



Bellingham BULLETIN

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Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

August 1, 2026

Soccer fervor makes a stop in Bellingham



Attendees could compete with their fellow fans and try to connect three shots in a giant game of Tiki-Taka-Toe, tic-tac-toe with a soccer twist, for the chance to win great prizes and rewards.

By DAVID DUNBAR

Over the past two months, with the FIFA World Cup 2026 underway, soccer was certainly having a moment in the U.S.

In Bellingham, the local Walmart was helping fans make the most of it. Director of Communications Mariel Messier explained, "Our event in late June was the third in a

series of six events Walmart hosted across the country designed to create an immersive fan experience that celebrates soccer culture and community."

There were interactive soccer games, free food and beverages, custom merchandise stations, live entertainment, and special appearances from soccer personalities including

Alexis Nunes, and professional soccer talent Rivaldo and Fernando Morientes. And lots of smiles from folks who visited between noon and 7 p.m. on a Friday in late June.

More than 500 fans pre-registered, and hundreds more just showed up. Families

SOCCER

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Community baby showers aim to connect growing families with resources

Showers planned for August 18 and 25 in Wrentham and Norfolk



Families received free car seat fittings from local police and fire personnel during last year's community baby shower, while the SAFE Coalition donated car seats to families. The service will return this year, with car seat availability dependent on grant funding. (Photo courtesy of Metacommet Public Health Alliance/Facebook)

By GRACE ALLEN

They say it takes a village to raise a child. For new and expectant families, finding that village, and knowing where to turn for help, can be just as important as support itself. Recognizing that need, the Metacommet Public Health Alliance is bringing together local organizations and resources through two community baby showers designed to connect families with the services available to them.

Last year, the organization launched its first community baby shower. This year, the event is expanding to two locations with more vendors, offering parents and caregivers essential baby supplies and educational resources in a celebratory, supportive environment. "We have concentrated pri-

marily on the elder population," said public health nurse Jeanine Murphy of her organization. "But it has become apparent that in the communities we serve, younger residents are in need of services and resources, too."

Two community baby showers are planned for this month. On Tuesday, August 18, a shower will be held at the Wrentham Senior Center from 4 to 6 p.m., and on Tuesday, August 25, a second shower will be held at the Norfolk Public Library, also from 4 to 6 p.m.

The Metacommet Public Health Alliance serves residents in Franklin, Norfolk, Wrentham,

SHOWERS

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SOCCER

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and kids came to the Walmart parking lot in Bellingham for a celebration that featured soccer-inspired merchandise, opportunities to participate in soccer challenges and activities, and in a setting where the community could come together around the sport.

"We're excited about the turnout and to see so many fans of all ages at the event who are celebrating soccer — both new and longtime fans," said Messier. "This event was about bringing the excitement of the game closer to communities across the country, just like Bell-

ingham."

She continued, "As a new wave of fans gets ready to celebrate this summer, our team is ready to celebrate with and serve our customers. This event helped show how Walmart is the one-stop destination for everything needed to host a soccer watch party, from snacks to beverages, VIZIO TVs, official merchandise, party supplies and more.



Enthusied fans lined up for their chances to compete... and compete, they did with some of the smallest fans winning the biggest prizes.



Visitors lined up for an opportunity to create their one-of-a-kind style for all this summer's soccer action. A range of soccer-inspired "merch" was on sale.

Metrowest Regional Fan Zone welcomes thousands over five days of World Cup™

FRANKLIN, Mass. - For five days in June, MetroWest became a place where the world came together—not only to watch soccer, but to celebrate cultures, communities and the universal language of sport.

More than two years in planning, the MetroWest Regional Fan Zone initiative generated 16,437 advance registrations for five days of free World Cup celebrations in Marlborough and Franklin. As one of only a handful of officially licensed FIFA World Cup™ watch party experiences in Massachusetts, the initiative transformed two communities into vibrant gathering places where thousands experienced the excitement of the tournament together. Attendees watched matches on giant LED screens while enjoying live music, local food and beverages, family activities, and dozens of local vendors, nonprofits and community organizations.

The events were free to everyone thanks to more than \$200,000 in privately raised cash and in-kind contributions, along with \$170,000 in state grant funding through the Sports & Entertainment Events Fund Grant administered by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.

"Watching thousands of people from different countries, cultures and communities

celebrating side by side was a reminder that sports have a remarkable ability to bring people together," said Stacey David, Executive Director of the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau. "We set out to create places where people could experience the excitement of the World Cup together, and what we witnessed over those five days exceeded every expectation. We couldn't be prouder to have welcomed the world to MetroWest."

In Franklin, the celebration took place June 24-25 at the Franklin Town Common and adjacent Hayward Manor, where nearly 4,000 people attended on Wednesday and an estimated 3,400 attended on Thursday following more than 7,700 advance registrations.

By kickoff, Hayward Manor had transformed into a patchwork of national colors. While the games captivated adults, the Common belonged to the kids. Soccer balls rolled across the grass in every direction as children challenged each other at Franklin Youth Soccer's kick walls, posed for photos with New England Revolution's defender Andrew Farrell and mascot Slyde, and raced to be first in line for the giant inflatable obstacle course, forming a queue almost as soon as it finished inflating. Kids cooled off

with ice cream while adults relaxed with wine slushies from La Cantina Winery in the Michelob Ultra Beer Garden. Fifty-three vendors, including restaurants, breweries, retailers, nonprofits and community organizations, kept the festival buzzing throughout both days.

One of the event's most memorable surprises greeted organizers on the morning of June 25, when they discovered that members of Scotland's famed Tartan Army had "coned" the Ben Franklin statue outside the Franklin Public Library overnight—a lighthearted tradition that has become synonymous with Scottish soccer supporters around the world.

The Fan Zones were designed not only to create memorable World Cup experiences, but also to encourage visitors to discover everything MetroWest has to offer. Throughout both events, attendees explored local businesses, attractions and communities before and after the matches. One attendee shared that he went to Marlborough for the United States match because he didn't want to watch the game alone in his living room. Two weeks later, he returned to Franklin with Ecuadorian and German friends so they could cheer on their teams together—a moment that perfectly captured the spirit of the



MetroWest Regional Fan Zones.

"That's exactly what we hoped these Fan Zones would become," said Stacey David, "places where people could celebrate with friends, neighbors and even strangers while exploring MetroWest."

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau extends its sincere appreciation to the City of Marlborough, the Town of Franklin, the Marlborough Economic Development Corporation, the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce, the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, the Anglican Church of the Redeemer who owns Hayward Manor, municipal

staff, public safety personnel, volunteers, community partners, media partners, and the many organizations whose collaboration, generosity and countless hours of work brought this ambitious regional initiative to life. Special thanks also go to sponsors Michelob Ultra, Southwick's Zoo, Dean College and Brazilian Times, as well as partner Lawson's Finest Liquids, for helping make these free community celebrations possible.

For more information on the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau, please visit the MBVB website at www.metrowestvisitors.org.

Bellingham High School announces 50+ year reunion for alumni

Event welcomes graduates from 1976 and earlier; new website and Facebook group launched

The Bellingham 50+ Reunion Committee has officially announced plans for its next multi-class reunion, set for Sunday, September 20, 2026, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Milford, Massachusetts. This gathering, which takes place every three years, welcomes all who graduated from or attended BHS fifty or more years ago, along with their guests. The tradition began in 1988 as the “Fifties Reunion” and has grown to include all eligible classes from across the decades.

This year’s event will run from 3-9 p.m., featuring music from the high school years, a full buffet dinner, cash bar and opportunities to reconnect with old friends. Alumni from the classes of 1976 and earlier are invited to attend, and registration is now available online at the committee’s new website: [bellingham50.org](#). Attendees can also update their contact information on the site to ensure they receive future communications.

For alumni who prefer to register by Mail, please send your check payable to BHS 50+ Reunion, along with your name while at BHS, current last name (if different), address, email address (for your registration confirmation) and guest name and mail to:

BHS 50+ Reunion, 22 Harbor Ave, Falmouth Ma 02540

The cost is \$60 per person.

The committee will continue to reach out via email and postal mail to alumni who have current contact details on file, ensuring everyone has a chance to participate.

To further connect classmates, the Reunion Committee has launched a new Facebook group, “Bellingham High School 50 Years Plus Reunion Bellingham, Massachusetts,” where alumni can request membership and stay updated on reunion news and events.

Free summer lunches are back—come join us!

Summer is a time for sunshine, play, and making memories—and thanks to the Hockomock Area YMCA, it’s also a time to make sure every young person stays nourished, energized, and cared for.

We’re excited to once again offer **FREE summer lunches for youth ages 1–18** across our community. No registration, no hassle—just a welcoming place where kids and teens can grab a healthy meal and feel part of something good.

Why It Matters

When school’s out, consistent meals can be harder to access. This program helps fill the gap—offering not just lunch, but connection, care, and support for every child.

Where to Find Us

We’re serving up smiles (and lunch!) at multiple convenient locations:

Bellingham Public Library
Mondays & Wednesdays | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Through August 12
100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

Memorial School – Milford
Monday through Friday | 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Through August 14
12 Walnut St., Milford

Jackson Elementary – Plainville
Tuesdays & Thursdays | 11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.
through August 13
68 Messenger St., Plainville

“The Bellingham Library is pleased to once again host the YMCA’s Summer Food Program, which, twice a week, provides free lunches to children ages 18 and under. Along with a nutritious meal, families can enjoy an activity or craft program during each visit,” says Bernadette Rivard, Bellingham Library Director. She adds that in mid-July, attendance had already surpassed last year’s numbers, “with dozens of families participating and the YMCA reporting that all available meals are being distributed. In these challenging economic times, the library is proud to partner with the Hockomock Area YMCA on this important community initiative.”

Let’s Feed Our Community—Together

Programs like this are powered by a shared belief: that when we take care of our kids, we strengthen our entire community. So spread the word, invite a neighbor, and help us make this a summer full of nourishment, connection, and joy.

BMI-TV Concerts on the Grass 2026 in Mendon this month

MENDON TOWN BEACH, 45 Taft Ave., Mendon
Sponsored by Middlesex Savings Bank
Wed., Aug. 5, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Free Pony Rides. *Vinyl Echo* (power trio) 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Wed Aug 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Free Pony Rides. *Alexander’s Jazztime Band* 6:30-8:30 p.m.

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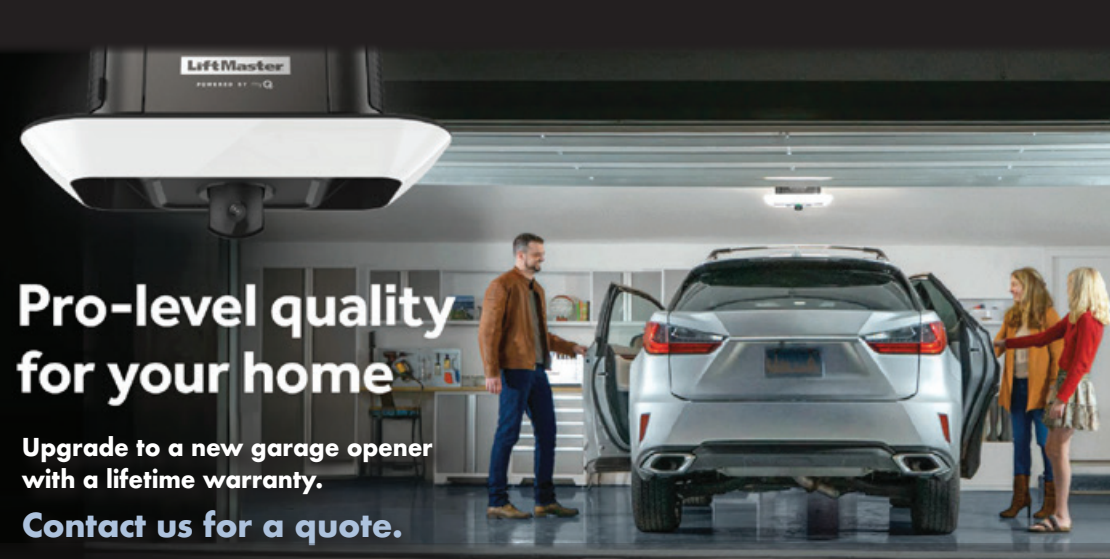
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Bellingham Cultural Council announces FY26 grant awards

The Bellingham Cultural Council (BCC) is pleased to announce its Fiscal Year 2026 grant awards, providing funding to 22 artists, educators, schools, nonprofits, and community organizations that will bring arts, history, humanities, and cultural programs to Bellingham throughout the coming year.

As a local partner of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the BCC supports programs that inspire creativity, celebrate culture, preserve history, and provide educational opportunities for residents of all ages.

The Bellingham Cultural Council is led by:

- Gavin Fiske, Chairman
- Jennifer Altomonte, Vice-Chair
- Kevin Staley, Treasurer
- Christopher Boyd, Secretary
- Danielle Dulchinos, Member

This year's grants support a wide variety of programs, including live music, theater, visual arts, educational workshops, multicultural events, literacy programs, dance, and school-based arts experiences.

FY26 Grant Recipients

- Amy Adams – *Painting with Amy*
- Janet Applefield – *Combatting Hate and Prejudice*
- Blackstone Valley Education Foundation, Inc. – *Arts in the Valley*
- Kerry Consentino-Vitorio – *Pebble Art & Sea Glass Design Workshop*
- DiPietro Elementary PTO – *Tanglewood Marionettes*
- Friends of the Bellingham Public Library – *Bellingham Library Summer Reading Program*
- Friends of the Bellingham Public Library – *Bellingham Local Author Expo*
- Friends of the Bellingham Public Library – *Multicultural Festival*
- Steven M. Hurlbut – *'Jumpin' Juba Senior Concert*
- KevTech Services, Inc. – *Digital Art and Photography Classes*
- Celeste Langlois – *Thankful Frame*
- MUSIC [Dance.edu](https://www.dance.edu) – *Hip Hop SQUARE Dance for Seniors! and Chair Dance*
- MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau, Inc. – *World Cup Fan Zone*
- Howard Newman – *Knock on Wood, Acoustic Folk-Rock Duo*

- Rita Parisi – *Women of '76*
- David Polatin – *Music from Memphis*
- Elizabeth Silvia – *The BaNannies*
- Stall Brook Elementary School – *Drum Perks*
- Carolyn Sullivan – *Write Your Own Obituary (Before Someone Else Does It Badly)*
- Roger L. Tincknell – *From Ireland to America*
- Jon Waterman – *Live Music Making History Live*
- Dennis Wise – *The Theft of Dignity: Webster Presentation*

These projects will provide residents with opportunities to enjoy live performances, hands-on workshops, cultural celebrations, historical presentations, and educational programs that

strengthen community connections.

The BCC thanks the Massachusetts Cultural Council for its continued support of local cultural initiatives and congratulates this year's grant recipients.

Artists, nonprofit organizations, schools, and community groups are encouraged to apply during the next Local Cultural Council grant cycle. Information about grant guidelines and application deadlines is available through the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Town of Bellingham.

For more information about upcoming programs or future grant opportunities, please visit the Town of Bellingham website or the Bellingham Cultural Council Facebook page.

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15th annual trail race raises over \$8K for FBRT Improvements

FRANKLIN, Mass. - The Franklin & Bellingham Rail Trail Committee (FBRTC) is thrilled to announce the successful completion of the 5K race hosted by the Tri-Valley Front Runners (TVFR), which raised over \$8,000 to support trail improvements.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to TVFR, and especially to Mark Capparella, the TVFR race director, and his team for their unwavering support and exceptional organization of this event. At the most recent FBRTC meeting, Mark and the TVFR team presented FBRTC President Paul Stamp & FBRTC race director Sue Fleurette with a donation of \$6,016. That donation will go towards the committee's efforts to advocate for continued development and maintenance of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT).

TVFR also donated race proceeds to the Franklin Food Pantry in Franklin and

St. Blaise Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry in Bellingham. Along with the donation from TVFR, over \$2,500 in donations were received from local businesses, including the event's Platinum Sponsor, Body Fit Training (BFT) Franklin Village.

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SHOWERS

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but the community baby showers are open to everyone, not just residents of those three towns.

Murphy described the events as welcoming “new and expectant moms, dads, young families, grandparents, aunts, uncles — really anybody.”

The showers combine educational resources with practical assistance. At least eleven organizations are expected to participate in person, while additional organizations that cannot attend will provide information for a resource table. There will also be raffle prizes for attendees.

Among the participating organizations are the SAFE Coalition, WIC (Women, Infants and Children), local police and fire departments, pediatric specialists, a postpartum doula, a birth doula, a lactation consultant, a family medicine physician, representatives from Abbott, a Montessori school and the Newborn Hearing Screening Program.

Police and fire personnel will

also provide car seat fittings for families.

Last year, SAFE Coalition donated 30 car seats to the shower and provided every attendee with a bag containing diapers and wipes. Whether car seats will be available this year depends on grant funding, Murphy said.

The two events also rely on community donations to provide some of the essential items for families. Through mid-month, residents can drop off donations at the libraries, pediatricians’ offices, and the senior centers, as well as Franklin, Norfolk, and Wrentham town halls. Supplies needed include diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, bottles, feeding supplies, pacifiers, baby toiletry items, new and gently used infant clothing and bedding, baby toys, and personal care items for new mothers. New car seats are also welcome, but used car seats cannot be accepted because their safety history cannot be verified.

Murphy said formula, particularly specialty formula, remains one of the greatest needs because of its cost.

The baby showers also bring

together multiple generations of the community. Last year, local senior citizens created baby shower favors by arranging infant socks into flowers. Others crocheted and knitted blankets and hats for families.

“The seniors’ contributions were a huge hit,” Murphy said.

The inaugural community baby shower attracted public health nurses from other communities looking for ideas to bring back to their own municipalities, noted Murphy.

Community baby showers became a modern public health and social initiative starting in the 2010s. Hosted by healthcare networks or local governments, they are viewed as a valuable way to reach new and expectant families to let them know about resources available to them, as well as providing education, contacts, and baby supplies.

Murphy emphasized that one of the primary goals of a community baby shower is making families aware of services they may not know exist. “It’s really just educating the public on what’s out there to help,” she said. “Depending on a family’s circumstances and where



Last year’s community baby shower connected new and expectant families with local organizations offering education, support, and essential baby supplies. (Metacomet Public Health Alliance)

they receive care, they may not always learn about services such as birth doulas or lactation consultants, for example. We want families to know those resources exist.”

She hopes that increasing families’ awareness of available programs and services will encourage them to seek help early, improving outcomes for children.

“By connecting people and

services, we hope to close developmental gaps and reduce the need for special education,” Murphy said. “It’s about empowering families by helping them understand what resources are available so they can get the support they need.”

For more information about the baby showers or the Metacomet Public Health Alliance, visit metacometpha.org.

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From the Town Clerk's office...

Wishing you a safe and happy summer from the Town Clerk's office! We're gearing up for the September 1st State Primary. Sample ballots can be found at the Town Clerk's office or on the website. Please note for a Primary you have a choice of a Republican or Democratic ballot. If you're enrolled in a party, you will receive that party's ballot. If you're unenrolled in a party, you have your choice of a republican or democratic ballot. Choosing will not affect your party enrollment. All parties will receive the same ballot in November.

In Person Early Voting will be held beginning August 22 in the Arcand Room of the Municipal Center located at 10 Mechanic Street. The schedule will be as follows:

- Saturday, August 22nd: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

- Monday, August 24th: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 25th: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 26th: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Thursday, August 27th: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Friday, August 28th: 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

While In-Person Early Voting and Mail-in Voting are options, you may always vote the day of the election. Polls will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and voting for all precincts will be held at the Bellingham High School gymnasium located at 60 Blackstone Street. Results will be posted on the Town Clerk's website.

Vote by Mail cards have been sent out by the state. If you wish to receive a ballot by mail, simply fill out and return

the card to the Clerk's office. A signature is required, and if you wish to receive a Primary ballot and are unenrolled, you must choose a party ballot. You have the option of requesting a ballot for the September Primary, the November State Election, or both.

In addition to this, we continue to process dog licenses, marriage intentions, and vital records. We ask that you please make appointments for marriage intentions or notary services, and call ahead, if possible, for vital records as our office is very busy this time of year. As always, please call or stop by with any questions. We can be reached at (508) 657-2833 or townclerk@bellinghamma.org.

Thank you,
Amy Bartelloni, Town Clerk

Bellingham Lions Club golf tournament raised funds for scholarships and those in need

The Bellingham Lions Club is pleased to announce the success of its annual Golf Tournament held on June 15, 2026, at Blissful Meadows Golf Club in Uxbridge, Massachusetts.

The tournament brought together golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and community supporters for a day of friendly competition, fellowship, and fundraising. Thanks to the tremendous generosity of all involved, proceeds from the event will help fund two scholarships for graduating Bellingham students and help those in need.

The success of this tournament reflects the incredible spirit of giving that exists throughout Bellingham and the surrounding communities. Every golfer, sponsor, donor, and volunteer played an important role in helping us continue our mission of serving those in need.

The Bellingham Lions Club extends its sincere appreciation to:

All of the golfers who participated and made the tournament

such an enjoyable and successful event.

The businesses and individuals who sponsored and supported the tournament through generous financial contributions.

The many donors who provided raffle prizes helped increase fundraising efforts.

The Bellingham Lions Club remains committed to its mission of serving through charitable programs and support for those in need. Events such as the annual golf tournament demonstrate the power of community partnerships and volunteer service in making a positive difference. As part of Lions Clubs International, the organization strives to improve lives through service, compassion, and community engagement.

For more information about the Bellingham Lions Club and its community programs, please contact Club members or email BellinghamMALions@Yahoo.com, or visit its social media pages.

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Debunking five common Social Security myths



Todd Miller, CFP®

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Social Security is often one of the most important income sources in retirement. Yet widespread myths about how it works can lead to confusion, unnecessary worry and poor planning decisions. Here's the truth behind five of the most common misconceptions.

Myth 1: Social Security is going broke. You've probably heard this one, but the full picture is more nuanced. According to the 2026 Social Security Board of Trustees Report, if Congress does nothing, the program would need to reduce benefits starting in 2032, paying roughly 78 cents for every dollar owed.

But that's just one scenario. Congress could raise the combined payroll tax from 12.4% to 16.65%, which the trustees estimate would secure full benefits through 2100. Other options include eliminating the earnings cap subject to payroll tax or adjusting retirement ages. Lawmakers have tools to address this.

Myth 2: Social Security will cover all your retirement needs. Think of Social Security as a financial foundation, not the full building. According to the

Social Security Administration, benefits replace only about 40% of pre-retirement income for a median earner. That means you'll likely need to account for most of your retirement income yourself. Building a strong personal savings strategy now can help close that gap.

Myth 3: You lose benefits permanently if you keep working. Not true. Social Security does have an "earnings test" that can temporarily reduce benefits for people who claim early and keep working. If your earnings exceed a set annual cap – which changes each year – Social Security will withhold a portion of your benefits. But once you reach full retirement age, the Social Security Administration adjusts your monthly check higher to repay those withheld amounts over time.

Myth 4: An ex-spouse's benefits come out of your own. If you were married for at least 10 years and are currently unmarried, your former spouse may be eligible to collect on your earnings record, or you may be able to collect on theirs. Divorced spouse benefits can be up to 50% of the other person's full retirement benefit. But those payments don't affect yours. Your monthly benefit is not reduced by anything paid to an ex-spouse or even a current spouse.

Myth 5: Social Security benefits are no longer taxed. Recent legislation caused some confusion here. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act did not eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits. If your combined income exceeds certain thresholds, you'll still owe taxes on a portion of your benefits. The law also created a temporary deduction (available

through 2028) for people 65 and older. Eligible taxpayers can deduct \$6,000 per qualifying filer if their modified adjusted gross income is \$75,000 or less for singles or \$150,000 for couples. The deduction phases out at \$175,000 for singles and \$250,000 for joint filers. The more you understand Social Security, the more control you have over your retirement outcome. Grounding your decisions in facts rather than assumptions can make a meaningful difference in your long-term financial security. For more information contact: Todd Miller, CFP® O: 781-652-9573 call or text Todd.Miller@edwardjones.com This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. *Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.*

News from Rep. Mike Soter

House Bill 5439, *An Act honoring Blue Star Families*, later Senate Bill 2903, recently passed unanimously in both branches. Massachusetts law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty will soon be honored with a special distinctive registration plate made available to their surviving family members. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles will be directed to create a new "Blue Star Family" license plate and motorcycle emblem. A total of 427 police officers have been killed in the line of duty in Massachusetts.

House Bill 5438, *An Act facilitating better interactions between police officers and persons with autism spectrum disorder*, later Senate Bill 2565 passed unanimously in both branches. More commonly referred to as the "blue envelope" bill, House Bill 5438 directs the Department of State Police, the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, and Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts to design blue envelopes that will provide written information and guidance on ways to enhance communication between police officers and persons with autism. Rep. Soter said this information will be printed on the outside of the envelope, while the person's driver's license, motor vehicle registration, and insurance card can be inserted in the envelope. Soter noted that the Senate version of the bill includes language requiring the Municipal Police Training Committee to incorporate instruction on the blue envelope program into the specialized training curriculum available to all law enforcement officers, also requiring this information be reviewed not less than every five years. This language is not included in the House bill. Senate Bill 2565 requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to make the blue envelopes available to any person with autism

or their guardian upon request, beginning on July 1. House Bill 5438 moves the effective date to September 1.

\$63.4B FY27 state budget

Rep. Soter recently supported a \$63.4 billion state budget that calls for increased state aid to cities and towns, lays the groundwork for future local aid reform, and holds the line on new taxes and fees.

After several weeks of negotiations, House and Senate conferees agreed to a compromise spending plan to fund state government in Fiscal Year 2027. The final conference committee report was filed on June 30 and approved by the House and Senate on July 1.

During the initial House budget debate in April, Soter advocated for a series of reforms to assist municipalities struggling with rising costs and increasing budget constraints, factors which have forced many communities to pursue Proposition 2 ½ overrides just to maintain basic core services. While more work needs to be done to make communities whole, he noted that the latest budget continues to move in the right direction by providing additional state funding assistance to cities and towns.

The budget contains significant increases in local aid funding, including Chapter 70 education assistance and Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), which supports a wide range of municipal programs and services, including public safety. Chapter 70 is funded at \$7.66 billion statewide, which represents an increase of about \$297 million over Fiscal Year 2026. UGGA is funded at \$1.363 billion, which is a \$40 million increase over the previous fiscal year, with the

additional funding set to be distributed on a per capita basis.

The Fiscal Year 2027 budget increases per pupil aid to \$160 per pupil while fully funding the sixth and final year of the 2019 Student Opportunity Act. Representative Soter noted that the new budget will provide the 8th Worcester District with \$45,598,457 in Chapter 70 aid and another \$7,895,120 in unrestricted municipal aid.

	Chapter 70 Educational Aid	Unrestricted Government Aid
Bellingham	\$10,967,237	\$2,208,493
Blackstone	\$162,423	\$1,758,565
Millville	\$73,662	\$524,402
Blackstone-Millville Regional	\$12,330,088	-
Medway	\$11,703,987	\$1,591,897
Uxbridge	\$10,361,060	\$1,811,763

Advocating for the communities in his district, Representative Soter was also able to secure funding for several critical local projects in the budget, including:

- \$20,000 for Bellingham Senior Center Parking Lot
- \$20,000 for Blackstone-Millville Regional Schools Security and Safety Upgrades

Uxbridge K of C Annual Car Show & Family Event

Saturday, September 12th, 2026
(Rain Date September 19th, 2026)
Location: Uxbridge High School - 300 Quaker Hwy, Uxbridge MA, 01569
Event 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration begins at 8:30 am
Admission is free for spectators, Entry Fee for Vehicle: \$10



This charity event will feature:
Entertainment with DJ - CRUISIN' BRUCE
Trophies (popular vote) 1:00 pm. Dash Plaques (1st 200). Food Trucks. Door Prize. Raffles. Local Emergency Vehicles. Kids Fun Zone. Face Painting. Balloons. Caricatures. & More!

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To apply, fill out an application through the town website or for a direct link, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2026BellinghamBoards> .0

BBA working on golf tournament Sept. 21 & selling town merch for holiday parade

The Bellingham Business Association doesn't hold a meeting in September, and that's because it holds its annual golf tournament to raise money for the two scholarships it awards to graduating Bellingham seniors. This year, the golf tournament is taking place on September 21, 2026 at Blissful Meadows Golf Club. The club is looking for sponsors and players.

Also, note, member dues are currently due. The cost for existing members is \$75 up until September 21, 2026, and after that, they're \$100. New members are always \$75.

For more information, reach out to contact@bellingham-businessassociation.org. You can also look for updates on the Bellingham Business Association's Facebook page.

Planning ahead, the BBA is raising money for the Halloween Trunk-or-Treat Stroll will be October 24 and on the town of Bellingham's 2nd Annual Holiday Parade coming up on December 12. You can purchase a Bellingham t-shirt (\$25) or hoodie (\$55) and all proceeds will go toward the holiday event.



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Your Money, Your Independence

When ‘I think they’re all set’ becomes ‘it’s complicated’



Glenn Brown, CFP

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 dur-

ing 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).

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 widow-makers. 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

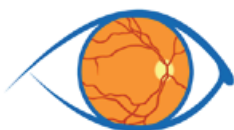
Preparing for evolving health needs, or the loss of a parent, spares your family from navigating an emotional crisis in the dark. By leading with empathy, collaborating with siblings, and setting up the right legal tools, you protect your parents’ autonomy and preserve peace of mind for everyone.

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

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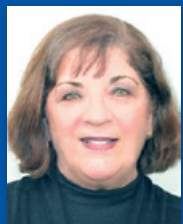
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Franklin’s Circle of Friends to start up again in fall

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, located at the First Universalist Society in Franklin at 262 Chestnut Street in Franklin, has announced a slate of new performances starting in September 2026 through May 2027. The lineup includes:

- Lucy Kaplansky, September 19
- Richard Shindell, October 24
- Rebecca Loebe, November 7
- Connie Kaldor, December 5
- Jim Kweskin, January 23
- Matt Nakoa, February 20
- Radoskav Lorkovic, March 20
- The Pairs, April 17
- John Gorka, May 1

Performances take place in a wheelchair-accessible meeting-house. For more information, visit www.circlefolk.org.

SAFE continues Healing Hearts grief support for minors in August

Grief can feel isolating, especially for young people. Healing Hearts gives children and teens a safe, welcoming space to process loss at their own pace through art, play, and connection with peers. Free biweekly groups run at the SAFE Coalition headquarters at 31 Hayward St., Ste. 2C, on Wednesdays through August 26:

- 3:00–3:40 p.m. Bereavement (Teens, ages 14–18)
- 3:45–4:25 p.m. Grief/Loss (Teens, ages 14–18)
- 4:30–5:10 p.m. Bereavement (School age, ages 6–13)
- 5:15–6:00 p.m. Grief/Loss (School age, ages 6–13)

Whether a young person is grieving a death or another significant loss like divorce, a parent’s illness, or a major life change, they are welcome. Groups are open enrollment, with no therapy experience needed and no pressure to participate.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/SAFEhealinghearts> .

Support provided in part by the Greater Milford CHNA 6 and The Parmenter Foundation

Town Administrator’s report available

At the Select Board’s July 6th meeting, the Town Administrator provided a report on various projects, events, and updates including July 4th, the closure of Silver Lake at 4PM on Saturday, planning for installation of ev chargers, and an update on health insurance activities. To learn more about what is going on, visit <https://tinyurl.com/BellinghamTMupdate>

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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 declutter 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 overflow-

ing 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 truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at

Business spotlight

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.

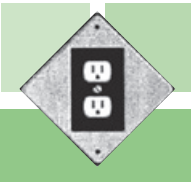
They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with



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. PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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The Together Trail: local group aims to build community one walk at a time

By JESS OMMEN

In a time when many people say they feel increasingly disconnected from one another, a new grassroots community group is hoping to bring neighbors together through a simple idea: spending time together.

The Together Trail, a Franklin-based community organization, is working to create opportunities for local residents to connect through monthly nature walks, volunteer projects, and social events such as cooking classes and craft nights. The group, which is still in its beginning stages, invites people from Franklin and surrounding communities to participate.

When Franklin resident Paige Pielocik organized the first Together Trail nature walk in July 2025, only one person showed up. Today, that person is one of her closest friends and has become a pivotal member in supporting The Together Trail’s mission.

Together with help from her friend and volunteer Michelle Tokar, Pielocik has expanded the organization’s offerings to include activities such as cooking classes and craft nights. She also hopes to organize larger community initiatives, including shop-local campaigns, volunteer projects and even a community cookbook featuring recipes from local residents.

Pielocik said she founded the

organization after noticing increasing social and political division in her community, reflecting a trend that is plaguing communities across the country. She believes local communities can help address these challenges by creating opportunities for people to simply spend time together.

“Everything feels so politically charged,” she said. “I wanted to create a space where people who may not have a lot in common could still come together, connect as neighbors and build friendships.”

Her view is supported by research linking strong social connections to improved physical health, mental well-being and civic engagement.

She also wanted to create an alternative to hobby- or sports-focused organizations.

“There are plenty of groups centered around a specific interest,” she said. “I wanted something where people could simply get together for the sake of community.”

Pielocik also noted she does not want cost to be a barrier to participation. Unlike many organizations, The Together Trail has no membership fees or requirements. However, some specialty events—such as cooking classes—may have a registration fee to cover costs.

The group’s signature event—the monthly nature walks—are completely free of



Founder of The Together Trail Paige Pielocik poses with daughter Maisse and friend Michelle Tokar at a cooking class in July.

charge and are designed to be welcoming and accessible for all ages and fitness levels. They welcome families, individuals, friends, and even four-legged companions.

Organizers also aim to select locations that are accessible for wheelchairs and strollers. The Holliston Rail Trail was chosen for July’s Nature Walk in large part for its accessibility.

The August Nature Walk will once again take place on the Holliston Rail Trail. Participants can meet at the Cross Street parking lot at noon on Sunday, August 30.



The Together Trail members participate in a cooking class in July. (Photos courtesy of The Together Trail.)

Additionally, the group will be hosting a craft event in the greenhouse at Fairmount Fruit Farm in Franklin on Saturday, August 15. Guests are welcome to come and go anytime from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at www.thetogethertrail.org.

The Together Trail welcomes anyone looking to meet new people, volunteer or spend time outdoors. Monthly nature walks are free, require no registration, and are open to individuals, families and dogs. All you have to do is show up!

As Pielocik’s first Together

Trail event demonstrated, sometimes just one person showing up can be the beginning of something truly meaningful.

Looking ahead, Pielocik hopes to expand The Together Trail into neighboring communities by encouraging local residents to start their own chapters.

For those interested in becoming involved, or to learn more about the organization and upcoming events, visit www.thetogethertrail.org or follow The Together Trail on Facebook.

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Save the date

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance August events

Annual St. Blaise vendor Fair September 19

The Annual St. Blaise Vendor Fair is planned for Saturday, September 19, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the grounds of St. Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main Street, Bellingham, MA. Admission is free and open to the public.

Over 35 vendors with unique wares will be set up around the church grounds. As always, Grandma's Attic will feature old and new treasures for just the right bargain hunter.

The Brotherhood of St. Joseph the Worker will be offering hamburgers, hotdogs and other delicious food items for sale.

The Ladies of St. Anne will have some amazing fruit cups, yogurt parfaits and desserts for sale to either eat on the grounds or to take home and share with family and friends. Tables to sit and enjoy your lunch will be set up in the food area.

Hope to see you there to get a jump on shopping...remember Christmas will be just about 3 months away!

HCA Artist Collective seeking art to display at second campus

The HCA Artist Collective at Hopkinton Center for the Arts is seeking artwork inspired by the "Four Seasons" to display in an exhibition at HCA's second campus at 34 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton.

Have you created artwork that is inspired by a season? Everything from a landscape full of snow, or autumn leaves - and everything in between. All artists are invited, with a submission deadline of August 17. For submission details, visit <https://tinyurl.com/HCAFourSeasons>.

The exhibit, HCA Puzzled, is currently on display now through August 27 in the Lotvin Family Gallery (www.hopartscenter.org/lotvin-gallery) at HCA's 98 Hayden Rowe St. location. Featured artists in this exhibit use patterns, shapes, and elements to create unified works of art. Their creative process involves combining individual elements—each with its own size, texture, and color—to construct something greater than the sum of its parts.

Lend a hand: volunteers needed at the Franklin Food Pantry

Demand for food assistance in the Franklin community is at an all-time high. As the need grows, so does The Pantry's reliance on dedicated volunteers to keep operations running smoothly. The Franklin Food Pantry is currently seeking energetic individuals to support weekday operations. Volunteers must be comfortable with physical tasks, including lifting and moving heavy boxes, and possess the stamina and strength required for an active, fast-paced shift.

Volunteering at The Pantry is incredibly rewarding. You'll see the immediate impact of your hard work on your neighbors' lives and connect with your community. To join our volunteer team, please visit our website (www.franklinfoodpantry.org/volunteer) and complete an application, or email Laura Doherty, Associate Director, at Ldoherty@franklinfoodpantry.org.

Picnic at DelCarte

Thurs., August 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m., DelCarte Recreation and Conservation Area, 409 - 459 Pleasant Street, Franklin

Join us as we walk around the trail and have a picnic! Bring your own brown bag meal.

Book Club

Wed., August 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin

Woodworking by Emily St. James. This book is available in print, as an e book, and as an audiobook.

More Families, Fewer Resources:

A New Reality for Our Local Food Pantries

Before leaving for summer break, a local first-grader was asked what she would miss most about school. Her answer was simple: *"I will miss the blue bags."*

Each Friday, those blue bags are filled with food donations and sent home with students in need, ensuring they have something to eat over the weekend.

Hunger continues to be a crisis throughout our state. According to the 2026 *Massachusetts Food Access Report: Hunger on the Rise* from The Greater Boston Food Bank and Mass General Brigham, a record 40 percent of households experienced food insecurity in 2025. Furthermore, child-level food insecurity rose from 33 percent to 37 percent within the last year.

For thousands in our communities, local food pantries are a lifeline providing essential food assistance to those affected by job loss, seniors on fixed incomes, veterans and people with disabilities. Working families also rely on food programs to make ends meet.

The high cost of groceries, skyrocketing rents and cuts to federal programs are driving more residents to seek food support, placing unprecedented strains on local food pantries already working to meet a growing demand.

This was underscored during a summit on food insecurity hosted by UMass Memorial Health — Milford Regional Medical Center's Community Benefits Committee, where local food pantry leaders shared firsthand insights into the challenges facing their organizations.

Pantry leaders noted significant cyclical declines in donations following the holidays, with challenges becoming heightened after January and particularly during the summer months, because school-based food drives come to a halt.

Another key takeaway from the summit was the profound impact of community contributions. Food donations are always needed and critically important. However, financial contributions provide pantries the flexibility to meet their community's most pressing needs, including offering healthy options.

Food assistance programs not only put meals on the table but help ensure that children have access to the same support they rely on during the school year. Every child deserves to spend their summer feeling carefree and having fun and not worrying if there will be enough to eat tomorrow.

A record 40% of households experienced food insecurity in 2025.

Learn more about your local food pantry's needs by visiting "About Us" at ummhealth.org/milford-regional and viewing "Community Benefits" or scan the QR code.

Food Equity and Sustainable Transformation

A community health initiative designed to tackle regional food insecurity.





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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

15 years later...

Fifteen years ago, we unlocked the doors to a brand new salon with a big dream, a small team, and absolutely no idea how many lives would eventually become part of our own.

Looking back, we've learned something that has very little to do with hair.

People rarely walk through our doors because they simply need a haircut, a color appointment, or a facial.

They come because something in life is changing.

Maybe it's a first date. A wedding. A new job. Senior pictures. A vacation they've been counting down to for months. Sometimes it's after having a baby. Sometimes it's after losing someone they love. Sometimes it's because they've spent months taking care of everyone else and finally decide it's time to do something for themselves.

And sometimes, they simply want to feel like themselves again.

For fifteen years, we've had the privilege of being part of those moments.

People often ask owner Heather Cohen what she's most proud of after fifteen years. Her answer is always the same.

"It isn't the renovations or the awards. It's hearing someone walk out the door saying, 'I feel like myself again.' The smile on their face is the best compliment of all."

Of course, the salon has changed too. Quite a bit, actually.

We've renovated multiple times over the years. First we doubled our space, and after the pandemic we took the biggest leap yet, expanding into the 4,000 square foot studio we call home today. Every time we grew, it wasn't because we wanted a bigger salon. It was because we wanted to create a better experience for the people who trusted us.

Looking back, we never sat down with a master plan that said, "One day we'll be a full-service beauty studio."

Most of what we've become happened because our guests kept asking for more, and we kept listening.

Someone wanted expert

skincare in the same place they already trusted for their hair. Someone else was looking for a makeup artist for a wedding. Curly-haired guests wanted specialists who truly understood their hair texture. Others were looking for extensions, lashes, waxing, smoothing treatments, or a little more time to relax and take care of themselves.

Instead of sending people somewhere else, we kept asking ourselves one simple question. "Why not offer it here?"

Somewhere along the way, skincare became a big part of our story too. We realized pretty quickly that caring for someone's skin isn't all that different from caring for their hair. It's personal. It's confidence. Sometimes it's simply giving someone permission to slow down for an hour.

One of the most meaningful chapters has been creating our private wig and topper studio.

For women experiencing hair loss from medical treatment, alopecia, hormonal changes, or thinning hair, this work is about so much more than finding the right piece. It's about restoring confidence during a season when confidence can feel hard to find. Every consultation is private. Every solution is customized. Every guest is welcomed with kindness because we know these conversations matter.

Looking back, it's funny. We spent fifteen years growing, but not always in the ways we expected.

Yes, the salon got bigger.

But the best kind of growth has been watching people grow alongside us.

Our apprenticeship program has become one of the things we're proudest of. Every experienced stylist once stood at the beginning of their career, and helping new artists build confidence, learn their craft, and eventually welcome guests of their own has become one of the most rewarding parts of what we do.

There were moments over the years when we had to stop and pinch ourselves.

Editorial photo shoots. National advertising campaigns.



Television appearances. Creative projects that challenged us and reminded us there's always something new to learn.

The best part?

Every bit of that experience came right back into the salon, making us better for the guests sitting in our chairs every day.

Some of our favorite memories haven't happened inside the salon at all.

They've happened throughout our community.

Over the years we've been lucky enough to support local charities, schools, sports teams, community organizations, and businesses that make this area such a special place to live. We're also honored to continue funding two annual scholarships for students at our sister school, the Martello Beauty Institute in Cancun, Mexico. Helping future beauty professionals begin careers of their own feels like one of the best ways we can give back to an industry that has given us so much.

When we think about the last fifteen years, we don't think first about growing larger or even the milestones.

We think about the bride who trusted us on her wedding day and still comes in for her color every six weeks.

The teenager who nervously sat in one of our chairs before her first school dance and now brings in her own children.

The guest who looked in the mirror after experiencing hair loss and smiled because she finally saw herself again.

The friendships.

The conversations.

The laughs.

The trust you've placed in us.

Those are the things that built b.LUXE.

As Heather likes to say,

"People think we've spent fifteen years building a salon. Honestly, we've spent fifteen years building relationships. The salon just kept getting bigger along the way."

The walls have changed.

The mirrors have changed.

The heart behind them never has.

To every guest who has trusted us, celebrated life's milestones with us, laughed with us, cried with us, recommended us to a friend, or simply walked through our doors, thank you.

You are the reason we've never stood still.

Here's to the next chapter...and to the countless stories still waiting to walk through our doors.

If you're not sure where to start, our team is always happy to help. Visit us at b.LUXE Hair & Makeup Studio in Medway or learn more at bluxe.com.

Because summer should be spent making memories, not standing in front of the mirror. b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio, Medway. Visit us at bLUXE.com or call 508-321-1624

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Mass. tow truck owner/operator launches mission to provide free highway tows

BELLINGHAM, Mass. — While most people drive past stranded vehicles on the side of the highway, Allen Hatch is stopping to help.

Allen is the founder of Coastline Towing LLC and the creator behind Miyagi Allenson Enterprise. His mission is simple but ambitious: provide free emergency highway tows to motorists who find themselves stranded in dangerous situations and may not have the resources to pay for immediate assistance.

Operating throughout Norfolk County, Massachusetts and surrounding areas, Allen has already begun performing free highway tows when possible while documenting the rescues on social media. His goal is to raise awareness about roadside safety while building community support for a larger vision.

Unlike traditional charity models, the project is currently in its early stages and, while it has been challenging to build consistent support so far due in part to limited reach and platform restrictions on social media content, it is actively seeking to expand support through Allen's towing work, merchandise sales, social media content, affiliate partnerships, sponsorship opportunities, and community involvement.

"Every day there are people stranded on the side of busy highways. Some are scared, some have children with them, and some simply can't afford the help they need. My goal is to get people to safety and eventually build a program that can help motorists across the country."

The long-term vision is to create a sustainable nationwide initiative that provides free emergency highway assistance to people in need while promoting roadway safety and community involvement.

Allen is currently documenting the journey as he works toward expanding the program throughout Massachusetts and beyond.

Please see the following TikTok videos posted

The mission

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTBBqCUwM/>

Female from Bellingham

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTBBbWwm1/>

Gentleman from out of the area

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTBBqf8jf/>

Visit Miyagi Allenson Enterprise at

<https://linktr.ee/miyagiallenson>.

August at Franklin UMC

The Community Closet at Franklin UMC located at 82 W Central Street Franklin MA is Open on Tuesdays from 12-2 p.m.

Dates: August 4, 11, 18, and 25: Come visit for a closet refresh—all clothing is FREE. Donations of gently used clean clothes are gratefully accepted to restock the inventory.

We are grateful for our volunteers and the people who donate who help to make this a welcome resource for our community.

Community Cookout: August 29 from 5pm-6 p.m.

Join us on the front lawn for free hamburgers and hotdogs.

Community@FranklinUMC to view all of our free to the community programs.

Save the Date: September 26th is Franklin's Harvest Festival

Mark your calendar: Franklin's 23rd Annual Harvest Festival is set for Sat., Sept. 26 from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Rain date is Sun. Sept. 27.

Organized by Franklin Downtown Partnership, the Harvest Festival is their largest event. More than 150 vendors will fill Main Street and extend to Dean College and Franklin Public Library. Enjoy live music, food, kids' activities, unique art and crafts, merch and services from local shops, and community groups. More details will be coming in September.

Due to the popularity of the event, vendor booths will only be available to FDP members. The Partnership invites Franklin crafters to join and participate in the festival. Registration for FDP members will open the last week of August.

Business owners are invited to be a sponsor of the Harvest Festival. Please email the FDP office at downtown.franklin@yahoo.com to learn about sponsorship opportunities, or register on the FDP website at www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.

Thank you to our event sponsors:

- **Platinum** – Dean Bank, G&C Plumbing & Heating

- **Gold** – Dean College, Glen Meadow Apartments

- **Silver** – Eagle Stainless Tube & Fabrication, Inc., Enclave of Franklin, Notturmo Home Services

- **Bronze** – ABI New England, Franklin Kitchen Center, Simon's Furniture

Follow the FDP on Instagram and Facebook for info, updates, and activities:

<https://www.instagram.com/franklindowntownpartnership/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/franklindowntownpartnership.org/>

The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents can join the Downtown Partnership for only \$25. The Partnership manages events like the Strawberry Stroll and the Harvest Festival, and initiatives such as beautification, streetscape design, green space, alley murals, and sculpture projects. For more information go to www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.



SIMPLE WAYS TO SAVE WATER

There are many simple things we can do to save water. Learn from the water-efficiency hero Flo what you can do today to help protect our water supply!



WHO NEEDS A HOSE?

Washing your bike or car with a bucket and sponge instead of a hose saves a lot of water. A hose can waste 6 gallons per minute if you leave it running, but using a bucket and sponge only uses a few gallons!

Also, some car washes recycle water instead of letting it run down the sewer drains. Ask your parents to check if a car wash near you recycles water.

Check Back Each Month for more Helpful Ways to Save!



Sponsored by the Bellingham DPW



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 skipping 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, head-



aches, 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.

The natural remedy: sunshine and outdoor play

One encouraging development is growing evidence that natural daylight helps reduce the risk of myopia (nearsightedness). Outdoor light exposure supports healthy eye growth, and outdoor activities encourage distance focusing rather than the near-focus demands of books and screens.

Experts recommend at least one to two hours outdoors daily—biking, playing soccer, swimming, or walking. This supports visual development while boosting physical fitness and emotional well-being. Digital devices are valuable educational tools, but shouldn't replace active outdoor play. Encouraging kids to disconnect and spend time in natural light is one of the simplest ways to promote lifelong eye health.

Many sports-related eye injuries can be avoided with protective polycarbonate eyewear during practices and games. At 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.

This school year, give your child the gift of seeing the world clearly.

For more details, see our ad on this page.

Safety and nutrition

This month is also a good time to focus on injury preven-

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Sen. Rausch’s candidate safety law passes

Measure will enable people to run for office without losing sense of security

BOSTON, Mass. – In a win for democratic participation, State Senator Becca Rausch’s (D-Needham) legislation to remove candidate home addresses from public election ballots, ending a practice only in place in Massachusetts that puts the safety and security of candidates and their families at notably heightened risk, has passed into law. Rising political violence in the U.S. has given many potential candidates hesitation about running or forestalled a run altogether. This change, effective January 1, 2027, will expand access to the ballot for a wide range of people, including women, people with families, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and survivors of abuse, who will now be able to run without fear of being targeted by political violence at their homes.

“I’ve spoken with would-be candidates – people who would be terrific legislators and other public servants – who chose not to seek public office out of fear for their and their family’s safety,” said Sen. Becca Rausch. “Elections are central to our representative democracy. They require candidates willing to dedicate themselves to both public service and to running for office. But the safety and security of your home should never have to be one of the sacrifices of the campaign trail. We may not be able to stop the hate that fuels acts of political violence, but we can use the tools at our disposal to mitigate the harm and the risk, and thereby also advance our democracy.”

This issue is neither theoretical nor partisan. Political violence has impacted people throughout the United States and across the political spectrum. Last year, a gunman murdered Minnesota House of Representatives Speaker Emerita Melissa

Hortman, her husband Mark Hortman, and their family dog, in their family home. He then repeatedly shot Minnesota State Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette Hoffman, at their home. A fringe militia planned to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer from her house. Chris Sununu, Charlie Baker, Michelle Wu, Paul Pelosi, and Angie Craig were all hurt or threatened at their homes.

Under the new law, starting with the 2027 local elections, a candidate’s municipality of residence will appear on the ballots, rather than their full street addresses. While this change will not help current office holders, it will benefit future generations of candidates, public servants, and their families.

Governor Healey signed the legislation into law on July 9, 2026.

My Pinnacle Network August 2026 B2B networking meetings

My Pinnacle Network recently announced its August 2026 business-to-business networking meetings for August 2026. They are:

My Pinnacle Network - Westborough, Tuesday, August 4, from 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Zoom only.

My Pinnacle Network-Mansfield - Wednesday, August 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Zoom only.

My Pinnacle Network – Newton, Thursday, August 13, 7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. Zoom only:

If you would like to attend a My Pinnacle Network meeting, please contact admin@my-pinnacle-network.com. There is no charge to visit a My Pinnacle Network meeting. For information on My Pinnacle Network, visit www.mypinnacle-network.com.

Monday cruise nights at VFW 7272 continue



Love cars! Come on down to VFW 7272 of Bellingham, at 940 Main Street, Bellingham, from 4-9 p.m. Check out the detail or come show off yours, and share your enthusiasm with other autophiles and gearheads while you support the post.

If cars aren’t your thing, Friday night at the post is karaoke night, from 8-12 p.m.!

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116 Mechanic St., Bellingham MA
(directly across from post office)
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KarateBellingham.com



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

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WHY YOU NEED A WILL
Wills can distribute your property, name an executor, name guardians for children, forgive debts and more. Having a will also means that you, rather than your state’s laws, decide who gets your property when you die.

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

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August 26 is Bellingham Public Schools first day

After school programs are available at Bellingham Public Library

After School Kids Signups (Students in grades 4-6 must be registered to attend the After School Kids program.)

- Tues., August 18, 3:30 to 5 p.m.
- Thurs., August 20, 3 to 6 p.m.
- Tues., August 25, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

If you can't attend any of these sessions, you may sign up your child during the program itself.

After School Kids – Starts Wed., August 26

For grades 4-6. When school is in session, ASK meets Mon. through Fri. from 2:30-4:45 p.m. Stop by the Community Room after school to make crafts, use a Chromebook, play on the Nintendo Switch, play board games and hang out with friends! Registration is required for this program, so pick up a registration form during library hours or after school. Please note: program times may vary on early release days. Questions? Email Diane Nelson.

Teen Room Activities – Starts Wed., August 26

For grades 7-12. When school is in session, Teen Room Activities are available Mon. through Fri. from 2 -4:45 p.m.. Stop by the Teen Room to use computers, play on the Nintendo Switch and Xbox, play board games and hang out with friends! There is no registration needed to attend this program. Please note: program times may vary on early release days, so please plan accordingly.

4 Precious Paws Rescue fundraiser rescheduled to August 20

4 Precious Paws Rescue, INC. has rescheduled the June fundraiser for Thursday, August 20, 2026. Same place, same times! Ravioli's Italian Cuisine, 45 River St., Millbury, MA, from noon to 9 p.m.

There will be many fabulous raffle gifts to choose from, including a car detailing worth \$300 from RDS, Ronnie's Detailing Solutions of Whitinsville. Take a chance to win this generous gift, which you will receive right in your own driveway. Other wonderful gifts are \$50 off yard clean-up from The Cleaning Crew, \$50 off from AR Junk Removal, and house cleaning worth \$200 from Molly Maids.. In addition, you could win up to \$100 off your bill from Millbury Auto Services, Inc.

Ravioli's will donate a portion of all purchases to benefit our pregnant moms and kittens. Our cats receive superlative vet care and nurturing from experienced foster moms and dads to give them the best start towards a healthy life. Check out our website, 4PreciousPawsRescueIncMa.com and our FB page to see our feline friends waiting to be adopted. We post our adoption days once a month where you can visit our cats and meet them up close. For either a sit-down meal or takeout, bring your family and friends for some good music, good food and some fun.

Bellingham Public Library news & events for August

For updates about library programs and services, please see the library website, www.bellinghamlibrary.org and click on Library Calendar & Events.

Special Programs

Experience History: America's 250 – Mon., August 3, 11 a.m.

For all ages - No registration needed. Thomas Quirk of Experience History brings an interactive experience of stories, music, and artifacts, portraying life in the eighteenth century. Learn what led to the American Revolution, see a fife demonstration, and examine period clothing, housewares, and more! Program supported by the Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, Friends of the Bellingham Library, and a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Colonial Crafts – Thurs., August 6 and 20, 4:15 p.m.

Designed for all ages - Registration required. Join us at the library for our craft series that will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of America's founding.

Quilling Workshop – Fri., August 7 at 12 p.m. and Thurs., August 27, 6 p.m.

Designed for those ages 16 and up - Registration required. Helen Whiting will guide you through the art of Quilling - using strips of paper that are rolled, shaped, and glued together to create decorative designs. Program made possible with support from the Friends of the Bellingham Library.

Children's Songs on Acoustic Guitar with Alleigh Crocker – Tues., August 11, 10:30 a.m.

For families - No registration needed. Music and movement with local musician Alleigh Crocker! Program supported by the Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, Friends of the Bellingham Library, and a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

West African Drum Fundraiser with Logan Amaral – Wed., August 12, 6 p.m.

For all ages - Registration required. With Logan Amaral, Director of Kekeli

Drum Dance and Founder of Spread the Light Music and Dance! On the second Wed. for the next few months Logan will lead this drumming program at the library as a Fundraiser for the Friends of the Library. Each session is \$15 (cash only) with \$5 of that going to the Friends of the Library!

All ages, but anyone under 15 must be accompanied by an adult (who does not have to participate).

Community Free Shop Day Pop-Up – Tues., August 25, 4 p.m.

Free community popup hosted by the Wildflower Misfit Collective! Representatives from the Collective will be onsite providing clothing, shoes, school supplies, and hygiene items at no cost to families. All items are free, no requirements, and open to anyone who could use support. A great way to get your family ready for the new school year!

Summer Reading Program

Thank you to Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, the Bellingham Cultural Council, and the Friends of the Library for their support of our Summer Reading Programs!

Check the library's calendar for details.

Mini Masterpieces – Tues., 4 p.m. (ends on August 18th) For grades 1-6 - Registration preferred. Weekly, we will learn about various artists throughout history and the different techniques they used, as well as create our own miniature versions of these masterpieces for display at the library.

Summer Meals Lunch Program – Mon. & Wed., 11:30 a.m. (ends on August 12th)

The Library is a meal site for the Hockomock Area YMCA's free lunch program, with lunch and activities.

Nature Explorers – Wed., 11 a.m. (ends on August 19th) For families. Join us outdoors at the **Town Common** for a story and nature walk, or indoors at the Library during inclement weather.

Book to Big Screen – Wed., 1 p.m. (ends on August 19th) All ages mid-week matinee featuring a movie adaptation of a popular book.

Krafty Kids – Thurs., 1 p.m.

(ends on August 20th) For families. Please register for each individual week.

Summerween Movie Night – Fri., August 7, 6 p.m.

Movie, "Spooky Buddies," rated G, with themed activities and snacks. Movie will start around 6:30. Costumes welcome, and don't forget blankets/pillows!

Fri-Yay Open Play – Fri. at 10:15 a.m. (ends on August 21st) For ages 0-5. The Community Room will be set up with some open-ended crafts and activities!

Ongoing Children's Programs

Ring a Ding – Mon. & Thurs., 10:15 a.m. (no session on August 24 and 27) For ages 0-5

Lego Builders – Mon., 4:30 p.m. For Grades K to 3 – Drop in, no registration!

Read to Freedom the Reading Dog – Mon., 5:30-7 p.m. Sign up for a 15-minute time slot on Library's online calendar.

Sensory Story Time – Tues., 10:15 a.m. (No session on August 11 and 25) Ages 2-5 of all abilities (younger siblings always welcome). Please register for each session.

Adult/Child Book Clubs – If you are interested in joining, those in grades 3-5 should contact Melissa Denham, mdenham@cwmar.org, grades 6-8 should contact Amanda Maclure, amaclure@cwmar.org, and grades 9-12 should contact Diane Nelson, dnelson@cwmar.org. Check the library calendar for details.

Adult Programs

Book Discussion Group – Generally meets the 1st Mon. of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Attend in person or on Zoom. On August 3rd we will discuss "James, A Novel" by Percival Everett. Contact Suzanne at salpert@cwmar.org for more information.

Tues. Fiber Arts & Other Crafts – Tues., August 4 & 18, at 6 p.m. Just drop in!

A Novel Idea: A New Book Club for Adults – Tues., August 4, 6:30 p.m., "The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell" by Robert Dugoni. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmar.org.

Needlecraft Night – Wed., 6 p.m. All skill levels welcome. Please bring your own materials.

English Conversation Circles – Thurs., 6 p.m., Free program - No registration needed. Join Thienne Risatto, our Library Assistant - Multilingual Learners Coordinator, for our English Conversation Circle program.

Library Board of Trustees Meeting – Thurs., August 13, 7 p.m., Conference room.

Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting - Tues., August 11, 7 p.m., To attend, email library@bellingshamlibrary.org for the Zoom link!

Bellingham Genealogy Club – Mon., August 24, 6 p.m. Registration required. Bring your laptop or use one of our Chromebooks on the fourth Mon. of the month to work on your family history with other family historians! Program also offered on Zoom. Please email Molly Garten at mgarten@cwmar.org with any questions.

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

The Legacy of Julia Child's Kitchen with Smithsonian Curator Paula J. Johnson – Tues., August 4th at 2 p.m.

When Trees Testify: Reclaiming America's Black Botanical Legacy with Beronda Montgomery – Tues., August 25th at 2 p.m.

High Altitudes and High Stakes: A Miss Marple Mystery with Lucy Foley – Tues., August 27th at 2 p.m.

Yoga – Kripalu Yoga for the Seasons: Summer – Tues., 8:30 a.m. (no session on August 4th) Registration required.

Writing Group for Adults – Tues., August 18, 6:30 p.m. Writers, readers, listeners, join us at the library or on Zoom! Local area writers Amy Bartelloni and Marjorie Turner Hollman welcome you to hear what local writers are working on and share what you are working on. Reading limit is 9 minutes per reader, with a brief opportunity for positive, personal comments only. Contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at marjorie@marjorieturner.com.

Did You Know - New computers for patron use at the library!

In July, the Library finished installing four new public computers for patron use. The computers have Microsoft applications, and patrons that print from these computers will be able to get the first 5 pages printed for free. After the initial 5 free pages, printing in Black & White will cost 15 cents per page and printing in Color will cost 50 cents per page.

Print jobs must be paid in cash (no pennies, foreign coins, or bills larger than \$10

can be accepted). Furthermore, we have purchased a service called "Princh" for patrons to be able to print from mobile devices!

There are also a number of Chromebooks available for patrons to use in the library and a few that can be borrowed!

Contact us for more information!

A Cappella Singers now known as Allegra Commonwealth Singers

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. - On Monday evenings, September through April, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Framingham fills with the familiar sounds of chatter, laughter, and treble voices blending into something bigger than the sum of their parts. For the chorus long known as The A Cappella Singers, those weekly gatherings have always been about more than music alone: they are about community, resilience, and the joy of making harmony together.

Now, the group is beginning a new chapter under a new name: "Allegra Commonwealth Singers."

President Beatrice Wood

says the change reflects both the ensemble's roots and its aspirations. "After extensive brainstorming, and then ranked-choice voting, this was the name that prevailed. We like that the initials stay the same, so it honors who we've been while also describing who we are more clearly," she said. "Allegra carries the feeling of joy and musical energy, and Commonwealth speaks to our Massachusetts home, our broader community, and the shared spirit that connects us as singers."

Roots, Change, and Growth

The chorus, under the direction of Brett Abigayña since

last year, has long been part of the MetroWest arts landscape, originating in Natick in 1963 and presenting concerts there and in nearby towns such as Wellesley and Framingham. During the earliest days when the group's name was coined, the chorus performed strictly a cappella pieces. Over the years, the group has adapted to changing schedules, changing needs, and changing times, and its repertoire today is mostly accompanied by piano.

According to Wood, there are a couple of other exciting opportunities on the horizon for the chorus beyond the traditional concerts: planning a 2027 summer tour in Ireland,

and a 2028 workshop for young composers of choral music. Community singers interested in joining the trip next year are urged to contact the chorus prior to **August 23, 2026**.

An Open Invitation

While the name is changing, the heart of the chorus remains the same - a community of singers committed to performing choral music together and sharing that joy with others.

Interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend guest nights, on September 7, 14, and 21 where the December concert repertoire will be introduced. Rehearsals are Monday nights,

7-9 p.m. at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple Street, Framingham. There is no formal audition - singers are heard for voice placement, ability to match pitch, and capability to read music.

The new website is coming soon - until then, the public should continue to use the legacy name and reach out for more information as follows:

Visit theacappellasingers.org
Email info@theacappellasingers.org
Phone (774) 231-8508

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SOTER

continued from page 7

- \$20,000 for Millville Elementary School Generator Replacement
- \$25,000 for Medway Food Pantry
- \$25,000 for Medway Community Farm
- \$20,000 for Uxbridge's 300th Anniversary

State funding for municipal road and bridge repairs

The House and Senate have authorized a \$300 million Chapter 90 appropriation for cities and towns to assist with municipal road and bridge repairs, with the support of State Rep. Soter. The funding was included as part of a \$4.58 billion transportation bond bill enacted in both branches on June 4. Governor Maura Healey signed the bill into law on June 11, 2026.

House Bill 5375, An Act financing long-term improvements to municipal roads and bridges, allocates \$200 million in Chapter 90 funding for Fiscal Year 2027 using the program's traditional weighted formula that is based on a community's local road mileage (58.33%), population (20.83%), and employment levels (20.83%). An additional \$100 million will be distributed to cities and towns based solely on a community's local road mileage as a way to ensure that rural communities with smaller populations receive their fair share of state funding assistance to help maintain their local transportation infrastructure.

Soter said the 8th Worcester District is slated to receive \$2,976,119.79 under the bill, \$1,851,928.16 coming under the traditional formula and \$1,124,191.63 based on local road mileage. The House also passed H.5470 on June 4th, the Fair Share Supplement Conference Committee Report, which is estimated to provide the district with an additional \$899,354.00 in Chapter 90 funding. Each town's apportionment is as follows:

	Standard Formula	Road Mileage	Estimated Additional from Fair Share (H5470)	Estimated Total Chapter 90 for FY27
Bellingham	\$540,161.06	\$306,407.66	\$245,132.00	\$1,091,700.72
Blackstone	\$228,100.93	\$135,947.22	\$108,759.00	\$472,807.15
Medway	\$442,033.42	\$268,501.29	\$214,791.00	\$925,325.71
Millville	\$108,747.82	\$74,034.01	\$59,224.00	\$242,005.83
Uxbridge	\$532,884.93	\$339,301.45	\$271,448.00	\$1,143,634.38

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Ladies of St. Anne award four scholarships

On June 21 at the 10 o'clock mass, the Ladies of St. Anne were honored to present four \$750 scholarships to exemplary students. Each one of these High Honor Roll students and members of the National Honor Society have shown outstanding leadership qualities in their high school extracurricular activities, including captaining state championship sports teams, playing in the band, fine arts awards and being involved in class government.

As members of the National Honor Society, they have demonstrated their commitment to serve their community by participating in numerous volunteer outreach programs for their peers, younger children, underprivileged individuals, less-abled people, and the elderly. These activities included volunteering in food pantries, Special Olympics, Hunger for Justice programs, and wherever help was needed in the Bellingham community.

While maintaining academic excellence and juggling busy

social schedules, these students also worked in paying or non-paying part-time jobs. And, most importantly, all of them have nurtured their faith by worshipping weekly, participating in our Journey in Faith program, studying and preparing for the sacraments, helping with St. Blaise Thanksgiving and Adopted-a-Child giving programs, the parish annual cleanup and many more community building activities at St. Blaise.

In application essays, each one of these young women spoke of her own faith journey: the power of prayer; the importance of compassion, grace and mercy; using education not just for personal gain but as a tool to help others; to see God in others; to create solutions that support individuals who lack access to necessities. We are humbled and honored to have these young disciples of Christ in our community.

Raeanna Jean-Louis graduated from Bishop Feehan High School, plans to attend Swarthmore College major-



Pictured are scholarship recipients Raeanna Jean-Louis, Gianna, Denisi, Valerie Nolan, Ashleigh Hughes and Fr. Al Faretra

ing in Business. Gianna Denisi graduated from Bellingham High School, will attend Bryant University majoring in Finance. Valerie Nolan graduated from Bellingham High School, plans to attend Virginia Wesleyan University majoring in communications and media. Ashleigh Hughes graduated from Bellingham High School and Clark University, will be continuing advanced studies in Applied

Behavioral Analysis at Bay Path University.

Thank you to Father Al, who has traveled side-by-side for 15 years with "his kids" on their faith journey, for your guidance, encouragement and support. The Ladies also thank you for your support and encouragement as we continue our own faith journey.

The Ladies thank the parents, family, friends, and extraor-

dinary parishioners who helped the young people in their faith journey. Your love and example have guided them in becoming disciples of Christ.

Thank you to the St Blaise community for helping to make these scholarships possible by supporting the Ladies of St. Anne bake sales and plant sales. We greatly appreciate your generous support.

Historic Happenings at Franklin Historical Museum in August

Regular Hours: Saturdays 10-1, Sundays 1-4. Free admission, but donations appreciated!

Revolutionaries in White: A Look Across Three Centuries of Bridal Fashion (Continuing from June)

Brides didn't always wear white, but in the 19th century, a number of factors combined to make that the preferred color choice. Today, white remains dominant for American brides as well as for brides in many other lands. Revolutionaries in White will display gowns spanning from the 19th to the 21st century, offering insights into rapid social changes, with groupings that include multi-generational family gowns and the unique 1946 Parachute Dress with its spectacular 13-foot train.

Sunday, August 9-- Our 'Second Sunday Speaker'

topic is 'Franklin's Connection to the Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki'

Commissioner Scott Mason will share the remarkable story of Charles William Sweeney, an officer in the United States Army Air Forces during World War II and the pilot who flew Bockscar, the B-29 aircraft carrying the Fat Man atomic bomb to the Japanese city of Nagasaki on 9 August 1945. Sweeney, a Quincy native, later became an officer in the Massachusetts Air National Guard and, later in life, resided in Franklin. The museum is open from 1-4 on Sunday and the program starts at 1:15. There is no admission charge but donations are encouraged and appreciated.

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central St., Franklin. Questions? Contact Alan Earls at 508 560 3786. Visit us online at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.org>

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CALENDAR

August 1

Bellingham Shred Day, 9 a.m.- 12 p.m., 10 Mechanic St., Bellingham, bring paper, magazines, manila file folders, staples, binder clips, no hard drives, cardboard, hard cover books or binders

August 3

Book Discussion Group,, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, “James, A Novel,” by Percival Everett. Contact Suzanne at salpert@cwmar.org.

Experience History:
America’s 250, 11 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Thomas Quirk of Experience History brings an interactive experience of stories, music, and artifacts, portraying life in the eighteenth century. Program supported by the Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, Friends of the Bellingham Library, and a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council.

Summer Concert Series: Ukulele Friends Orchestra, 7 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, bring a blanket or chair and enjoy HCA Summer Concert Series: Stoney’s Wicked Din, 11 a.m., Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe, Hopkinton, www.hopartscenter.org

August 4

A Novel Idea: A New Book Club for Adults, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, with light refresh-

ments. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmar.org. “The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell,” by Robert Dugoni.

Online Author Talks:
The Legacy of Julia Child’s Kitchen with Smithsonian Curator Paula J. Johnson, 2 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma>

Family Night at the Bandstand: Brass Attack! Sounds of Chicago, Blood Sweat & Tears and more, Corner of Congress & Walnut Streets, Milford

August 5

ABMI-TV Concerts on the Grass, 6:30 -8:30 p.m., Mendon Town Beach, 45 Taft Ave., Mendon, Vinyl Echo (power trio), 6:30-7:30 p.m. pony rides.

August 9

Second Sunday Speaker Series: ‘Franklin’s Connection to the Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki’, 1:15 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 W. Central St., Franklin, featuring Commissioner Scott Mason will on the story of Charles William Sweeney, a WWII US Army AF officer who flew Bockscar , the B-29 aircraft carrying the Fat Man atomic bomb on 9 August 1945.

August 10

Summer Concert Series: Bluegrass & Hillbilly, 7 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, bring a blanket or chair and enjoy!

August 11

Children’s Songs on Acoustic Guitar with Alleigh

Crocker, 10:30 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, For families.

August 12

ABMI-TV Concerts on the Grass, 6:30 -8:30 p.m., Mendon Town Beach, 45 Taft Ave., Mendon, *Alexander’s Jazztime Band*, 6:30-7:30 p.m. pony rides.

Summer Sounds: Off Campus, 5 p.m., Bellforge Arts Center, Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Rd., Medfield, free but please register, www.bellforge.org, Three rising Massachusetts bands.

West African Drum Fundraiser with Logan Amaral, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, all ages, registration required, \$15 charge with \$5 to the Friends of the Library.

August 18

Writing Group for Adults, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at marjorieturner.com.

Family Night at the Bandstand: The Claflin Symphony Summer Winds, 7 p.m., Corner of Congress & Walnut Streets, Milford

August 19

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, *Woodworking* by Emily St. James.

August 22

In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 9 a.m. -3 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham Municipal Center, 10 Mechanic St., Bellingham

August 24

In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham Municipal Center, 10 Mechanic St., Bellingham

August 25

In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham

Community Free Shop Day Pop-Up, 4 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, hosted by the Wildflower Misfit Collective! Clothing, shoes, school supplies, and hygiene items at no cost to families. All items are free, no requirements, and open to anyone who could use support.

Online Author Talks – When Trees Testify: Reclaiming America’s Black Botanical Legacy with Beronda Montgomery, 2 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> .

August 26

First day of school, Bellingham Public Schools
In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham

August 27

Online Author Talks: High Altitudes and High Stakes: A Miss Marple Mystery with

Lucy Foley, 2 p.m., to register, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> .

In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham

August 28

In Person Early Voting for State Primary, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Arcand Room, Bellingham

August 29

Community Cookout, 5-6 p.m., Franklin UMC, 82 W. Central St., Franklin, free hamburgers & hot dogs on front lawn, Community@FranklinUMC to view all of our free to the community programs.

SAFE Coalition International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) events, 9-11 a.m., town commons and town hall lawns in Franklin, Medway, Norfolk, Wrentham and Millis. Anyone can attend and plant flags. Sign up at safecoalitionma.org/iodad.

August 31

Exsultet! auditions, 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, 725 Washington Street, Holiston, elite women’s chorus draws from local area, find audition piece to rehearse at www.exsultet.us.

September 2

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, featured artist oil painter Rose Wang

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Southwick's Zoo announces passing of white rhino Thelma

MENDON, Mass. — 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. Bergman of Wilderness Wildlife Center in Pennsylvania. 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.

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, helping to raise meaningful support for rhino conservation initiatives in southern Africa.

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 will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available.



Exsultet! to hold auditions August 31



Do you love to sing? Then we would love to meet you! We are Exsultet!— a fun-loving, women's choral group made up of around twenty musicians. We love making music and challenging ourselves to present concerts which enlighten and entertain. Exsultet! sings a repertoire of choral literature spanning musical periods and

cultures and incorporates readings and poetry into our performances.

Exsultet! has openings for Sopranos and Altos for the 2026-2027 season. Auditions will take place on Monday, August 31 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 725 Washington Street, Holliston, Mass.

Exsultet! rehearsals for the 2026-2027 Season will be on Monday nights from 7-9 p.m. in preparation for our two concert weekends. We typically perform our Holiday Concert in early December and our Spring Concert in April/May.

To audition, download the audition piece, O Little Town of Bethlehem from our website, www.exsultet.us, and prepare to rehearse and sing it with the group. At the end of rehearsal, you will be asked to sing your part in a trio or quartet. Come prepared to sing, work hard, and have fun!

Please contact Carrie Klimeczko at carrie7975@gmail.com for more information.

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SPORTS

Bellingham boys' soccer aims to start upcoming season off strong

By MATT HYLEN

Bellingham boys' soccer enters this season with something it hasn't always had: momentum, unity, and the expectation to keep building a rebound culture.

Last year's team posted its most regular-season wins in years, and the results came with a shift in how the program is perceived around town. Head Coach Eric Mounsey has watched the crowds grow along with the win column. "The Bellingham soccer buzz has grown. Fans are coming to games. The boys are proud," he said.

It wasn't a flawless season, but Mounsey sees the rough patches as part of what got this program to where it is now, and part of what will carry it forward.

"It wasn't always pretty, but there were always lessons learned and growth," Mounsey said. "That's the main goal: growth. Growth as a team, growth as a program, growth as individual players, growth as men, and I hope to grow as a coach."

However, that growth will need to come from a group replacing seven graduated seniors. It's a significant chunk of last year's roster to lose, but Mounsey already sees the next wave ready to step in and fill it.

"The team's expectations are to continue to be a thorn in the Tri-Valley League's (TVL) side," he said. "We are building a program that we want to contend every year. I am grateful to be a part of the journey."

With that said, Mounsey understands that it is up to him to create a culture that makes these goals possible.

"Culture revolves around team buy-in," he said. "It starts with our seniors and trickles down through the oldest players to the new incoming eighth graders. It's my belief that if your best player hasn't bought into the brotherhood that we're trying to build, then the team can't succeed."

The mentality that Mounsey

has set and the brotherhood he has helped create has paid major dividends on the field. "The moments where we're all in it together, though? That's when the magic happens, and why I believe we started to have success last year," he said.

To Mounsey, belief and unity is fueling the outlook for the season ahead, with a roster he describes as hungry. Mounsey stated, "These guys, especially the seniors and juniors, want this and live for this."

The goal isn't just to build on last year, but to establish Bellingham as a program opponents can't overlook. "My main goal for these guys for the start of the season is to come already in soccer shape," he explains. "When this team wants to keep going, keep working hard, and knows they can do more, my job as the coach is to support those efforts and match that energy. I love that we have a team that wants to do that."

Multi-sport participation has also become part of the program's identity rather than a competing interest. Several players split time across basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, and track, and Mounsey encourages it rather than discouraging it.

"No seasons off doesn't mean that it needs to be soccer 365," he said. "The cross training with other sports will only make these guys better soccer players, teammates, leaders, and well-rounded young men."

With the program's largest-ever summer league turnout, the priority heading into preseason is arriving in game shape, not building it from scratch. "The preseason is too short before our first game to be focusing heavily on conditioning and knocking the rust off," Mounsey said.

Between captains' practices and sessions at Blackhawk Bootcamp under the team's athletic trainer, much of that conditioning is already underway. Leading that work are



three senior captains who've played together for years and cover every part of the field.

Senior Cillian Murphy returns as one of the team's top goal-scorers and the engine of the offense. Mounsey expects him to carry that same offensive load again, pointing to his experience and soccer IQ as advantages the whole roster benefits from. "The younger players learn from him every day," he said.

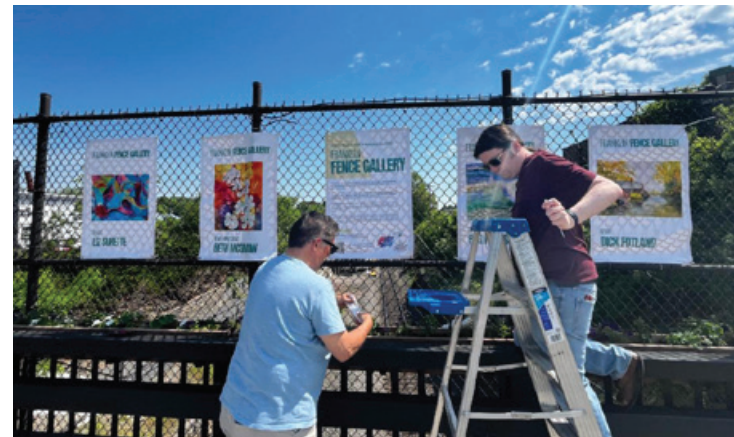
In the midfield, Caleb Platek returns for his second year as a captain, someone Mounsey credits as much for his voice off the field as his play on it. His leadership has been central to the program's culture-building, and after battling through an injury last season, Mounsey sees a player who's healthy, motivated, and primed for a big senior year.

On defense, Eric Mounsey Jr. anchors the back line, bringing what his coach calls toughness, heart, and an infectious no-quit attitude. Coming off a breakout junior season, he's continued to grow into his voice as a leader, something Mounsey has enjoyed watching up close.

Beyond the captains, a mix of returning upperclassmen ready for bigger roles and underclassmen eager to prove themselves rounds out a roster that keeps expanding. Preseason tryout numbers have climbed in recent years, and Mounsey doesn't take that growth for granted.

"The growing number of athletes wanting to be a part of Bellingham soccer is the biggest compliment a coach can get," Mounsey said.

Stop by the Franklin Fence Gallery



A project of the Franklin Cultural District and Franklin Art Association, the fence gallery will feature rotating exhibitions by local and regional artists, photographers, students, and community creatives.

Located on the downtown bridge, as well as the fence in front of the Davis Thayer building, the Franklin Fence Gallery is a new public art initiative that brings creativity out into the open—turning everyday fence space into a vibrant, outdoor gallery for all to enjoy. Presented by the Franklin Cultural District in partnership with the Franklin Art Association, this project showcases artwork by artists from across the Franklin area. Installed along prominent fences and public pathways throughout downtown Franklin, the gallery will feature rotating exhibitions by local and regional artists, photographers, students, and community creatives.

Presented by the Franklin Cultural District in partnership with the Franklin Art Association, this project showcases artwork by artists from across the Franklin area.



Artist Peg Munson, a member of the Franklin Art Association, stands by an image of her work at the Franklin Fence Gallery.

By transforming public space into a platform for local expression, the Franklin Fence Gallery helps strengthen community identity, support local artists, and make art a visible, shared experience for everyone.

The Fence Gallery aims to bring vibrant visual art into the public realm, encourage walkability and exploration, and create new opportunities for artists to share their work with residents and visitors alike. By activating underutilized spaces with creativity and storytelling, the Franklin Fence Gallery continues the Cultural District's commitment to making arts and culture visible, inclusive, and woven into the fabric of daily community life.

Public charter school opens 8th grade applications for 2026-27

Applications due to BFCCPS August 10



Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (BFCCPS), located in Franklin, Massachusetts, has begun accepting applications for Grade Eight for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year. BFCCPS is a regional public charter school for students in Kindergarten through Grade Eight. The school provides a well-rounded, rigorous academic program designed to educate the whole child providing courses in art, music, languages, technology, and physical education. In addition to our core academic and co-curricular classes, students in Grade Six through Eight participate in weekly Classical Enrichment Courses and have word language instruction in both French and Latin. Middle schoolers are also eligible to participate in our Spring Musical. Students in Grades 5-8 also have the opportunity to participate in overnight field trips each spring, our Grade 8 students typically visit Washington DC the week



before April Vacation. Round trip bus transportation is available with bus stops currently in Bellingham, Blackstone, Franklin, Norfolk, Mendon, Medway, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, and Wrentham. BFCCPS alumni continue to excel during their attendance at local public high schools as well as independent high schools. Please visit www.bfccps.org for enrollment details, including applications. Applications for Grade Eight will be open through August 10, 2026. Applications for all other grades are not currently available at this time. If you'd like to learn more about the educational mission of the school or have enrollment related questions please contact the school's Communication Coordinator, Joanne Basile at jbasile@bfccps.org or 508-541-3434 x104.

BVTi graduates celebrated, marking inaugural milestone

UPTON, Mass. – The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District celebrated the graduation of 62 students from its adult education programs, recognizing the inaugural graduating class of the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi). The ceremony marked an important milestone. The graduates completed training in Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Welding through BVTi. Designed to prepare adult learners for high-demand careers, BVTi's credential-based programs provide industry-recognized credentials, hands-on training, and the technical knowledge needed to enter or advance in the skilled trades. In 2025, the Healey-Driscoll Administration, in partnership with Commonwealth Corporation, awarded the district a \$1.04 million Career Technical Initiative (CTI) grant. With support from the grant, BVTi launched adult education programs for learners seeking new

skills, certifications, and pathways to career advancement. "We are incredibly proud of our inaugural graduating class and our partnership with the Commonwealth through the CTI program to expand access to career and technical education," said BVT's Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele II. "This grant has allowed us to deliver high-quality career and technical education to adults seeking to upskill or retrain, provide skilled labor to the local workforce, and generate nontaxpayer revenue that helps support the school." "We continually look ahead and plan for the future," said BVT's Assistant Superintendent and Curriculum Director Dr. Matthew Connors. "Working collaboratively with our Director of Workforce & Economic Development, Mary May, BVTi is focused on expanding its catalog of adult education programs and introducing additional offerings this fall." To learn more about BVTi, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti.

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SAFE to host Overdose Awareness Day events August 29



FRANKLIN, Mass. — SAFE Coalition will hold flag placing events in five Massachusetts towns to remember community members lost to overdose and mark International Overdose Awareness Day.

The public events will take place Saturday, August 29th from 9 to 11 a.m. on town commons and town hall lawns in Franklin, Medway, Norfolk, Wrentham and Millis. Anyone can attend and plant flags, a powerful gesture that helps show support and dismantle the stigma and isolation of overdose loss. Those interested can sign up at safecoalitionma.org/iodad.

The annual event arrives amid news that the state experienced a 27% drop in opioid-related deaths in 2025 from the previous year. It is also the first time the annual total has fallen below 1,000 since 2013, with an estimated total of 978 deaths, according to the state Department of Public Health. Fatal opioid overdoses have declined nearly 60% since a record high of 2,364 deaths in 2022.

"The news of the fatal overdose decrease in Massachusetts signifies real progress," said Jen Levine, SAFE's chief executive officer and co-founder. "It gives us hope, but it doesn't mean

our work is finished. Every flag placed is a reminder that we are far from done."

International Overdose Awareness Day, established in 2001, is a worldwide event held each year to remember those who have died or suffered because of overdose and to reduce the stigma associated with drug-related deaths. Thousands of communities are expected to participate this year.



SAFE

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Massachusetts' declining fatal overdose number reflects the value of SAFE's work in the community. Founded in 2015 as a community response to the opioid crisis, SAFE provides free, judgment-free support for substance use and mental health concerns through support groups, educational courses, community and school events, family services, counseling, Narcan training and more.

For more information or to volunteer, visit safecoalitionma.org/iodad.

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Norfolk County real estate activity accelerates in June 2026

DEDHAM, Mass – Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell today released the real estate recording statistics for June 2026, which indicate increased real estate activity across Norfolk County compared to June 2025, particularly in document recordings, property sales, and mortgage activity.

The Registry of Deeds recorded 11,172 documents in June 2026, a 7% increase compared to the 10,433 documents recorded in June 2025 and a 19% increase from May 2026.

The total number of deeds recorded for June 2026, representing both commercial and residential real estate sales and transfers, was 1,825, a 9% increase from the 1,677 deeds recorded in June 2025 and a 25% increase from May 2026. Looking at just real estate sales, 1,151 properties were sold in June 2026, a 14% increase compared to June 2025.

"The increase in property sales suggests continued demand for real estate in Norfolk County," stated Register O'Donnell. "The strong gain in sales activity compared to both last year and last month is an encouraging sign as we move through the summer homebuying season."

The average sale price for both commercial and residential real estate was approximately \$981,000, a 15% decrease compared to June 2025 and an 18% decrease from May 2026. The total value of commercial and residential sales recorded in June 2026 was approximately \$1.13 billion, a 3% decrease from the \$1.17 billion recorded in June 2025.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street in Dedham. Find them at www.norfolkdeeds.org or reach out by phone (781) 461-6101 or email register-odonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

Franklin Art Association to welcome oil painter Rose Wang Sept. 2

The Franklin Art Association warmly welcomes the public to its meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Franklin Senior Center on Wednesday, September 2. The program will feature Rose Wang, a classical oil painter based in Massachusetts, specializing in portraiture, still life and landscapes.

Rose enjoys sharing her passion for painting through demonstrations and community art events. She is inspired by the beauty of everyday life - people, flowers, landscapes and quiet moments that often go unnoticed. The evening's program will feature Rose sharing her portrait painting techniques by painting a model from the audience.

All programs are free and open to the public. Coffee and snacks will be served at the intermission, where you will have a chance to meet and speak with the artist.

The Art Association is supported by grants from the



Franklin Cultural Council, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Franklin Cultural District.

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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