, he serves as a Clinical Instructor of Surgery at Brown University, where he teaches ophthalmology residents when on-call for the hospital system.

The most rewarding moments, he said, are seeing patients regain

their independence.

"Maybe they don't get back to perfect vision, but if they can drive again or return to the activities they enjoy, that's a success," he said.

Outside the office, Dr. Barsamian enjoys spending time with his family, cycling, walking his dog and gardening.

Above all, he wants patients to know specialized retinal care is available close to home.

"I want people to know we're here," he said. "We're open five days a week, have a caring staff with more than 45 years' experience in Ophthalmology, and we're committed to providing timely, personalized retinal care in a warm,



Dr. Mark Barsamian, DO, recently opened his new practice, Retina Physicians and Surgeons of New England, in Hopedale.

professional environment." Retina Physicians and Surgeons of New England is located at 54 Hopedale St., Suite #1 in Hopedale. The office is easily accessible, and the practice is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and accepts most major medical insurance plans. For more information please call 774-396-6905 or visit www.rps-retina.org.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Early voting dates set

Early voting will take place in Hopedale at the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall located at 54 Hopedale Street, Suite 10, from Saturday August 22, to Friday, August 28.

Hours will be as follows:

- Saturday, August 22 – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Sunday, August 23 – no early voting hours
- Monday, August 24 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 25 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 26 – 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Thursday, August 27 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Friday, August 28 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The last day to register to vote will be Saturday, August 22, at 5 p.m.

State Primary Day is Tuesday, Sept. 1.
Voting in Hopedale will take place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
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Beder recognized as part of Military Appreciation Day



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Thomas J. Beder, center, was recognized as part of this year's Annual Military Appreciation Day. He was presented with citations by legislative aide Daniel Lincoln (left), representing Sen. Ryan Fattman's office, and State Rep. Brian Murray (right), who nominated Beder for the honor. Photo source: State Rep. Brian Murray

In June, retired U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Thomas J. Beder of Hopedale was recognized for his outstanding service to both the nation and the local community as part of the 2nd Annual Military Appreciation Day.

Beder was nominated for the honor by State Rep. Brian W. Murray (10th

Worcester District).

Beder was not able to attend the ceremony at the State House but later received citations from the offices of State Rep. Brian Murray, Sen. Ryan Fattman and Gov. Maura Healey during a presentation before the Hopedale Select Board.

Beder has long been a dedi-

cated community volunteer. He organizes Hopedale's annual Flag Day ceremony, Memorial Day Parade, and cemetery service; volunteers and speaks at the town's Veterans Day program; mentors local Boy Scout troops and Special Olympics participants; and leads the Greater Hopedale area's Toys for Tots campaign.

Gallagher named Interim Town Administrator

By Theresa Knapp

At its June 29 meeting, the Select Board unanimously appointed Michael Gallagher as Hopedale's Interim Town Administrator.

The previous Town Administrator, Mitchell Ruscitti, left the position in June for a similar position in Swansea.

"Some of these resumes are truly outstanding as far as their breadth of service," said board member Bernie Stock, regarding the three candidates they interviewed for the position.

In voicing his support for Gallagher, Stock said, "I like his approach, I think he's got some strong financial and IT experience that we need right now; we need somebody who's going to get us over that initial hump."

Board member Carole Mullen also supported Gallagher. She said Hopedale needs someone who can help the town get out of "a catastrophic mess" and she believes Gallagher has the "deepest background at their

The Hopedale Town Administrator Screening Committee has been appointed and has begun its work to find a full-time Town Administrator.

fingertips, and experience, to be able to find the way, working with our team, to find our way out of this."

Select Board Chair Glenda Hazard also supported Gallagher, touting his "deep financial background for the moment that can help us decipher the situation that we're in and get us back on track."

In his interview, Gallagher shared his municipal experience with the towns of Norfolk, North Attleborough, Northborough, Somerset, and Weymouth.

To watch the candidate interviews, visit www.townhall-streams.com.

Electronics Recycling Day on Sept. 19 in Milford

The First Congregational Church of Milford will sponsor an Electronics Recycling Day on Sat., Sept. 19, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The church will ensure that 99% of dropped off items will be reused and recycled.

All computer monitors, computers, parts and accessories, faxes, copiers, printers, scanners and TV's can be recycled. Recycling fees range from \$5 to \$45 per item. Cell phones can be recycled at no charge and will be donated to charities that recycle and reuse them. The recycling vendor will erase and shred all hard drives at no additional cost.

This event is an easy and fun way to dispose of the old electronics in your garage, basement, attic and offices, so start setting them aside now and

bring them to the church parking lot on Sept. 19. A drive-thru process will allow those donating to quickly drop off their items where help will be available.

The First Congregational Church Electronics Recycling event is held twice a year during April and September. We very much appreciate the support of those who have previously chosen to responsibly recycle with us and look forward to continuing to offer this recycling opportunity.

Drop off in the church parking lot at 4 Congress St., Milford. (Opposite Draper Park, next to the Post Office). Please enter the lot from the Church Street entrance. Cash payments only.

For more information, contact the church office at 508-473-5259

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When 'I think they're all set' becomes 'it's complicated'

**Glenn Brown, CFP**

Here is how to approach it in steps.

Rally your siblings first

Get on the same page with your siblings before talking to your parents. Aligning early avoids the too common, *"Your sister knows our plan,"* while telling your sister you do!

Focus on hearing and supporting their wishes, not taking control. Finally, pick a quiet time outside of major holidays with just the adult kids and parents (no spouses) to keep the conversation open and relaxed.

Open the dialogue on wellness

Start the conversation from a place of curiosity and respect. Use "I" statements to share your own thoughts rather than pressing for immediate answers. Focus first on wellness and long-term care preferences.

Would they prefer to stay in their home with professional support?

Transition to a retirement community?

What about when one passes, what should occur?

Outsource sooner than later

Waiting for a crisis to get outside help is a major mistake. This is true for home maintenance, caregiving, or financial management. Too often, older clients stubbornly insist, *"I'm not paying \$100 for a plow guy and his shovel!"* But shoveling snow, cleaning gutters and pushing a lawn mower in your 70s are

widowmakers. Is saving a few dollars worth a life-altering event?

This same mindset traps their savings. Without a distribution plan, retirees often freeze and refuse to spend on safety, convenience, or life goals out of fear. A CFP gives them permission to enjoy and spend their money with confidence, while keeping you in the role of a loving child rather than an exhausted caregiver.

Secure essential legal tools

Once preferences are clear, make sure the right legal structures are updated and funded.

A **Healthcare Proxy** names a trusted person to handle medical decisions if your parents can't speak for themselves. Paired with a **Financial Power of Attorney**, daily bills and care choices are managed seamlessly without costly court intervention.

While many assume a Will is enough, a **Revocable Living**

Trust offers critical advantages that a Will simply cannot match:

- **Control during life:** A Will only takes effect after death. A Trust works while your parents are alive, letting a successor trustee step in immediately if they become incapacitated.
- **Control over distribution:** Rather than handing heirs a risky, lump-sum inheritance, a Trust can structure payouts over time or at specific milestone ages.
- **Control over privacy & contesting:** Wills go through public, lengthy probate court and can be contested. Trusts remain completely private and transfer assets smoothly without court delays.

(Did I mention a revocable trust is about control?)

Protecting their independence
Preparing for evolving health

needs, or the loss of a parent, spares your family from navigating an emotional crisis in the dark. By leading with empathy, collaborating with siblings, and setting up the right legal tools, you protect your parents' autonomy and preserve peace of mind for everyone.

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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When meeting with new clients, we usually start with family. Conversations about kids bring great enthusiasm, but shifting to aging parents changes the mood instantly.

The responses almost always match the client's age:

- **30s:** *"I think they're all set."*
- **40s:** *"Well... it's complicated."*
- **50s:** A heavy sigh and, *"Yeah, it's been a struggle."*

Discussing money, health, and estate planning with your parents is daunting. But delaying leaves families unprepared during a crisis, resulting in quick, sometimes irreversible decisions under emotional stress.

This isn't about inheritance or taking away control. It's about protecting their independence so hard-earned assets serve *their* wishes, not a medical crisis, an unwanted lifestyle or excessive taxation (looking at you, Massachusetts estate tax *cough* money grab).

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Bancroft Memorial Library news

50 Hopedale Street,
Hopedale MA 01747
Contact: Keely Bethel-Penny,
Library Director
508-634-2209
kbethel-penny@cwmar.org

Reminder: Our Friday Summer Hours (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) continue through Sept. 4.

Summer Reading 2026 wraps up on Aug. 14, so be sure to turn in all of your reading logs for raffle tickets for a chance to win one of the grand prizes! There is no limit to the number of entries you can earn, so keep reading!

Community Conversations – Wed., Aug. 5, at 6:30 p.m.: Community Conversations will meet in the Program Room to discuss “Reimagining the Supreme Court.”

NEWS FROM MARJORIE HATTERSLEY CHILDREN'S ROOM

Summer Reading 2026 – “Plant a Seed, Read!”

Summer Reading wraps up on Friday, Aug. 14 with a Beach Party from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Be sure to redeem all reading logs to receive raffle tickets for a chance to win one of the Grand Prizes. Winning tickets will be drawn after closing on Friday the 14 and all winners will be

notified by telephone.

Open Play – Thursdays 8/6 & 8/13 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. for kids in Grades 2 – 6: School age kids can drop in for Open Play in the Program Room. Different play opportunities will change weekly, such as arts and crafts, a crochet lesson, board games, Wii gaming, assorted puzzles, life size games, learn a card game and more!

Design a Grass Head – Mon., Aug. 3, from 4-6 p.m.: Design, cut and decorate a Grass Head that you can take home!

Tummy Time Summer Reading Style – Tuesdays, 8/4 & 8/11 at 10 a.m.: Drop in for some safe and comfortable movement and socialization for infants from birth through 18 months.

Build a Rube Goldberg Machine – Mon., Aug. 10, from 4-6 p.m.: Drop in and use all the recyclable items we have collected to build your own Rube Goldberg Machine! Named after the American cartoonist and inventor Rube Goldberg (1883–1970), these machines are meant to be fun, creative, and highly engineered for a hilariously basic end goal (e.g., turning off a light or wiping a chin.)

Summer Reading Big Book Story Time – Fri., Aug. 7, from 11 a.m.-12 p.m.: Big Book

Story Time is an interactive Story Time we make together. Attendees will choose which Big Book we will read together then we will all collaborate and build our story time activities. Drop in!

Saturday Movie Matinees – Saturdays, 8/1 & 8/8 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.: Drop in at the Library to beat the heat and enjoy a fun, family friendly movie. (G or PG titles only). You can bring a snack, a blanket and a stuffy. Stop by or call the Library to find out what the movie is.

Beach Party – Fri., Aug. 14, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.: Let's celebrate the end of another fantastic Summer Reading Program with a drop in, outdoor, beach theme party featuring music, bubbles, ice pops, tattoos, shell painting and making kinetic sand.

Donations Wanted for the 2nd Annual Bancroft Library Costume Swap: Do you have old costumes or dress-up clothes that you no longer need? The Bancroft Library would love to give them a new life! The Library is collecting gently used costumes and dress-up clothes for its 2nd Annual Costume Swap, which will take place on the first Saturday in October. If you are cleaning out a closet, attic, or play-clothes trunk,



please consider donating your unwanted costumes to the Library. Donation bins will be available upstairs and downstairs at the Library beginning Aug. 1. Help us make this year's Costume Swap bigger and better!

Holiday Toy Swap: We are planning a Toy Swap on the first Saturday in November, giving families a chance to pass along gently used toys their children have outgrown and discover something new. Participants can sign up for free table space to display toys they no longer need and arrange their own swaps with other participants. At the end of the event, any remaining toys may be taken home or donated to the Library. Donated toys will be offered to local pre-schools and schools, with any remaining items donated to Savers. The Toy Swap is a fun,

community-focused way to give gently used toys a second life while helping families find new treasures without having to buy something new. More information will be forthcoming so keep an eye out.

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE HOPEDALE LIBRARY Online Auction Aug. 10-15

The Friends of the Hopedale Library are excited to announce an online auction taking place the week of Aug. 10. This year's auction offers an impressive variety of items and experiences for all ages and interests. Highlights include a Bruins High Five Experience (2 game tickets and the opportunity to high five the players as they exit the locker room), a one-hour private reading with medium Ellen Henry, an overnight stay at the historic Hawthorne Hotel in Salem, generous gift cards to favorite local restaurants, relaxing riverboat cruises and museum passes. Additional items and surprises will be added as the auction approaches. Whether you are looking for a fun family activity, a thoughtful gift, or a special treat for yourself, there is

BANCROFT

continued on page 9

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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



BANCROFT

continued from page 8

something for everyone. From children’s programming and summer reading to technology access and community events, your participation helps keep Bancroft Memorial Library thriving. Auction details and the bidding link will be posted on the Library’s website and social media pages soon. Be sure to bid early, bid often, and share the link with friends and family near and far!

FlowerPower Fundraiser

Please support The Friends of the Hopedale Library by shopping our FlowerPower.com fundraiser through Oct. 15. You can order fall bulbs online and have orders shipped directly to you. The Friends of the Hopedale Library earns 50% which goes right back to the Library! Shop at <http://hopedalelibrary.fpfundraising.com>.

Ongoing Book Sale

Looking for a book to bring to the beach or keep in your car? Visit the Friends of the Hopedale Library Ongoing Book Sale,

located downstairs outside the Program Room. The sale is open when the Library is open, making it easy to browse at your convenience. We offer a wide selection of books for adults and children, as well as puzzles. All proceeds support Library programs and services, including Summer Reading, museum passes, and other enhancements not covered by the regular library budget. Prices start at 50¢. The selection is refreshed weekly.

The Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Hopedale Library, founded in 1983, is an active volunteer, non-profit organization with a town-wide membership and a representative executive board. We work with the Library staff and the Trustees to support the Library in providing funds for equipment, materials, and programs not covered by the Library’s regular operating budget. The Friends of the Hopedale Library meets the second Wednesday of the month, September through June at 6:30 p.m. New members and ideas are always welcome.

Hopedale resident among winners at 11th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day

Nico Skorupa wins ‘longest fish’ for ages 8 and under

The 11th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day was held on May 16 where over 225 participants and their families gathered at River Bend Farm on a gorgeous Saturday. The event was organized by Open Sky Community Services and the Blackstone River Watershed Association in partnership with the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor Volunteers-in-Parks Program, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.

Among the winners was Nico Skorupa of Hopedale who caught the longest fish at 8 ½ inches.

Other winners, includ-

ing three pairs of siblings, included:

Adults:

Longest fish – Therese Raymond of Westborough, 20” fish

Most fish caught – John Nordquist of Northbridge, 27 fish

13-17:

Longest fish – Nathaniel Hazard of Worcester, 8 1/2” fish

Most fish caught – Keren Melo of Framingham, 3 fish

9-12:

Longest fish – Mauricio Melo of Framingham, 9 1/4” fish

Most fish caught – Dylan Cote of Uxbridge, 8 fish

8 and under:

Longest fish – Nico Skorupa

of Hopedale, 8 1/2” fish

Most fish caught – Jasmine Hazard of Worcester, 3 fish

In addition to the fishing competition, the day included free raffles, children’s activities, face painting, and food from Pizza Box Pizza Truck, Sweet Wise Ice-Cream Truck, and Las Lemonade. This inclusive, free event provides an opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to come together, while learning about and enjoying the beautiful Blackstone River.

Organizers would like to recognize Benjamin Plastering and Bass Pro Shops for their financial support of Family Fun Fishing Day.

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Letter to the Editor:

Day in the Park sponsors

The Hopedale Cultural Council is pleased to announce the following sponsors for the Hopedale Day in the Park on Sat., Sept. 19, and we thank them for their support.

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Art Show Purchase Prize:
Wolf Law Office, LLC

We look forward to seeing everyone on Sept. 19.

~Hopedale Cultural Council

Letter to the Editor policy

Letters to the Editor are welcome and encouraged. They provide readers with an opportunity to express their opinions on issues of local interest and to foster respectful community discussion.

The views expressed in letters are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or editorial position of this newspaper, its staff, or its publishers.

Submission of a letter grants this newspaper permission to edit, publish, and archive the letter in print, online, and on affiliated digital platforms.

Hopedale Day in the Park 2026

The Hopedale Cultural Council is busy preparing for the 46th Hopedale Day in the Park to be held on Saturday, Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the grounds of the Hopedale Community House. Note the venue change due to construction at the Town

Park.

There will be music all day, free children’s entertainment, craft vendors, and food booths. Many local civic, church, school groups, and businesses are participating to make it a fun day for all ages. The juried art show will take place in the

Draper Gym.

Applications for vendors, art show information, and sponsorship information can be found at <https://hopedale-ma.gov/1241/Hopedale-Cultural-Council> or by emailing hopedaleculturalcouncil@yahoo.com.

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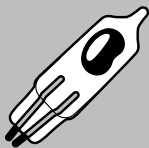
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Do you follow Hopedale’s comfort dog, K-9 Dunkin, on Instagram? You can find him @dunkinonduty. And, if you would like one of his trading cards, say ‘hi’ when you see him around town or stop by the police station. Photo source: dunkinonduty/Instagram

Special Town Meeting allocates funds to rectify ‘human error’ in accounting

BY THERESA KNAPP

At a Special Town Meeting on June 30, voters made several transfers to cover a fiscal deficit that was discovered in February. The matter involved “human error” by a town employee and is still under investigation.

In February, then-Town Administrator Mitch Ruscitti brought the matter to the attention of town officials in an emergency meeting of the Select Board. At the time, he said the issue was due to a “discrepancy in uncollected real estate taxes in FY25 appears to be substantial... This year is about ‘6x’ [six times] of what is usually uncollected” which raised concern.

At the start of the June Special Town Meeting, Town Moderator Eugene Phillips acknowledged residents had many questions about how the town got into the current fiscal

situation, “But I want to look at tonight as the fix for the situation we’re in and not a head-hunting [mission].”

After reading the first article, Select Board Chair Glenda Hazard said, “I know people have a lot of questions and are pretty upset about the need to do this, and I’m with you on that. What started with questions about police detail funds has kind of led to the discovery of more things we need to fix... It’s not ideal that we need to make this transfer, but it’s at the advice of the Department of Revenue.”

Hazard continued, “This has been being discussed for several months, and I have always been led to believe to this point that this is not due to any sort of malfeasance; that this is just due to errors that were made that people could not



admit that they made mistakes and correct them, and they were compounded over time. The transfers that we are making tonight are transfers that we should have made during those years at that time and that slipped through the cracks, so this is what brings us here tonight.”

Hazard said the District At-

torney is involved to see if any theft occurred. She also said the town is taking other steps to review the town’s fiscal policies. “Even though that’s not ideal, I hope that makes you feel a little better about us correcting the problem.”

Hopedale Chief Financial Officer Linda Catanzariti said the deficits were identified by the Department of Revenue in FY25. She said, “[The balances] might have gone off the rails in ‘22 or ‘23 or ‘24, but I think the bottom line is we had a deficit on the books for maybe a few years.”

The town had about \$1.2 million in its Stabilization Fund and the June Special Town Meeting spent “about two-thirds of it,” according to Hazard.

The transfers included:

Article 1 transferred \$832,696.91 from the Stabiliza-

tion Fund and \$237,050 from Ambulance Receipts Reserves for a total of \$1,069,746.91 to fund several budget deficits.

Article 2 transferred \$273,004 from the Water Department Retained earnings to cover deficits in FY26 debt interest, health insurance, legal fees, salaries, and building repair/maintenance.

Article 3 transferred \$46,335 from the Sewer Department Retained earnings to cover deficits in FY26 legal fees, salaries, and health insurance.

The fourth article on the warrant – to amend the FY27 fire department operating budget – was not needed and was passed over.

The full warrant is available at <https://bit.ly/HopedaleSTM-june2026>.

A recording of the 35-minute meeting can be found at www.townhallstreams.com.

Grand Prize Winner enjoys a day at Southwick's Zoo



Grand Prize winner Chelsea T. recently redeemed her four-pack of tickets to Southwick's Zoo, enjoying a memorable day with her extended family. Pictured above, Chelsea is the second from the right.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR

GRAND PRIZE & RUNNER UP WINNERS

who correctly identified all 10 HIDDEN ANIMALS in our May newspapers to win general admission tickets to Southwick's Zoo

GRAND PRIZE WINNER - Wachusett Free Press Chelsea T.

Wachusett Free Press.....	Stacy J.	Medway & Millis Local Town Pages.....	Lydia T.
Upton & Mendon Free Press.....	David C.	Hopedale Local Town Pages.....	Lisa B.
Milford Free Press.....	Paulo Sergio P.	Holliston Local Town Pages.....	Alan M.
The Yankee Express - South.....	Emily C.	Franklin Local Town Pages.....	Amanda G.
The Yankee Express - North.....	Hale S.	Blackstone Valley Express - South.....	April H.
Norwood Local Town Pages.....	Kelly A.	Blackstone Valley Express - North.....	Emilia S.
Norfolk & Wrentham Local Town Pages.....	Joseph C.	Bellingham Bulletin.....	Scott R.
Natick Local Town Pages.....	Meg W.	Ashland Local Town Pages.....	Suzanne M.

Thank you to all our readers for your enthusiastic participation in making this contest a fun and successful community event!

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LIVING HEALTHY

Give your child the gift of clear vision this school year

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

As summer winds down, parents are busy checking off back-to-school lists—backpacks, notebooks, pencils, clothes. But one critical factor for classroom success can't be bought in a store: healthy, clear vision.

August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month, a timely reminder to prioritize kids' visual well-being. Experts estimate up to 80% of classroom learning is presented visually. Whether reading, writing, using computers, or watching the whiteboard, children's eyes work constantly. When they can't see clearly, learning becomes difficult, frustrating, and exhausting.

The hidden struggle: screenings vs. real exams

A common misconception is that children will complain if their vision is poor. In reality, kids rarely realize they have a problem—with no point of

comparison, they assume everyone sees the way they do, and simply adapt to blurry vision or eye strain.

Surprisingly, a child can pass a school vision screening and still have significant issues. Screening typically tests only distance acuity and aren't a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam. Studies show 1 in 17 preschoolers and nearly 1 in 4 school-aged children have undetected vision problems affecting their academic performance. Early diagnosis allows these conditions to be treated before they disrupt learning.

Warning signs to watch for

- Parents should watch for:
- Squinting, eye rubbing, or head tilting
 - Frequent headaches or eye strain after school
 - Sitting too close to the TV
 - Holding books or devices very close to the face
 - Losing their place or skip-

- ping lines while reading
- Covering or closing one eye to focus
 - Excessive tearing, redness, or light sensitivity
 - Sudden avoidance of reading or homework
- Trust your instincts—if something seems off, schedule an exam.

Digital eye strain

Modern classrooms rely heavily on computers, smartboards, and tablets, which has driven a rise in Computer Vision Syndrome (Digital Eye Strain). Symptoms include blurred vision, tired or dry eyes, headaches, light sensitivity, and neck or shoulder discomfort. Screen concentration reduces our blink rate, drying out the tear film and fatiguing the eyes.

Simple habits help: the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds) relaxes focusing muscles. Kids should also blink



deliberately, maintain a comfortable viewing distance, reduce glare, and take regular breaks from devices.

Notably, despite marketing claims, evidence doesn't show blue-light-blocking glasses meaningfully reduce digital eye strain. Proper viewing habits, breaks, and correcting refractive errors remain the most effective strategies.

home, keep hazardous chemicals and sharp tools out of children's reach, and teach basic safety habits like not running with pencils or scissors.

Nutrition also supports growing eyes. A diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables, leafy greens, omega-3-rich fish, eggs, and whole grains provides the vitamins and antioxidants needed for healthy retina development, tear production, and overall eye health.

A clear path to success

As the new school year begins, remember that clear vision is a cornerstone of your child's success, both academically and beyond. Early detection and treatment of vision problems can improve learning, confidence, athletic performance, and quality of life. Making a comprehensive eye exam part of your back-to-school routine is one of the most valuable investments you can make in your child's future.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, our ophthalmologists and optometrists provide comprehensive eye care for children and adults using state-of-the-art technology. Our Children's Optical Boutique offers eyewear designed for infants, children, and teens, with an in-house lab for quick, precise service.

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HAPPENINGS

Events happening in and around the area

Aug. 3

6:30 p.m., **Milford Summer Concert Series** (Neil Diamond tribute), Plains Park, Milford.

Aug. 10

6:30 p.m., **Milford Summer Concert Series** (Johnny Cash tribute), Plains Park, Milford.

Aug. 29

9 a.m. – **SAFE Coalition flag placing event for International Overdose Awareness Day.** Medway Town Hall, Millis Town Hall. Find more locations and information at www.safecoalitionma.org.

Aug. 31

7 p.m., **Exsultet! women's choral group auditions**, First Congregational Church, 725 Washington St., Holliston. For more info, contact carrie7975@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATES

Sept. 10

6:30 p.m. – **Celebrating the 250th anniversary** of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Upton Community Center.

Sept. 19

8 a.m. to 12 p.m. - **Electronics Recycling Day**, First Congregational Church of Milford, 4 Congress St., Milford. Cash payments only. Questions: 508-473-5259

Sept. 19

10 a.m. **Hopedale Day in the Park**, Hopedale Community House. Rain date: Sept. 20. For more info, visit <https://hopedale-ma.gov/1241/Hopedale-Cultural-Council>. The art show will be in the Draper Gym.

Sept. 26

9 a.m. – **Upton Heritage Day**, Upton Town Common. Vendors, crafters, entertainers, etc., can contact uptonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com or 508-529-6600.

10 a.m. - **Holiday Vendor Fair**, Community House, 8 Court St., Uxbridge (behind Town Common). Tables available by contacting dataless1@yahoo.com 508-244-7849.

Oct. 17

6 p.m. – **Milford High School Class of 1976 reunion**. For details, contact Ann Robichaud at 508-473-0422 or arobichaud1033@gmail.com.

If you have an event you would like listed in the calendar, send it to editor@hopedaletownnews.com

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Please confirm details before you head to an event.



Pets of the Month: Rebel & Rascal

Looking for twice the love, twice the laughs, and twice the purrs? Meet Rebel and Rascal, two irresistibly fluffy kittens with big personalities and even bigger hearts!

This adventurous duo love to investigate every corner, chase toys, and turn everyday moments into exciting explorations.

Rebel and Rascal are a little on the shy side. Their ideal family will have the patience to work with them and understand their cues. Giving them space when they need it but ultimately working towards

integrating them into the family. Rebel and Rascal will bring endless entertainment, companionship, and unconditional love to one lucky family.

If you're ready to welcome this dynamic duo into your heart and home, Rebel and Rascal are ready to meet you. Give these fluffy brothers the happy ending they deserve—and get ready for a lifetime of purrs, cuddles, and laughter!

For information on meeting Rebel and Rascal, or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit <https://www.milfordhumane.org>.



Rebel and Rascal are two irresistibly fluffy kittens with big personalities and even bigger hearts.
Photo credit: Milford Humane Society



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Hopedale Public Safety Log

Neighbor disputes, unattended death, structure fire, assault



Between June 16 and July 16, the Hopedale Police and Fire Departments responded to hundreds of calls, many related to motor vehicle stops, vehicle accidents/crashes, traffic complaints, erratic operators, preventative patrolling, community policing, illegal parking, theft/larceny/forgery/fraud, burglar alarms, lost/found property, property checks, animal complaints, road hazards, soliciting, LTC/FIC (license to carry/firearms identification card) matters, warrant/summons service, suspicious persons/activity, court appearances, 911 hang-ups/open lines, safety detail officers, school resource officer, general information, records requests, and public assistance.	Boston/Gillette Stadium. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Entries of note include: June 16 at 9:31 a.m., High School, illegal parking June 16 at 10:20 a.m., Boston Stadium, detail officer requested June 16 at 11:59 p.m., Hopedale St., speed sign/message board info June 18 at 12:52 a.m., So. Main St., motor vehicle stop, arrest. A 34-year-old Milford male was arrested and charged with OUI-liquor OR .08%, and lights violation. June 18 at 6:40 a.m., Hill St., fire investigation June 18 at 12:53 p.m., Forest Path, property repossession June 19 at 1:45 p.m., Hopedale St., open door/window, secured June 20 at 12:48 a.m., Soward St., animal complaint June 20 at 9:52 p.m., Elmwood Ave., disturbance, peace restored June 21 at 11:11 p.m., Mendon	St., suspicious activity/person/vehicle June 22 at 9:31 p.m., Mendon St., motor vehicle accident, transported to hospital June 23 at 1:29 a.m., speed sign/message board info June 26 at 6:28 a.m., Cemetery St., traffic hazard June 26 at 3:43 p.m., Mendon St. and Briar Cliff Rd., motor vehicle stop, vehicle towed June 26 at 7:02 p.m., Plain St., disturbance, peace restored June 27 at 8:40 a.m., Hopedale St., neighbor dispute June 28 at 9:24 a.m., Bancroft Park, suspicious activity/person/vehicle June 28 at 12:02 p.m., Peace St., harassing phone calls, civil matter June 28 at 1:12 p.m., Hopedale St., assault, transported to hospital June 29 at 8:26 a.m., Tammie Rd., animal complaint June 29 at 1:33 p.m., Ballou	Rd., soliciting June 29 at 8:30 p.m., Daniels St., soliciting June 29 at 9:48 p.m., Malquinn Dr., structure fire June 30 at 11:23 a.m., So. Main St., past hit & run July 1 at 4:53 p.m., unknown, soliciting July 1 at 11:07 p.m., Hopedale Town Park, suspicious activity/person/vehicle July 1 at 11:24 p.m., Hopedale Pond, suspicious activity/person/vehicle July 2 at 7:58 a.m., Lake St., motor vehicle lockout July 4 at 7:08 p.m., Plain St., motor vehicle accident, arrest. A 37-year-old Hopedale male was arrested and charged with OUI-liquor OR .08%, negligent operation of motor vehicle, possession of open container of alcohol in motor vehicle. July 5 at 10:52 a.m., Westcott Rd., neighbor dispute July 5 at 2:55 p.m., Hopedale	St., trespassing/unwanted person July 5 at 3:28 p.m., Ballou Rd., disturbance July 8 at 7:58 a.m., Hartford Ave., erratic operator July 8 at 9:45 a.m., Hope St., illegal parking July 9 at 8:32 a.m., Hopedale St., unattended death July 10 at 7:55 p.m., motor vehicle stop, arrest. A 53-year-old Milford male was arrested and charged with OUI-liquor OR .08%, possession of open container of alcohol in motor vehicle, warrant from another jurisdiction. July 13 at 11:49 p.m., Plain St., suspicious activity/person/vehicle July 16 at 2:14 p.m., HPD, court regarding arrest of 47-year-old Lynn male charging with OUI-liquor OR .08%, erratic operation of motor vehicle.
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Source: Hopedale Police Department

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Thelma, a white rhinoceros at Southwick's Zoo, died in June

A press release from Southwick's Zoo

It is with profound sadness that we share difficult news with our zoo community. On Tuesday, June 30, 2026, we unexpectedly lost Thelma, one of our cherished white rhinoceroses. This loss has deeply affected our animal care staff, zoo team, and all who consider Southwick's Zoo family.

Louise, Thelma's longtime companion, is currently receiving veterinary care and continues to show encouraging signs of improvement. Out of an abundance of caution, she will remain off exhibit while our veterinary team continues to monitor her closely and completes additional testing.

To better understand the circumstances surrounding Thelma's passing, an experienced pathology team from Tufts Veterinary Hospital performed a comprehensive necropsy. We are also grateful for the support and collaboration of veterinary professionals from Capron Park

Zoo, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and Dr. Jonathan Bergman. Our own veterinary team, Dr. Samantha King and Dr. Peter Brewer, along with our dedicated hoofstock keepers and the entire Southwick's Zoo staff, have worked tirelessly throughout this process to ensure Louise receives the highest level of care.

As many of you know, our rhinos have played a special role in connecting guests with wildlife through educational experiences offered by our nonprofit conservation partner, EARTH Ltd. Thelma was an extraordinary ambassador for her species. Through her calm demeanor and gentle personality, she inspired countless visitors to learn about rhino conservation and the challenges wild rhino populations face. The encounters she participated in helped raise meaningful support for rhino conservation initiatives in southern Africa, directly contributing to efforts that protect this re-



Thelma, a white rhinoceros at Southwick's Zoo, died on June 30.
Photo source: Southwick's Zoo

markable species.

Those who had the privilege of working with Thelma knew her as a mellow, trusting, and gentle animal. She and Louise genuinely enjoyed spending time

RHINOCEROS

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SPORTS

Lewis hoping college prepares him for next step

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Hopedale's Brayden Lewis recently completed his first year playing collegiate baseball with Wheaton College, where he was named the Conference Rookie of the Year. The former Blue Raider is taking that performance and making the move up the chain: he will be taking his talents to Northeastern University next fall.

"I've been playing baseball my entire life and like so many young players I too hope to play professional baseball someday," Lewis said. "Being from a small school like Hopedale, a lot of athletes never get that opportunity to play college sports, never mind making it professionally, but if I keep an open mind and continue working, it may be a possibility."

The Hopedale shortstop was moved from the infield to the outfield upon arriving at Wheaton, but it wasn't a surprise.

"I knew it was coming and things like this can be hard to adapt to, but I learned the position quickly and was able to start right away for Whea-



Hopedale's Brayden Lewis recently completed his first year playing collegiate baseball with Wheaton College and has transferred to Northeastern University. Courtesy photo

ton," he said.

Prior to leaving for his first year of college, Milford Legion Coach Steve DiVitto got Lewis to come out for the summer team. Playing for Milford gave him the ability to make the jump from high school to college without missing a beat.

According to Lewis, college is the best players from each high school, and he needed to be able to adapt while taking his game to the next level. He

put in a lot of extra work so he would be successful against the pitchers, who are not only better than those he saw on the high school level, but throw much harder.

"Being able to go from Wheaton to Northeastern shows he has what it takes," DiVitto said. "He is one of the best to come through this program. He loves the sport and it shows; his power of his bat is unbelievable, and he has

speed to make things happen. He is also a great fielder with an arm."

Lewis concluded his Hopedale career hitting .420, while batting .540 in his junior season and .480 as a senior; he also had a total of three home runs. During his first college season with the Lyons, Lewis batted .326 with 10 homeruns, added 8 doubles, 2 triples, while scoring 29 runs and had 36 RBI. He says it was all due to his getting stronger and focusing solely on baseball. With the success in his first year, he thought it may be the right time to move ahead and entered the transfer portal.

"After my success, I decided to transfer out of Wheaton. I've always wanted to play Divisional 1 baseball at the highest level," he said. "I figured the time was right, entered the portal and coaches started reaching out. When I heard from Northeastern, I set up a visit, fell in love with the school, and found out they had two outfielders graduating leaving an opportunity to possibly play right away."

Lewis is hoping he can earn a starting position in the outfield for the Huskies and help them to their third straight Conference championship. In order to do so, he is going to work extremely hard this summer with the Milford Legion team.

"I wanted to come back to Milford for a second year to help me prepare as well as get me the exposure," Lewis said. "I also want revenge on last year's disappointment."

Last summer, Milford ran the table in Zone 4 going 20-0 while earning the number one seed in the tournament. Unfortunately, they were upset in the first round, and their season quickly came to an unexpected end.

Milford is returning a lot of talent from last year's squad and, although Lewis doesn't expect to go undefeated, he does want to help this team back into the Zone 4 Tournament and make a deep run showing everyone that last year was not a fluke.

Lewis's ultimate goal is to continue to play for Northeastern as well as he did at Wheaton, and eventually get drafted into the big leagues.

RHINOCEROS

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with their dedicated keepers and encounter participants, often leaning in for scratches and affection that would leave them completely relaxed - even drifting off to sleep. The bond they shared with their caregivers was truly special, making this loss especially difficult for everyone who knew and loved them.

Our hearts are heavy as we mourn Thelma, and our team remains focused on Louise's recovery. We are awaiting the final pathology results, which may provide additional information about the cause of Thelma's passing and help guide Louise's ongoing care. Until our veterinary team is confident that she has been fully evaluated and cleared, Louise will remain off exhibit.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the many veterinary professionals, animal

care experts, and zoological colleagues who have generously shared their time, expertise, and compassion. We are especially thankful to the teams from Tufts Veterinary Hospital, Capron Park Zoo, Roger Williams Park Zoo, Dr. Jonathan Bergman, and our own veterinarians, Dr. Samantha King and Dr. Peter Brewer, along with our dedicated hoofstock staff. Their countless hours of treatment, consultation, diagnostics, and unwavering commitment to Louise's care have been nothing short of extraordinary. The willingness of so many professionals to come together in support of our animals is a testament to the collaborative spirit of the zoological and veterinary community, and we are sincerely grateful for their dedication during this time.

We appreciate the compassion, patience, and support shown by our guests, members, colleagues, and the zoologi-

cal community. Thank you for keeping our animal care team and Thelma and Louise in your thoughts as we work through

this heartbreaking time together. We will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available regard-

ing the necropsy findings and Louise's ongoing treatment and recovery.

Submitted by Southwick's Zoo

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Date	Hopedale	Amount
07/10/2026	21 Mendon St.	\$949,900
07/08/2026	14 Oak St.	\$470,000
07/06/2026	224 Northrop St.	\$460,000
07/06/2026	6 Laurelwood Dr.	\$390,000
07/02/2026	125 Dutcher St.	\$435,000
06/30/2026	114 Plain St.	\$380,000
06/30/2026	1 Haven Way	\$900,000
06/29/2026	216 West St.	\$445,000
06/26/2026	19 Harmony Trl.	\$975,000
06/26/2026	117 Laurelwood Dr.	\$390,000

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



The 4-bed, 2-bath, 2,685-square-foot house at 125 Dutcher Street in Hopedale recently sold for \$435,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com



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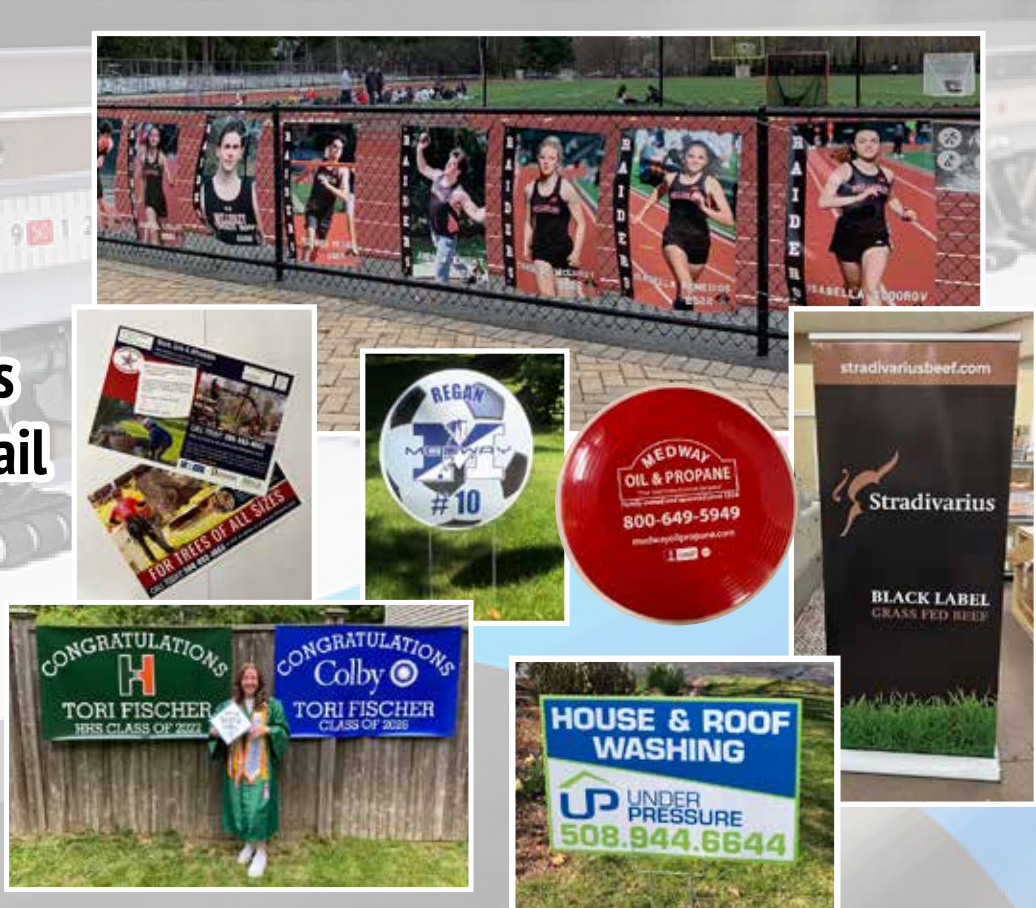
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