



Bellingham BULLETIN

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Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

September 1, 2026

Better accessibility coming to Blackstone St. thanks to MassDOT

By DAVID DUNBAR

If you walk between the Bellingham Public Library and Memorial Middle School—or have children who do—you will have something new to appreciate around Thanksgiving.

The Town of Bellingham's Department of Public Works is replacing the aging and deteriorated sidewalk along Blackstone Street and widening it from its existing four-foot width to five feet. The approximately 1,500-foot sidewalk runs along the south side of Blackstone Street, from roughly the school parking lot, past Candace Drive, to the Bellingham Public Library. Completion of the project is anticipated by the end of November.

"We're improving the existing sidewalk and the ramps leading onto and off of it, making the corridor more accessible, safer and more comfortable for pedestrians," said DPW Director Jesse Riedle.



DPW Director Jesse Riedle (left) and Interim Assistant Director Barry Lariviere review the Blackstone Street improvement project which should be completed around Thanksgiving.

The project represents the first phase of a broader accessibility improvement program funded through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Complete Streets program. The Town was successful in securing \$233,150 in state funding to complete the project.

Because the sidewalk runs along Town-owned property, the additional 12 inches of width can be accommodated without the need to acquire

additional property.

"We've received numerous complaints and inquiries about the condition of this sidewalk over the past several months," said Barry Lariviere, Interim Assistant Director of the DPW. "Now that the grant funding has been approved, we're able to move forward with these improvements."

ACCESSIBILITY

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'Love your neighbor' at Bellingham Harvest Fest September 26 on Town Common

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Bellingham's Harvest Fest, presented by First Baptist Church and Bible Baptist Church, will once again take place on Bellingham Town Common on Saturday, September 26, 2026, with a rain date of October 3. The family-focused fun day will offer numerous activities as well as vendor booths from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The event was well-received after it returned last year from a hiatus.

"It is bittersweet Ken won't be with us. We had over 50 vendors and close to 500 people walking through," added Carrier, who anticipates an even better year.

In fact, Pastor Baron Rodrigues, who has been with First Baptist Church for 19 years, notes, "We're dedicating this festival in memory of Ken Hamwey, who loved people and loved to help them, and we are looking to do far greater in our help to the food banks than we did last year."



Bellingham Police were a big hit at last year's Harvest Fest, a family fun day aimed at bringing the community together and helping those in need. This year's event will take place on Saturday, Sept. 26 on Bellingham Town Common. (Oct. 3 rain date) Photos used courtesy of Bible Baptist Church

"I think it went very well last year," says Pastor Michael Carrier, the 32nd pastor of Bible Baptist Church, who said he was grateful for all of the advertising and sponsorships it received, as well as to the late Ken Hamwey, for getting the word out.

After expenses are paid (police detail, permits, entertainment costs, etc.), any funds remaining will go to area food pantries. Also, non-perishable, food-item donations are welcomed.

HARVEST FEST

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Memory Café returns to Bellingham Senior Center

By JUDITH DORATO O’GARA

“When someone is living with a very challenging medical condition, often life becomes about managing that condition, so it becomes about doctor visits and dealing with problems. People can become socially isolated, not only the person living with dementia, but also the person that’s supporting them,” says Beth Soltzberg, Director of the Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JFCS) Alzheimer’s/Related Dementias Family Support Program in Waltham.

Soltzberg explains social isolation occurs among these groups, because many activities people with memory impairments and their caregivers used to do may no longer work as well.

She adds, “Visiting extended family and friends, even businesses, such as going to a restaurant or coffee shop or other public place, can become harder,” she explains. Others

may not understand how to modify activities so that they do work well.”

In 2014, Soltzberg implemented one of the first Memory Cafés in Massachusetts at her Waltham location. A Memory Café is a welcoming, social gathering for people experiencing memory loss and their caregivers. It’s a relaxed place to connect, enjoy conversation, listen to music, and build community in a supportive and comfortable environment. The idea, dating back to 1997, was the brainchild of psychologist Bére Miesen, of Holland, but they weren’t introduced in the United States until 2008 in Santa Fe, NM. In 2011, the first Massachusetts Memory Café was created in Marlborough, and Soltzberg’s Waltham program was the second. Now, the Commonwealth boasts over 100 Memory Cafés in various cities and towns.

“They’re wonderful, free resources that make such a dif-

ference for people who come to them,” says Soltzberg.

Now, after a several years hiatus, the Bellingham Senior Center will once again offer a Memory Café, with one scheduled for Saturday, September 19, from 10-11:30 a.m., 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham, with live entertainment by singer Alex Connolly. Folks can call 508-966-0398 to register.

Josie Dutil, Bellingham Senior Center director, explains, “We had a Memory Cafe before COVID, then COVID hit and we tried to keep it alive on Zoom, and now the person who used to oversee it is now working full-time.” Thanks to a Special Incentive Grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging, she says, the Senior Center was able to revive the program.

“We’ve been wanting to bring it back, with volunteers in place,” says Dutil, pleased that the Bellingham Senior Center will be able to offer the program

on a Saturday, as many caregivers still work during the week, when most Memory Café’s take place.

“Caregivers are often very isolated, especially folks who are caregivers for folks with dementia and Alzheimer’s. The Memory Café provides them a social opportunity to get out of the house, meet other individuals who are also caregiving, and their loved ones meet other individuals who have the disease. It brings normalcy to their world in a welcoming setting. It’s an opportunity for them to socialize in an environment that is safe, and they can feel accepted, appreciated and seen for who they are.”

Dutil explains the Memory Café will continue in Bellingham the third Saturday of the month through the rest of the year, thanks to the grant, after which they’ll seek another funding source.

Nowadays, there’s a national

directory of Memory Café’s, <https://dfamerica.org/memory-cafe-directory/> hosted by Dementia Friendly America.

“That’s where people can go to find a café and where people who are running cafes can go to find free resources so they can list their café, watch self-paced online training on how to run a café and connect with the national learning community for memory café leaders,” says Soltzberg, who is now part of the Memory Café Alliance.

Bellingham, in addition to offering the Memory Café, also continues to offer a Supportive Day Program, which takes place from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. three days a week, that also offers caregivers some respite and a safe place for their loved ones.

For more information, call the Senior Center at 508-966-0398.

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FBRTC announces new benches installed on the SNETT



Photos used courtesy of Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail Committee

The Franklin & Bellingham Rail Trail Committee (FBRTC) is pleased to announce that 4 new benches have been installed along the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT), enhancing comfort and accessibility for trail users.

The benches were paid for with a combination of a Mass Trails grant that was awarded in November, and fundraising proceeds raised at events like our recent Rail Trail 5k.

The process began during the summer of 2024 when the committee sent out a survey to the community asking what improvements they would like. The committee then surveyed the trail, and determined 4 locations that would benefit from new benches. The team then worked with MA DCR to get a

quote for acquiring and installing the benches and used that information to apply for a Mass Trails grant. The grant was submitted in February 2025, and grant winners were originally supposed to be notified in June 2025. Due to unexpected circumstances, the grants were not awarded until November 2025. With a compressed timeline, FBRTC worked with DCR to coordinate the preparation of the sites for the benches, and then assemble and install the benches.

The four new benches were installed along the 2.3-mile stretch of the SNETT between Spring Street in Franklin and Center Street in Bellingham.

“These new benches will greatly improve comfort and

accessibility for all trail users,” said Darren McNamara, FBRTC Vice President. “The most common feedback we’ve received is that the lack of seating made it difficult for some—particularly those with mobility challenges—to fully enjoy the trail. This project demonstrates how local advocacy groups like FBRTC can work hand-in-hand with state agencies to improve quality of life in our communities.”

FBRTC is a volunteer-led advocacy organization dedicated to the development and maintenance of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail. Last

year, the committee played a key role in advocating for the use of Community Preservation Act funds in Franklin to purchase disused freight rail land—extending the SNETT by 1.75 miles into downtown Franklin. The group’s ongoing priorities include improving the Franklin-Bellingham section of the trail and advancing connectivity toward Blackstone.

FBRTC extends its sincere thanks to Kevin Hol-

lenbeck and Raymond Longvall from Massachusetts DCR for their help in procuring and installing the benches, as well as to state and local officials, sponsors, and donors who supported this effort. Those interested in getting involved with FBRTC’s trail improvement and advocacy efforts are encouraged to contact fbrtcommittee@gmail.com.

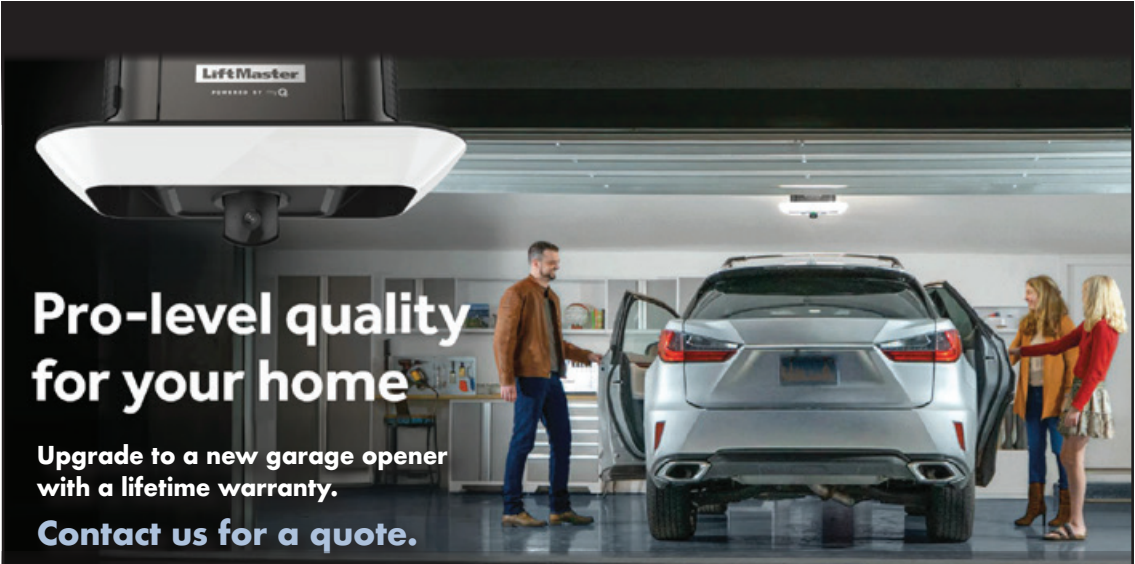


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Talk on French Canadian descendants' Canadian status Sept. 17

On September 17, at 6 p.m., Ann Marie Genereaux will present “Exploring Your Canadian Roots After Bill C-3” at the Bellingham Library.

What is Bill C-3? A Canadian law, effective 12/15/2025, that removed the first generational limit on citizenship by descent. This has far-reaching effects, because, between 1840 to 1930, an estimated 900,000 French-Canadians migrated to the US with a significant portion settling in New England. It's estimated that over 10 million Americans are of French-Canadian descent.

Under this law a person, born outside of Canada before 12/15/2025, who can document their direct line of descent from a Canadian citizen, is themselves a citizen from birth. They can go back as many generations as necessary (grandparent, great grandpar-

ents, great great grandparents, etc.) to show their descent, and they only need one Canadian citizen ancestor. Family groups descended from a common ancestor can apply for citizenship together. The USA and Canada governments both allow for dual citizenship.

Documentation of descent can be primary, which is preferred, or secondary, if necessary. Primary documentation consists of birth/baptismal certificates, Canadian naturalization records, marriage records, and/or adoption records. Secondary documentation includes Canadian and/or US censuses, US naturalization records, military records, death certificates, obituaries, etc. Genealogy societies and online sites can help with finding and obtaining documentation.

Interested persons can file Canadian Forms CIT 0001,

Application for a Citizenship Certificate, and CIT 00014, Document Checklist, along with copies of documentation of their direct lineage, copies of two IDs, two specifically-sized pictures, and a receipt for payment of the \$75 (Canadian) fee. People may also want to send a cover letter or letter of explanation and/or family tree.

No registration is required at the Bellingham Library event. Other speakers will include genealogy enthusiast John Dalpe; Annette Mimeault Smith, Vice President of the American-French Genealogy Society of Woonsocket, RI; and Molly Garten, Teen/Local History Librarian, Bellingham Library. Please note that this presentation is not legal advice and is for educational and entertainment purposes only.

Blood crisis persists, donors needed now

BOSTON, Mass. - The American Red Cross continues to urge donors of all blood types to act now and make an appointment to give blood or platelets amid the ongoing national blood crisis. Just three additional donors at every blood drive could help further stabilize the blood supply and ensure patients continue receiving lifesaving care.

Since issuing only the second blood crisis in Red Cross history in late July, thousands of generous donors have stepped up to help save lives. At the same time, the blood supply remains under severe pressure, just as many communities transition to back-to-school schedules. When fewer donors are available to give, the impact on available lifesaving blood products can be significant — especially when the blood supply is already facing a low.

Keep up the momentum and help reverse the blood crisis. Book an appointment to give blood now by using the Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Those who are unable to donate can still make an impact by encouraging eligible friends, family members and colleagues to give blood.

- Thursday, Sept. 3**
Franklin Elks, 1077 Pond St., Franklin, 1-6 p.m.
Plainridge Park Casino, 301 Washington St., Plainville, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 4**
Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford, 12-5 p.m.
Encompass Fitness, 27 Milliston Rd., Millis, 12-5 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 5**
Norfolk Center for Active Living, 28 Medway Branch Rd., Norfolk, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 17**
Franklin Elks, 1077 Pond St., Franklin, 1-6 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 18**
Framingham Fire Dept., 10 Loring Dr., Framingham, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 19**
St. Joseph Parish, 145 Holliston St., Medway, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 21**
Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 26**
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Milford, 23 Pine St., Milford, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

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Save the Date!

Tri-County Regional Chamber auction & comedy fundraiser October 24

Tri-County Regional Chamber has added a comedy element to its annual auction, this year to take place at 6 p.m. on Saturday, October 24, at the Doubletree Hotel in Milford. Comedians Steve Bjork, Mike Koutrobis, and Gianni Saltalamacchia will perform, in addition to the exciting auction in support of the chamber. For more information, visit <https://www.tricountychamberma.org/auction>.



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

By JESS OMMEN

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

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

"I take time to listen to my patients and educate them about their retinal conditions," he said. "When a patient has a good understanding of what's going on with their eyes and the treatment choices available to them, they tend to be more engaged with their retinal health, and this can lead to a better result for them. For example, with my diabetic retinopathy patients, showing them pictures of how diabetes is impacting their eyes can serve as additional motivation for them to continue to

Business spotlight

work on their blood sugars." Dr. Barsamian continued, "It's important for patients to be well informed. In fact, they tell me 'knowing what's going on' puts them at ease."

The doctor's Hopedale office is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that allows him to diagnose and treat many conditions in the office five days a week. He intentionally leaves room in his schedule for same-day appointments and new patients.

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

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

Since becoming a vitreoretinal specialist in 2010, Dr. Barsamian has focused on diagnosing and treating complex conditions such as retinal de-



Retina Physicians and Surgeons of New England



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

tachments, diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration. And, in addition to offering office-based procedures such as injections and lasers, he also performs advanced retinal surgeries for patients warranting such treatment to help them preserve and restore their vision.

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

"When I was about 18 years old, my father had bilateral retinal detachments," he said. "His physician was a world-renowned retinal specialist who examined me because he was concerned I might also be at risk. That experience stayed with me."

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

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

The most rewarding moments, he said, are seeing patients regain their independence.

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

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

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

"I want people to know we're here," he said. "We're open five days a week, have a

caring staff with more than 45 years' experience in Ophthalmology, and we're committed to providing timely, personalized retinal care in a warm, professional environment."

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

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Snow angels needed! Help your neighbors shovel out!

If you are interested and available to help an elderly or disabled neighbor in need of help with snow removal this coming winter, please call the Senior Center at 508-966-0398 and join its list of volunteers.

The Snow Angels program is a voluntary snow removal service for seniors and people with physical disabilities living independently. The program's goal is to help bring together residents who want to keep their driveways, sidewalks, and cars clear, but are physically unable to do so, with volunteers who want to help their community.

New girls' a cappella chorus forms in Bellingham

Bellingham resident Janet Billings has recently formed a new children's nonprofit chorus. Blooming Harmony is an a cappella youth chorus made up of 3rd-12th grade girls dedicated to preserving and performing the uniquely American art form of barbershop harmony. For more information on joining, visit www.bloomingharmonychorus.org or find BloomingHarmonyChorus on Facebook or Instagram.

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From the Town Clerk's office...

A big thank you to the poll workers who worked so hard at the September 1st State Primary! We're now busy preparing for the November 3rd State Election. There will be two weeks of Early In-Person Voting at the Municipal Center. Hours will be published in October's *Bulletin*.

If you have applied for a Vote by Mail ballot and selected "all elections," you will receive November's ballot by mail. If you haven't, and you want a Vote by Mail ballot, the state will be sending out postcard applications. Simply mail this back to the Town Clerk's office, and we'll get the ballot out as soon as we receive them. Please make sure you sign the application and the ballot envelope.

November's ballot will be a long one. We have nine state-wide ballot questions. Information on each question can be found on the Secretary's website at www.sec.state.ma.us. You can also find information on your voting status, or the status of your Vote by Mail ballot.



Bellingham Town Clerk staff and poll workers train for the 2026 elections.

As soon as sample ballots are available, they will be posted on the Town Clerk's website and in person at the Town Clerk's office.

For the next few months, we ask that you please call ahead for marriage intention or notary

services, as well as vital record orders. As always, please call us with any questions or concerns at 508-657- 2833. We're happy to help!

Amy Bartelloni
Town Clerk

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Tuesday (prior to mtg) by 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday (prior to mtg) by 4:30 p.m.

Municipal Spotlight

Behind the calls at Bellingham and Franklin Animal Control

By JENNIFER RUSSO

For Bellingham/Franklin Animal Control team, no two days are alike. A routine morning can quickly turn into a call about an injured animal, a loose dog, a roadkill incident, or wildlife that has wandered somewhere it may not be welcome.

At its heart, Animal Control is about helping animals that need it and keeping both them and the people in the community safe. Department Head Tracey Taddeo and Assistant Department Head Patrick Kelleher are part of a five-person team that handles a wide range of animal-related issues throughout nearby communities.

For Taddeo, the work has been a lifelong calling. She grew up on a farm and has always loved animals. Her father was a police officer and part-time animal control officer, so she grew up seeing the work firsthand and has now been doing it for 22 years.

A big part of the job is assessing the situation and understanding when an animal actually needs intervention. While many times there is a need for Animal Control to step in, sometimes what looks concerning to a person isn't something to be too concerned about.

"There are times an animal may be exhibiting normal behavior, but people aren't aware of what that might be," Taddeo said.

"A mother deer, for example, may leave her fawn alone in an open area while she searches for food. Some nocturnal animals may occasionally be out during the day. Neither situation automatically means the animal is sick or rabid," she shared.

If residents see several coyotes in their neighborhood, Taddeo recommends making noise.

"Clap your hands, beep your horn, bang some pots," she said. "The more noise you make, the more they understand they shouldn't be there. Coyotes generally avoid people. Although residents should take precautions by not letting small pets out

at night and never intentionally approach or feed a coyote, they very rarely attack humans unprovoked."

When an animal does need help, the team has traps and snare poles that allow officers to safely remove animals from dangerous situations in order to assess what is happening. For injured wildlife, the department has a network of people who can assist. They work with Tufts Wildlife Clinic at Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in North Grafton, as well as local wildlife rehabilitators and rescue organizations.

Partners include Cornerstone Farm and Rescue in Bellingham, Raptor Rescue, Return to Wild, Stacey Cobb, and other organizations that specialize in wildlife and rehabilitation, depending on the situation and type of animal they are helping.

And every once in a while, the call is something nobody could have predicted — like the crocodile encountered inside a home during a drug raid or the loose emu Patrick Kelleher encountered in Franklin. But while the unusual calls make for good stories, they are only a small part of what the department does.

Education is an important part of their work. The officers want residents to understand that trying to help an animal themselves can sometimes create an even bigger problem.

If someone attempts to grab a loose dog and gets bitten, for example, the situation can become a rabies exposure concern, particularly if the dog cannot be located afterward.

Kelleher said bats are another current concern. The department has seen an increase in bats getting into homes, and residents should not attempt to handle them. Instead, they should call animal control immediately, note where the bat is located and, if possible, contain it in one area of the home.

When animal control captures a bat, it can be submitted

MUNICIPAL SPOTLIGHT

continued on page 12

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Feeling financially fulfilled means so much more than just the number in your bank account. It's about being able to take your family out to dinner without calculating whether you can afford it. It means sleeping soundly on a Sunday night, knowing that if the water heater

gives out tomorrow, you can handle it. And it's saying yes to a vacation because you planned ahead and the money is there.

In short, financial fulfillment is the feeling that your money is supporting the life you want.

Yet true fulfillment is surprisingly rare. Only 16% of Americans are financially fulfilled, according to a 2026 study by Edward Jones and Gallup, "Money and Meaning: Understanding Financial Fulfillment." Those at the other end of the spectrum, the financially stressed (32%), often say that money regularly controls their daily decisions. Most Americans (51%), however, fall in the middle — the financially conflicted. They manage to get by but often carry a persistent undercurrent of worry.

Notably, where you land on this spectrum has less to do with

your income than you might expect. More than half of households earning \$175,000 or more are still financially conflicted.

Building the foundation

So, the question becomes, "What do financially fulfilled people do differently?" Simply put, they tend to have foundational planning structures in place. Five behaviors show up consistently among the financially fulfilled, and they're simple steps you can take, too.

- **Build an emergency fund** (98% of fulfilled have this). Aim for saving three to six months of living expenses in a liquid, easily accessible account. When you know you can handle the unexpected, you stop bracing for it, and lower stress gives you a higher quality of life.
- **Create a financial plan for retirement** (91% of financially

fulfilled have one). It's hard to feel in control if you don't know where you're going. A retirement plan puts a real number on what you'll need and lays out a clear path to get there, with built-in protection against life's unexpected curveballs.

- **Save intentionally for major milestones** (87% of financially fulfilled do). A home renovation, a new vehicle or a child's education don't have to feel disruptive. Setting money aside deliberately for the milestones you anticipate means you can say yes without scrambling.
- **Put an estate plan in place** (66% of financially fulfilled have). Estate plans are not just for the wealthy. A will and basic estate plan help ensure what you've worked for still reflects your wishes after you're gone.

- **Work with a financial advisor** (60% of financially fulfilled who sought any guidance have used an advisor in the past year). The internet is great, but real guidance comes from a credentialed person who knows you and your family and what you want your money to do for you.

Knowing that your money is working toward the life you want doesn't happen by accident. Feeling financially fulfilled is worth the effort and may be more achievable than you realize.

For more information contact: Todd Miller, CFP®
O: 781-652-9573 call or text Todd.Miller@edwardjones.com

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BVT's school lunch and breakfast programs policy

Families encouraged to check eligibility chart & submit application

UPTON, Mass. — The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District (BVT) is pleased to continue offering students one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day, thanks to permanent funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While meals are provided at no cost, families are still encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application on the school website. Doing so helps expand other educational and nutrition initiatives across the district and supports funding for these programs in future years.

You do not need to complete an application to receive free meal benefits if you receive a letter stating that your child is eligible through the direct certification process. Families who qualify for free or reduced-price

meals may also become eligible for SUN Bucks, a program that provides grocery assistance during the summer months when school is not in session. Eligible families may also qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides monthly financial assistance for groceries. If you are not currently receiving SNAP benefits but think you may be eligible, contact Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 or apply online through DTA Connect.

To determine whether your household qualifies for free or reduced-price meal benefits, visit the school website to view the current federal income eligibility chart, find answers to frequently asked questions, and complete an online application at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/freereducedmealsfaq.



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Rep. Michael Soter named to economic development bill conference committee

BOSTON, Mass.— House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading) has appointed State Representative Michael J. Soter (R-Bellingham) to serve on a six-member conference committee that will work to reconcile the differences between two comprehensive economic development proposals recently passed by the House (House Bill 5576) and the Senate (Senate Bill 3228).

Also, Rep. Soter recently supported:

- Legislation to protect vulnerable individuals receiving home care services by establishing a formal licensing process for home care agencies operating in Massachusetts, House Bill 5627, *An Act to Improve Massachusetts home care*, which calls for enhanced state oversight of home care agencies, as well as ongoing training for home care workers.
- Child welfare legislation that seeks to improve communication and coordination among state agencies working with the families of children in foster care or receiving state services, House Bill 5629, *An Act enhancing child welfare protections*, which was enacted on July 31 and is now before Governor Maura Healey for her review and signature. The bill represents a compromise negotiated by a six-member conference committee that worked to resolve the differences between two earlier versions of the bill: House Bill 4646, engrossed on October 22, 2025, and Senate Bill 3121, which was passed on June 11, 2026.
- Legislation to improve Alzheimer’s and dementia care in Massachusetts through a public awareness campaign and new training requirements to help guide municipal and state police, firefighters and EMS personnel in their interactions with individuals with cognitive impairment issues, House Bill 5613, *An Act to improve care and prepare for the new era of Alzheimer’s and dementia*, engrossed by the House of Representatives on July 29 on a vote of 156-0.
- Legislation to promote the adoption of research animals, limit animal testing, and establish a uniform pet ownership program in state-aided public housing, House Bill 5881, *An Act promoting pet equity, treatment and safety*, also known as the PETS Act, engrossed by the House of Representatives on a vote of 151-1 on July 15. The bill is a redrafted version of Senate Bill 3028, which was passed by the Senate on a unanimous 38-0 vote on March 19.
- Legislation designed to expand primary care access and make health care more affordable for Massachusetts residents, House Bill 5618, *An Act strengthening primary care and advancing health care affordability*, engrossed by the House of Representatives on July 30 by a vote of 158-0. The Senate previously passed its own version of the bill – Senate Bill 3141, *An Act relative to primary care for you* – on June 18 by a vote of 35-4. A conference committee is expected to be appointed to try to resolve the differences between the two bills and produce a compromise proposal that can be sent to Governor Maura Healey for her review and signature.



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Your Money, Your Independence

Navigating college admissions with financial planning



Glenn Brown, CFP

If you have a high school junior or senior, the college admissions process can quickly turn into an overwhelming blur of deadlines, application choices, and financial decisions. From understanding application timing to navigating shifting loan rules, every choice you make now directly impacts your family's broader financial plan.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

Let's start with the early application process with various October deadlines, and how choosing between Early Action and Early Decision carries financial implications.

Early Action gives your student an early decision without a binding commitment, letting them apply to several schools and compare actual financial aid offers. Early Decision is a binding agreement. While it can give an admissions edge at certain selective institutions, it strips away your leverage to negotiate financial aid later. If your family chooses the binding route, merit aid conversations must happen prior, not after the application.

Build Merit-Based Relationships

When targeting merit-based aid, looking beyond "trophy" schools is often where the real money is hiding. Highly competitive universities rarely offer deep merit scholarships because their applicant pools are overflowing. Instead, consider specialized or regional colleges where your student's academic profile places them in the top 20% of applicants. Encourage your teenager to lead conversations, build relationships with local recruiters, and express genuine interest. Admissions teams want to hear an authentic student

voice—not a sales pitch polished by Mom or Dad.

Manage Your 529 Plan

For families who have spent years funding a 529 plan, junior year in high school is the time to start protecting that growth. Consider shifting a portion of those funds into money market instruments so market dips do not force a bad exit right when tuition bills arrive. Tax-free withdrawals must go toward qualified education expenses like tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board. If you end up overfunding the account, SECURE 2.0 rules allow families to roll up to \$35,000 of leftover 529 funds directly into a Roth IRA for the student, provided the account has been open for at least 15 years. It serves as a great safety valve that turns unused college money into a head start on retirement.

Fast Track The FAFSA

Make sure to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible once it opens in the fall. Prioritizing early completion gives your family first-come, first-served access to state-level

grants, institutional aid, and federal work-study funds that frequently run out before general admissions deadlines.

Sequencing Your Loans

The biggest shift comes from last year's student loan reform, when open-ended federal parent borrowing officially ended. Congress placed a hard annual limit of \$20,000 and a lifetime cumulative cap of \$65,000 per dependent child on Parent PLUS loans. Direct undergraduate student loan limits remain capped at \$5,500 to \$12,500 annually. Because a four-year university can easily exceed that \$65,000 federal ceiling, families need a proactive borrowing plan:

- Pace the \$65,000 Parent PLUS cap evenly across all four years (\$16,250 annually) rather than borrowing \$20,000 upfront and hitting a wall by senior year.
- Combine lower-interest Direct student loans first, ensuring your teenager maxes out their federal loan eligibility before parents assume debt.
- Target colleges with generous institutional grants, prioritiz-

ing schools whose net price calculators reveal strong aid packages that minimize reliance on parent debt. Aligning your child's educational goals with a realistic, well-paced funding strategy ensures they get a great degree without compromising your own retirement. If you are balancing application timelines with your household wealth plan, reach out to your Certified Financial Planner to map out a custom college roadmap. *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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ACCESSIBILITY

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Construction includes improvements to the pedestrian ramps, installation of detectable warning panels at six existing accessible ramps in front of the school, and the addition of pedestrian ramps designed to comply with the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA). The Town is also pursuing additional Complete Streets funding to extend accessibility improvements along Blackstone Street from the Library toward Marion Road. The Town has applied for design engineering funds and hopes to receive future grant approval. Following completion of the design, the

Town would pursue construction funding. "We intend to continue seeking additional funding for improvements along Blackstone Street and throughout Bellingham," Riedle said. "We're continuing to explore grant opportunities that allow us to make important infrastructure and accessibility improvements while

keeping costs to Bellingham residents to a minimum. Our goal is to provide well-designed, positive improvements that benefit

a large number of residents and pedestrians."



Detailed map of the planned sidewalk improvement project on Blackstone Street between the Bellingham Middle Memorial School and the town Library.

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Bellingham student musician performs for sold-out crowd

Landon Egan performed at South Shore Conservatory's Evenings Under the Stars concert series



HINGHAM and DUXBURY, Mass. - When A Swingin' Affair took the Carr Amphitheater stage one Saturday night in July in front of a sold-out crowd at South Shore Conservatory's Evenings Under the Stars concert series, Bellingham musician Landon Egan, drums, was among the performers.

"South Shore Conservatory (SSC) is committed to bringing student and professional artists together whenever possible," said SSC Artistic Director Steve Bass. "While the sold-out audience represented an important milestone for SSC, the most meaningful part of the evening was that these students were able to experience the thrill of performing with a live 16-piece big band. It was a proud and unforgettable example of what SSC can make possible for young artists."

Egan, recipient of the 2026 Malcolm W. Rowell, Jr. scholarship for future music educators, was hand-picked to perform on stage because of his stellar musicianship in SSC's Summer Music Festival Jazz Combo. The combo played alongside some of the region's most accomplished musicians, including Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Bijon Watson and Boston Pops drummer George Darrah.



Bellingham's Landon Egan performed at South Shore Conservatory's Evenings Under the Stars concert series alongside some of the region's most accomplished musicians. Photo used courtesy of South Shore Conservatory.

The Sinatra Under the Stars performance, which filled both the 200-seat pavilion and 200-seat lawn, concluded SSC's 2026 Evenings Under the Star series.

To learn more about SSC's private lessons, ensembles, and classes, visit sscmusic.org or find South Shore Conservatory on Facebook or Instagram.

BWOT plans 4th annual Quarter Auction

The Bellingham Women of Today (BWOT) will be hosting their 4th annual Quarter Auction on Friday October 16, 2026 at the Bellingham Senior Center. The doors will open at 6 for guests, and the event will start at 6:30. This is a fun event for adults, and it's been a great fundraiser to support our High School Scholarship fund and other charities.

Local Vendors set up a table of their products for purchase and offer up 2 items for auction. Guests pay \$5 at the door, and that gets them 5 paddles to use to bid on those auction items. Guests can use quarters to get in on the bidding, as well as shop at the tables. It's a perfect opportunity to start your holiday shopping. There are many raffles and snack items available for purchase too. Some of the vendors we had in the past have been Tupperware, Tastefully Simple, Kelly's Closet, Pampered Chef, and Jordan's Essentials, and we have had wonderful crafters such as Crafty Chris and Treasures from Harley's Heart with cards, jewelry, leggings, knit items and

other handmade crafts. We are still accepting applications for vendors and crafters. Please email us at bellinghamwomenoftoday@gmail.com or message us on Facebook. The cost for vendors and crafters is \$25 for the table space and the 2 items to be auctioned off during the event. Both vendors and crafters will be given an earlier arrival time to allow them the opportunity to get set up before the door open for the guests at 6 p.m. at the Bellingham Senior Center located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham.

We hope to see you there! If you've never been to a Quarter Auction before, please don't worry; we can explain how it works. It is always a fun night for a good cause.

Membership Opportunity

Monday September 14th is our next meeting at the Bellingham Police Department in the conference starting at 7:30 p.m. We are open new members 18 years and older. All are welcome to just come learn what we do to help our community.

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EV owners can sell energy back to grid with new V2G program

By David Dunbar

Massachusetts drivers are about to get a new way to earn money from their electric vehicles. There are about 150,000 EVs in the state's cities and towns, including Bellingham.

It's called the V2G program – Vehicle to Grid – and it allows vehicle owners to send stored energy from their EV batteries back to the grid during periods of peak demand while earning incentives for participating. These incentives can range from several hundred to more than one thousand dollars per year.

Coordinating the demonstration period which started a few weeks ago is ConnectedSolutions, “an important part of our strategy to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable service,” says David Roman Ubeda, senior program manager at National Grid. “V2G may provide additional opportunities to customers in support of managing their energy bills while advancing long-term sustainability across Massachusetts.” ConnectedSolutions is one of North America's most established demand flexibility programs, already coordinating thermostats, batteries, and other distributed energy resources to reduce grid strain.

If you want to get involved, Allyssa Lanctot of Pony Communications explains that you need to be a residential National Grid or Eversource electric customer in Massachusetts. “You must own a vehicle-to-grid capable electric vehicle and have compatible bidirectional charging equipment installed as well as meet other additional eligibility requirements.”

Bidirectional chargers are generally installed like a standard EV charger, typically in a garage or on an exterior wall near a driveway or parking space where the vehicle is regularly charged.

“The program,” explains Lanctot, “is designed so participants are compensated for providing electricity during periods when the grid needs it most – typically on hot summer afternoons or other times of peak demand, when electricity is especially valuable. These kinds of events are usually of limited duration, so drivers retain plenty of charge for everyday use.”

She goes on to say, “The vehicle can typically be recharged during off-peak hours when demand on the grid is lower. The financial incentive is intended to exceed the value of the electricity discharged, allowing participants to come out ahead while also helping improve grid reliability and reduce costs for all customers.”

With more than 150,000 EVs already on Massachusetts roads and more bidirectional-capable vehicles entering the market, utilities are beginning to view parked EVs as a growing grid resource that can help improve reliability and reduce system costs. The introduction of vehicle-to-grid capabilities enables drivers to “give back” to the grid, turning every parked EV into a vital tool for a more reliable energy system.

If you'd like more information about the Y2G program, visit <https://www.nationalgridus.com/MA-Home/Energy-Saving-Programs/ConnectedSolutions>

For a deeper dive into Y2G, visit: <https://www.ica.org/reports/vehicle-to-grid-technology>.

Santa Foundation kicks off holiday giving season with gala October 2

The Santa Foundation is excited to invite the community to its Annual Gala on Friday, October 2, 2026, from 6-10 p.m. at the Franklin Elks Lodge. The evening promises great food, live entertainment, exciting raffles, and an opportunity to make a meaningful difference for local children and families during the holiday season.

Guests will enjoy a delicious buffet dinner, live music, and an evening filled with fun while supporting the Santa Foundation's mission of bringing joy and hope to children and families facing financial hardship throughout our region.

“The Gala has become one of my favorite nights of the year,” said Karla Boudreau, Gala Chair and Santa Foundation Director. “As I look out into the crowd, I reflect on the many unique ways our community contributes to this special evening and our mission. It's an opportunity to recognize and celebrate their incredible generosity while raising the funds needed to ensure hundreds of local children and their families wake up to a magical Christmas morning full of hope and happiness.”

This year's Gala will feature several exciting fundraising opportunities, including an exclusive Golden Ticket Raffle. For just \$50, supporters can purchase one of only 100 Golden Tickets for the opportunity to win one of two incredible prize packages. Golden Tickets are available through the Santa Foundation website and may be purchased whether or not you attend the Gala. With only 100 tickets available, participants have an exceptional chance to win.

Featuring two great prize packages - two winners will be selected, with the first winner choosing between the prizes before the second winner receives the remaining package. Golden Ticket prizes include a 3 night get-away in Stowe, VT, with accommodations for four guests and gift cards for local attractions. Our 2nd Golden Ticket Prize features a backyard fall oasis, including a great smokeless fire stove and all the fun accessories.

Guests will also have the opportunity to bid on extraordinary sports experiences in the Premier Silent Auction, participate in a Live Auction featuring unique items and experiences, browse raffle prizes generously donated by local businesses, and even take home one of



The all-volunteer Santa Foundation serves families across 34 MA and RI communities, last year providing holiday support to over 860 families, or 3,500 individuals. Their annual fundraising gala is October 2. Photo used courtesy of The Santa Foundation.

the evening's beautiful floral centerpieces.

“While guests enjoy a wonderful evening of food, music, and fun, the Gala also provides the momentum that powers our holiday programs,” said Pam Formosa, Director of Operations and Gala Co-Chair. “The generosity of that evening launches months of volunteer work—shopping, sorting, and coordinating with community partners—to create personalized holiday experiences for the families we serve.”

Just days before the Gala, the Santa Foundation will launch its popular Holiday Calendar Fundraiser at the Franklin Harvest Festival. The annual Holiday Calendar has become a community favorite, featuring 31 days of prizes generously donated by local businesses. Winning numbers will be drawn throughout November, culminating with a final, \$1,000 cash prize.

The Santa Foundation serves families across 34 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island

providing personalized holiday gifts, essential items, and assistance to families experiencing financial hardship. Last holiday season, the Foundation provided holiday support to more than 860 families, impacting over 3,500 individuals. As an all-volunteer organization, the Foundation relies on local businesses, community partners, and individual donors to continue its impact.

Tickets for the Gala are now available, and community members are encouraged to reserve their seats early. Sponsorship opportunities, raffle prize donations, and volunteers are also welcome.

Together, our community continues to prove that the spirit of giving isn't limited to the holidays—it begins with neighbors helping neighbors all year long.

For more information or to purchase Gala tickets, visit www.sfjoy.org or follow the Santa Foundation on Facebook.

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BVT receives CTI grant to expand workforce training

UPTON, Mass. — The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District has received an \$880,000 Career Technical Initiative (CTI) grant to train 84 adults for careers in high-demand skilled trades through the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi).

The Round 11 grant, announced Aug. 10 by Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones during an event at Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, is part of \$15.5 million in CTI grants awarded to 24 organizations across the Commonwealth.

The CTI program enables Massachusetts vocational technical high schools to use classrooms, labs, and equipment in the evenings and on weekends to provide workforce training outside the traditional school day. Through partnerships with employers, workforce boards,

community organizations and educational institutions, CTI helps prepare participants for in-demand occupations.

The Round 11 funding will support training in carpentry, automotive collision, automotive technology, culinary arts, electrical, HVAC, plumbing and advanced manufacturing. The programs are designed to address regional workforce needs and provide adult learners with opportunities to gain industry-recognized skills and credentials.

Through BVTi, the District will continue to expand its adult education programs. Fall courses include advanced manufacturing, electrical, HVAC, and welding. Spring courses will include auto body, automotive technology, construction, culinary arts, and plumbing.

"We're proud to expand access to career technical education at BVT," said BVT Superintendent-Director An-

thony E. Steele II. "This grant will allow BVTi to deliver high-quality career technical education to adults seeking to upskill or retrain, strengthen the regional workforce by preparing skilled employees for in-demand careers, and generate revenue that supports our students and programs."

This grant is funded by the Career Technical Initiative through State Appropriations and funds appropriated through the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This grant initiative is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Workforce Skills Cabinet.

For more information about adult education at BVT, visit the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti or www.bvtadulthood.org.

MUNICIPAL SPOTLIGHT

continued from page 6

for rabies testing before it is released, with testing available for up to one bat per home each year.

"A bat bite can be very serious, as they are one of the largest carriers of rabies," Patrick shared.

There are also services the department provides that many residents may not realize are available. If someone has a medical emergency and temporarily cannot care for a pet, Animal Control may be able to assist with feeding a cat or watching a dog.

Animal Control. Not long ago, a dog was found tied to a tree at a cemetery on Wrentham Road. After that situation was resolved, Taddeo actually ended up adopting the dog herself.

For the team, helping animals is about much more than responding to calls. It is about understanding animal behavior, preventing injuries, educating the public, connecting animals with appropriate care, and being there when residents need help.

Residents are encouraged to call Animal Control rather than email when an immediate situation is occurring, since officers are frequently out responding to active calls.



Tracey Taddeo and Patrick Kelleher are part of a five-person team Bellingham/Franklin animal control team. Photo by Jenn Russo

The department is also considered a mandated reporter who works closely with the Department of Children and Families. Child welfare concerns can often be connected to other issues, such as animal abuse and vice versa, making that relationship an important part of the department's community role.

In difficult situations involving suspected animal abuse or abandonment, residents are encouraged to contact police or

The office is staffed Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Outside those hours, residents should contact their local police department, which can route animal control calls appropriately.

For Taddeo, Kelleher and the rest of the team, the work may be unpredictable, but the purpose is consistent: Help when an animal needs it, help residents understand what to do, and make the community a safer place for both.



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Ladies of St. Anne Sodality begin new year

The first Ladies of St. Anne meeting of the 2026-27 year will be on Thursday, September 10. It will begin with a service in the chapel at 6:30 and then we will have our meeting in the Parish Hall afterwards.

The Ladies of St. Anne invite all Bellingham women, 18+ years to join the Ladies Sodality. Our ministry is to develop and strengthen one another in devotion to St. Anne, grandmother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Saint Blaise Parish plans annual vendor fair

Kick off your fall and holiday shopping at the 18th annual Saint Blaise Vendor Fair! This year, the church grounds will host 60 booths featuring a fantastic selection of products from talented local artisans. Visitors can explore home-made creations, home decor, jewelry, unique gifts, small businesses, local seasonal produce, raffles, baked goods, and much more.

Date: Saturday, September 19, 2026

Time: 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Rain or Shine)

Location: Saint Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham

Admission: Free and open to the public

We are also excited to welcome two local young entrepreneurs this year: Charlotte's Slime Shoppe and Daniella's Little Baubles. Charlotte will offer pre-scented and colored slimes with coordinating add-ins, while Daniella will feature beautiful paint-swirled ornaments for your holiday decor.

Whether you are shopping for yourself, decorating for the upcoming seasons, or checking off your holiday gift list, you will find something for everyone!

Come hungry! The Brotherhood of St. Joseph the Worker will sell hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and waters with seating available in the food area. Additionally, the Ladies of St. Anne will offer muffins, breads, fruit cups, yogurt parfaits, and desserts to enjoy on-site or take home.

Alien Ice will also be joining the festivities from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to serve up ice cream treats.

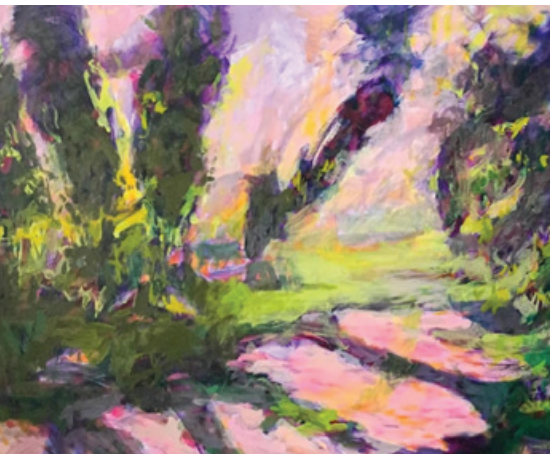
Carolyn Carey's Grandma's Attic

Grandma's Attic has been officially renamed to *Carolyn Carey's Grandma's Attic* in honor and remembrance of a beloved parishioner who started the tradition 29 years ago. Located by the garage, it will feature a wide array of old and new treasures.

Please note: While the main fair is rain or shine, the rain date for Grandma's Attic only is Saturday, October 3 (8 a.m. – 2 p.m.).

Donations: Donations are being accepted now through Wednesday, September 16. Please note we cannot accept clothing, shoes, large appliances, or bulky baby items.

Franklin Art Association to welcome abstract artist Lenny Moskowitz October 7



The Franklin Art Association warmly welcomes the public to its meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Franklin Senior Center on Wednesday, October 7. The program will feature Lenny Moskowitz who will explore a painterly, abstract approach to landscape with a focus on atmosphere, light and spatial depth.

Lenny teaches at various art

centers in New England and exhibits regionally. He taught at Quinnipiac University for 15 years and continues to enjoy doing demonstrations for art associations. He likes to approach a painting without a preconceived idea of what the final work should look like, and thrives on surprise!

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.

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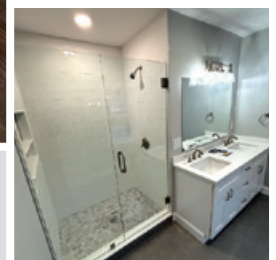
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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Why Is Everyone at b.LUXE?

Inside One of Massachusetts' Highest-Rated Salons

By GINA WOELFEL

September is the Unofficial "Back To Yourself" Season.

After a summer of loose schedules, salt air and increasingly optional beauty routines, September brings the urge to feel pulled together again. That return to yourself is what b.LUXE has always been about.

Meanwhile, at the Studio...

On any given day, more than 30 beauty professionals are cutting hair, mixing color, giving facials, applying makeup, fitting wigs and toppers, consulting with guests and learning from one another. Fifteen years in, hair is still at the heart of b.LUXE. It simply has more company now: advanced therapeutic skincare, private wig and topper services and a new generation of artists building their careers. More than 1,000 Google reviews have helped make b.LUXE one of the highest-rated salons in Massachusetts. We're proud of that number. Even prouder of what it represents. Each one came from a guest who thought their experience was worth sharing.

It Still Starts with Really Good Hair

Hair has always been the foundation of b.LUXE Studio. Our team specializes in precision cutting, custom color, extensions, smoothing services, scalp care and conditioning treatments. Every b.LUXE artist receives advanced education in cutting, coloring and treatments for all hair lengths and textures, from short hair and long layers to curls, razor cuts and clipper cuts. Your hair also has to work outside the salon.

You shouldn't need three brushes, four products, two free hours and the upper-body strength of a professional athlete to recreate it. Really good hair should still be really good when you're the one doing it.

The Next Generation Is Taking Appointments

September has always carried a certain back-to-school energy, and our apprentices understand that better than anyone. Apprentice Stylists Jenni, Anneliese and Kendall have officially joined our booking menu, offering blowouts, haircuts, color and foiling under the guidance of b.LUXE's experienced mentors and educators. We know a college budget and great hair are not natural allies.

We have a solution.

A model wash, cut and style starts at \$35. Color services start at \$40. Face-frame foils start at \$65, partial foils at \$85 and full foils at \$105! Foiling services include a color balance and blow-dry, too. These are full salon appointments, not practice sessions tucked away after hours. Each includes a consultation, completed service and senior-educator check-ins along the way. It is smart beauty math. For students heading back to campus, families watching fall expenses and anyone who appreciates b.LUXE hair at apprentice pricing, the numbers work.

Extensions Are Not What They Used to Be

The words "hair extensions" once suggested very long, dramatic results. Now, many of our guests choose extensions for reasons other than length. They want fullness through the sides, added density or the return of

volume their hair used to have. We still love a dramatic makeover. Today's extensions can be placed and blended to look completely natural. A consultation covers the method, color, placement and upkeep before a single extension is added.

Wigs & Toppers: BEAUTIFULLY YOU

Our wig and topper services began with owner Heather Cohen, who understands hair loss because she has experienced it herself. She knows that finding alternative hair is not simply a matter of selecting a color and placing an order. You want it to look natural. You want it to feel comfortable.

Mostly, you want to recognize yourself again. Our private consultations give you room to ask questions, try different options and receive honest guidance. We work with guests experiencing thinning, alopecia, medical hair loss and changes in density. Consultations are available in person and virtually for our non-local guests. Every piece is selected, fitted, cut and styled with the same care and attention as every b.LUXE hair service. We have also given wigs and toppers a home of their own at bluxewigs.com. Online retail is coming soon!

The Quieter Side of b.LUXE

Beyond the energy of the salon, behind the spa room doors, the pace changes. The light softens, the music settles into the background, and your phone stays blissfully silent in your bag. For once, you have nowhere else to be. Our G.M. Collin Master Certified Estheticians, Corinn and Monique, offer customized facials, chemical peels, waxing and lash services, with specialized care that includes oncology therapeutic skincare and Reiki facials.



Hair. Skin. Makeup. Wigs. **BEAUTIFULLY YOU**

THE NEXT GENERATION IS TAKING APPOINTMENTS



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WASH, CUT + STYLE	FROM \$35
COLOR	FROM \$40
FOILS	FROM \$65



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You may leave with brighter skin and a better home-care plan. You may also leave wondering why you waited so long to let someone take care of you. **Back to You** September is not about reinvention. It is a return to the routines that make you feel like yourself, just as the busiest three months of the year begin. Maybe that's why everyone is here. For their hair. Their skin.

Their makeup. Their confidence. Turns out, there is more than one way back to yourself. Book your next appointment at bluxe.com, or visit bluxewigs.com to learn more about wigs, toppers and private consultations. **PAID ADVERTISEMENT** *Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.*

Share your memories of Denis Fraine

The Bellingham Historical Commission is seeking stories, memories, and photos celebrating the remarkable service of longtime Town Administrator Denis Fraine.



We invite residents, colleagues, friends, and community members to share their personal reflections and experiences. These submissions will be compiled into a commemorative booklet to be presented to Denis' family, preserved in the Bellingham Historical Museum, and potentially made available for purchase.

In addition, your stories will help form the foundation of a special edition of "Crimpsville

Comments," the newsletter of the Bellingham Historical Commission, dedicated to recognizing Denis' lasting contributions and commitment to the Town of Bellingham.

To participate, please send your stories and photos to history@bellinghamma.org

Thank you for helping us honor Denis' legacy and preserve these memories for future generations.

A few things coming up at Bellingham Senior Center

The Bellingham Senior Center is located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Reach them at 508-966-0398.

Fuel Assistance: For new applications, please call to schedule an appointment to apply and obtain a checklist to determine what supporting documentation is required to apply. The FY2027 income eligibility for one person is \$53,585, for two people it is \$70,073. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) runs from November 1 through April 30, 2027.

For recertifications, the pink recert application should appear in your mailbox during the month of September. Please call as soon as you receive your application to schedule your appointment. If you do not receive yours by the end of this month, please contact Lisa Loo at (508) 657-2714.

Dance Fitness: Wednesdays, 9:15 a.m., dance routines infused with fitness and aerobic moves.

Spiritual Book Club: Mondays at 9 a.m., meets on Zoom, "Girl with 7 Names/Escape from North Korea," by Lee Hyeon-seo. Please call host Josie Dutilat (508) 657-2705 to join or learn more.

Band of Brothers:

Thursday, Sept. 10, 10 a.m., group of men committed to supporting each other through life's ups and downs.

Thrive after Therapy:

Tuesdays at 1 p.m., If you or a loved one has been doing physical therapy or completed physical therapy, and have a home program you are supposed to be following, this FREE program is for you! We come together in a room equipped with all of the PT equipment you might need along with supervision to guide you.

Shades of Ireland: Tuesday, September 8, 2 p.m. Presentation about an upcoming 10-day visit to Ireland.

Shining Tides Trail Walk: Thursday, September 17, 11 a.m. This scenic outing to Mattapoisett features an approximate two-mile walk along a beautiful wooden boardwalk with stunning coastal shoreline views. Be sure to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy! Our destination is just over an hour away. Since bus service will not be available, we will need volunteer drivers. To register for the trip or to volunteer as

a driver, please call the Senior Center at (508) 966-0398. For those who would like to travel together, the group will leave the Senior Center parking lot promptly at 10 a.m. You are also welcome to meet us at our destination in the parking lot near Depot St. and Railroad Ave. in Mattapoisett. Enter "7 Depot St." in GPS.

Parade of Elephants/ Great Elephant Migration: Thursday, September 3, Meet at Franklin/Forge Park train station at 9:20 a.m., Round trip ticket for seniors \$10.50

Experienced tour guide Rita McCarthy will lead a group visit to this public art exhibition, in Boston until September 13, featuring 100 life-size elephant sculptures along the Commonwealth Avenue Mall in the Back Bay. The sculptures are hand-crafted by more than 300 Indigenous artisans in India. You should be able to comfortably walk three to four miles on the visit. (Rain date for the trip is Tuesday, September 8.) Please call the Center to sign up; space is limited. (508) 966-0398

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:

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LIVING HEALTHY

A new treatment option for dry macular degeneration

By ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D. | MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

For decades, telling a patient they had dry macular degeneration meant delivering some of the most difficult news in eye care. I would sit across from patients worried about losing their ability to read, drive, or enjoy time with family, and explain that we had very few treatment options.

The advice was always the same: take appropriate vitamins, don't smoke, maintain a healthy lifestyle, monitor your vision, and come in for regular exams. Beyond that, our approach was largely one of careful observation. We were managing the disease as best we could, but we had little to offer in terms of active treatment.

Today, that paradigm is changing.

generation, affecting millions of Americans. Unlike wet AMD, for which effective injectable treatments have been available for nearly two decades, patients with earlier stages of dry AMD historically had no treatment specifically designed to address the disease itself. While the AREDS2 vitamin formulation can reduce the risk of progression in certain patients, active treatment options remained severely limited.

However, in November 2024, the FDA authorized the Valeda® Light Delivery System for the treatment of dry AMD. Valeda utilizes a technology called **photobiomodulation (PBM)**, offering a noninvasive approach for appropriately selected patients with intermediate dry AMD before the development of advanced geographic atrophy.

other medical fields for wound healing and inflammation, its application in ophthalmology is a major milestone.

PBM uses carefully controlled wavelengths of red and near-infrared light delivered to the retina during a series of brief, painless office treatments. The light is absorbed by mitochondria—the energy-producing structures within cells. Researchers believe this process supports cellular metabolism while reducing the oxidative stress and inflammation that drive the progression of macular degeneration.

The standard treatment protocol consists of nine short sessions performed over approximately three to five weeks. Based on clinical trials, additional treatment series may be recommended periodically.



biomodulation in patients with intermediate dry AMD over two years. The results were highly encouraging:

- **Improved vision:** Patients receiving PBM experienced an average improvement in visual acuity compared to those who received a sham treatment.
- **Measurable gains:** More than 60% of treated eyes gained at least five letters on the standard ETDRS visual acuity chart.
- **Slower progression:** The study suggested that treated patients may experience lower rates of progression to advanced geographic atrophy.
- **Safety:** The treatment was well tolerated with no significant safety concerns identified.

A note of caution: Photobiomodulation is not a cure, and it does not guarantee improved vision for every patient. As an ophthalmologist, I believe in balancing optimism with reality. Patients deserve accurate information and realistic expectations, not exaggerated promises.

Who is a candidate?

Patient selection is critical. Current evidence and FDA authorization focus specifically on patients with **intermediate dry AMD**. Determining whether this treatment is appropriate requires a comprehensive eye examination, detailed retinal imaging, and an individualized evaluation by an ophthalmolo-

gist or retina specialist.

What this means for you

If you were told years ago that there was "nothing to do" for your dry AMD, it is time to have another conversation with your eye doctor. PBM does not replace the fundamentals of care—patients must still take vitamins, avoid smoking, and undergo regular monitoring—but it offers a powerful new tool in our arsenal.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we are proud to be the fourth center in Massachusetts—and the only one in our local area—to offer photobiomodulation therapy with the Valeda system through our Franklin office.

We are also proud to provide comprehensive, on-site retina specialty care through Dr. Alyse Richard, a highly trained retina specialist dedicated to advanced, patient-centered care for complex retinal conditions.

After many years of simply monitoring dry AMD, I am grateful we finally have more to offer. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with dry AMD, contact Milford Franklin Eye Center today to schedule a comprehensive retinal evaluation.

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16th Annual “Friends of the Poor Walk” Sept. 26

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul event benefits Bellingham residents in need

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, St. Blaise Bellingham Conference is participating for the 16th year in the nationally sponsored “Friends of the Poor Walk.” The 1.5 mile Friends of the Poor Walk will be held rain or shine on Saturday, September 26th, 2026. The walk begins at St. Blaise Church, 1158 South Main Street continues down to the town common, around the common several times and back to the church.

Registration begins at St. Blaise Church, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham at 8 a.m., and the walk begins at 9 a.m. T shirts, beverages and snacks will be available to all participants.

There are no administrative fees, and all proceeds from the walk are used locally to assist Bellingham residents, regardless of faith. Assistance is provided for heating, gas, electrical bills, rent and other necessities to those who have needed help to get through a crisis or setback due to illness, job loss or other economical difficulties. Over the past nine months over 50 families and individuals have received assistance from the Bellingham Conference this past

year totaling over \$42,000. Our goal this year is to raise \$7,500. There are many ways people can help to ensure that the 16th Friends of the Poor Walk is successful. If unable to participate, you may donate to a specific walker or directly to the Bellingham conference by going to the church’s website www.saintblaise.org and scrolling down to “Online Giving.” Then, select “Saint Vincent de Paul” (please put FOB Walk in the Notes), or make a check out directly to SVdP Bellingham Walk – c/o St. Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main Street, Bellingham 02019.

Join the walk and help us help those in need. Experience the good feeling that comes with helping individuals and families to find shelter, put food on the table, heat their homes, keep the lights on, provide for their children and remain in their homes.

If you need help or know of someone who does, you can call St. Blaise Church at (508) 966-1258 ext. 15. Leave a message. Most calls are returned within 24 hours and are held in strictest confidentiality.

Christmas in September?

This year the St. Blaise Christmas Fair is getting a head start during the Vendor Fair on the grounds of St. Blaise on September 19, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. A Christmas tree will be set up at the Christmas Fair booth. The tree will have “decorations” of cards noting various items that are needed for the Christmas Fair. We are asking that you stop by the tree and choose a card with the item you would like to donate. Donations will be due by November 1. Also, donations of gift cards or services from Bellingham’s business community are requested. All donations will be used as raffle items at the St. Blaise Christmas Fair on December 5, 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. It’s a great

way to support the parish and the community as this annual event brings together folks from Bellingham and surrounding communities for a day of fun and games for all. Donating businesses enjoy some publicity as the donations feature your business name. You may even acquire new customers coming in for services because they won the raffle!

We greatly appreciate donations of gift cards from anyone. Donations of scratch tickets are also requested and appreciated.

For more information or questions you can contact Sue Garten, suegarten25@gmail.com.

Hope to see you there!

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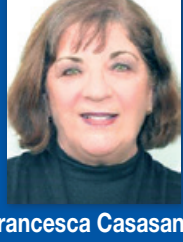
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Allegra Commonwealth Singers to hold guest nights in Sept.

Allegra Commonwealth Singers, formerly known as A Cappella Singers, meets on Mondays at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Framingham.

Interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) - soprano and alto adult singers -are welcome to attend guest nights, every Monday in September, where the December concert repertoire will be introduced. Rehearsals are Monday nights, 7-9 p.m. at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham. There is no formal audition - singers are heard for voice placement, ability to match pitch, and capability to read music.

The chorus rehearses weekly to prepare for upcoming public afternoon concerts on December 5 & 6. Director Brett Abigaña leads the chorus in his second year, and pianist Simonida Spasojevic accompanies. Information is available on the website allegrasingers.org or by emailing info@allegrasingers.org or calling 774-231-8508.



Bouncy houses will be just part of the fun at Harvest Fest, which will boast vendors, children’s activities and a concert among the many offerings.

HARVEST FEST

continued from page 1

Proceeds left over from last year’s event benefited Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry as well as the Franklin Food Pantry. “Last year we were able to give a little over \$700 to each food pantry, which was a blessing,” says Rodrigues, adding he hopes the event will grow and help it get better each year.

“We want to connect with the community, that’s our goal, and be able to do things that bring people together,” says Rodrigues. Last year, he notes, “It went amazing. Both churches coming together for a common cause, to help the community. You can’t get any better than that. You’ve heard the golden rule: love you neighbor. That’s what we’re fulfilling.”

For the youth, there will be free pony rides, face painting, a bounce house, an obstacle course, gymnastic and karate exhibitions, and other exciting activities. A concert by Just Us 4 is also on the agenda.

Many vendors will be on hand, showcasing a variety of items like jewelry, photo prints, arts and crafts, woodworking items, food trucks, candy, dried flower frames, croc charms, Tupperware, cups, wallets, etc.

Both churches are still seeking sponsors and vendors for the Harvest Fest. The fee for vendors is \$40 ,and sponsors can support the event with a contribution of any size. If interested contact Pastor Rodrigues at (508) 844-1843.

“We’re thankful for the vendors and sponsors who are partnering with us to provide fun and also help the needy in

the surrounding communities,” Pastor Rodrigues says.

At press time, sponsors included:

Our Town Publishing (*Bellingham Bulletin*), Middlesex Savings Bank, Cook Valley Farm, Unibank, Mass. Armament, Dean Bank, WMRC Radio, Pearls Candy and Nuts, and the Bellingham Lions Club, Ryan’s Country Greenery, Jennifer Lynn Photography, Stonewall Canine, Town’s Pizza & Café, Whole Foods, Imperial Cars (in honor of Ken Hamwey), Piette Jewelers, and Garelick Farms.

Both churches have been fixtures in Bellingham for a lengthy stretch.

The First Baptist Church, which was founded in 1737, played a key role in America’s fight for independence. Its meeting house was a focal point where pastors met to plot their fight for religious freedom, and its second pastor was Noah Alden, a descendant of John and Priscilla Alden of Plymouth Colony. Alden later became a religious adviser to President John Adams.

Bellingham Bible Baptist Church began 150 years ago when Noah J. Arnold and Var-num J. Bates gathered with a

small group of believers above their grocery store on Maple Street. These men laid the spiritual foundation of what would become the North Bellingham Baptist Church in 1867. Thanks to a generous land donation by Deacon D.A. King, the current building was completed and dedicated in March 1908.

“Both churches have a long-standing history of fighting for religious liberty, and today we carry out that mission by bringing hope and generosity to our community,” Pastor Carrier notes.

Pastor Rodrigues, who says he feels a deep connection to Bellingham, adds how grateful both churches were to have Bellingham Police and Fire participate and interact with families at last year’s event.

“Everyone had a good time. Everyone was enjoying themselves,” says Rodrigues, “Families, community and businesses came together for a fun day, all to help those in need.”

If you would like to be a vendor or sponsor this year’s Harvest Fest, reach out to Pastor Rodrigues at 508-844-1843 or Pastor Carrier at 508-966-0873.

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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.

Planning ahead, the BBA is raising money for 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.

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@bellingshambusinessassociation.org.

You can also look for updates on the Bellingham Business Association's Facebook page.



Sen. Rausch creates, funds reproductive care training pilot program

BOSTON, MA – As states restrict access to abortion and other reproductive care, Sen. Becca Rausch (D-Needham) secured \$250,000 in the FY27 state budget to create and implement a reproductive care training pilot program to help ensure that medical students all across the country are fully trained in reproductive care, even those in states with restrictive abortion laws. This program will expand Massachusetts' leadership in medical care and education.

"Abortion restrictions harm patients," said Rausch. "They also impact would-be reproductive health care providers who cannot access necessary training because their medical residencies are in anti-choice states. The loss of trained providers further hurts patients, including those seeking miscarriage care. Massachusetts' world-class medical schools are part of the solution for patients nationwide."

Medical students' limited li-

censure is tied to the state in which they complete their residencies. A student completing residency in Texas, for example, cannot get comprehensive reproductive care training there due to its abortion ban, nor could they in Massachusetts, because they do not have Massachusetts licensure or residency. The new law will create a narrow, limited licensure framework that will ensure that medical students with at least two years of experience can receive reproductive health care training here in Massachusetts.

Senator Rausch's successful amendment appropriates \$250,000 through the Department of Public Health for Massachusetts hospitals to provide out-of-state medical residents with abortion and abortion-related care training. It also directs DPH to issue a report on this pilot program by April 1, 2027. The measure was signed into law by Governor Healey on July 9, 2026.

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Federal disaster relief for MA farmers, secured by McGovern, finally on way

WORCESTER, Mass. — Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) announced in August that over \$42 million in federal disaster relief he secured in December 2024, is finally heading to Massachusetts farmers.

The money comes from a \$220 million New England disaster block grant program written by McGovern and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), enacted into law by President Biden in late 2024. Designed specifically to support small and mid-sized producers—particularly those in states like Massachusetts who are often shut out of traditional U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) pro-

grams—the program compensates farmers for crop losses and storm-related damage to on-farm infrastructure sustained during severe weather events in 2023 and 2024.

McGovern and DeLauro, top Democrats on the Rules and Appropriations Committees, repeatedly pushed top USDA officials in letters, phone calls, and meetings to comply with the law and release the funds—ultimately forcing the Trump Administration to do so. Massachusetts recently executed its contract with USDA, and this week is announcing a process for impacted farmers to apply for funding to support their continued farming operations.

Massachusetts is home to nearly 7,100 farms—roughly 2,000 of which lie in Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin Counties, areas devastated by 2023 flooding of the Connecticut River and battered by multiple severe weather events. Many small farms in the region are ineligible for crop insurance or find USDA aid programs too cumbersome to access, putting them at higher risk of closure following natural disasters.

Information on who is eligible and how to apply are on this MA state website: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/natural-disaster-recovery-ii-program-for-agriculture-ndrii-2023-2024>.

Franklin Rotary Club 10th Annual Car Show, Saturday, October 3

Event at New England Chapel accepting sponsors through Sept. 11

The Franklin Rotary Club & New England Chapel 10th Annual Car Show is slated for October 3, 2025, from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., located at the New England Chapel, 300 Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038.

Registration is \$20 per car, and entry is FREE for spectators. This show features: Food, Ice Cream, Air-Conditioned

Lounge, Indoor Restrooms & Raffles. This car show welcomes vehicles of all types; Antique, Muscle, Classic, Custom, Motorcycles and out of the norm new cars! Trophies will be awarded at 12:30 p.m. The Rotary Club Car Show has now become a staple of the Franklin Community, and we are proud to offer this event to all.

DEADLINE FOR SPONSORSHIP – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

To register or become a sponsor contact: Gary Convertino at gconvertino@cox.net.

All proceeds to benefit Rotary Club of Franklin, MA community service projects.

Immigrant Rights' Coalition celebrates enactment of PROTECT ACT

BOSTON, Mass. — On August 5, 2026, Gov. Maura Healey signed the PROTECT Act, which seeks to curtail the federal government's brutal immigration enforcement activities, protect due process, and limit local agencies' cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The Protecting Massachusetts Communities Coalition has been advocating for this bill for more than a year and celebrates its passage as an important step in supporting and improving public safety for all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of immigration status.

The Protecting Massachusetts Communities Coalition offers its deepest thanks to House and Senate leadership for their support of the bill, and to the six-member conference committee for carefully reconciling the two versions. The coalition also extends special thanks to the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus for their work on the bill, and to Governor Maura Healey for her support and signing this bill into law.

According to the Massachusetts Municipal Association:

"The final accord adopts the broader scope of protected areas offered in the Senate's version of the bill, restricting warrantless arrests by immigra-

tion enforcement officers in courthouses, schools, childcare centers and healthcare centers. Each of these groups will need to create guidance and model policies on interactions related to law enforcement agents, with each school district ensuring it has a written emergency response plan related to these interactions by Sept. 1, 2026, or the first day of school, whichever is earlier.

The law also codifies the Supreme Judicial Court's "Lunn" decision by reinforcing the idea that local officers cannot arrest or detain a person based on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer alone. It also prohibits any new 287(g) agreements for civil immigration enforcement. The state's only current 287(g) agreement between the Department of Correction and ICE is allowed to remain intact.

The final compromise also prevents officers from inquiring about immigration status during routine policing and creates new civil liability for ICE agents by allowing victims of unjustified actions to sue them in state court."

To view the text of the act, visit <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2026/Chapter163>.

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CALENDAR

September 1

Novel Idea book club, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, “Remarkably Bright Creatures,” by Shelby Van Pelt. Contact Diane Nelson at dnelson@cwmar.org

Fiber Arts & Other Crafts, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, bring your craft and enjoy others’ company

Online Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> . Why the Ideas That Built America Still Matter with David O. Stewart, 2 p.m.

September 2

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, features artist Rose Wang, all welcome

September 3

OUT MetroWest Bellingham Satellite Night, 5 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, free monthly program for LGBTQ+ youth and their allies in middle and high school.

Fri-Yay Open Play, 10:15 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, open ended crafts for 0-5

September 7

Allegra Commonwealth Singers guest night, 7-9 p.m., St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham, interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend

September 8

Online Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> . A Ship Called Sickness and One Unforgettable Space Crew with Daniel Kraus, 7 p.m.

Friends of Library monthly meeting, 7 p.m. on Zoom, email library@bellinghamlibrary.org

September 9

West African Drum Fundraiser with Logan Amaral, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, for all ages - Registration appreciated. \$15 to participate (cash only) with \$5 of the fee going to the Friends of the Library. Under 15 must have adult.

September 10

Ladies of St. Anne Sodality first meeting of year, 6:30 p.m. service followed by meeting, St. Blaise Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham, women 18+ welcome

September 12

Uxbridge Knights of Columbus Car Show, 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m., Uxbridge High School, 300 Quaker Highway, Uxbridge

September 14

Bellingham Women of Today meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bellingham Police Dept., 30 Blackstone St., Bellingham, open to new members 18 years+. All welcome to attend.

In Conversation with Author Heather B. Moore, “Her America,” virtual program

through Bellingham Library, 7 p.m., register on library website Registration required. From award-winning, starred-review author Heather B. Moore comes a powerful portrait of eight American women whose courage and conviction drove them to smash stereotypes and build a nation - we’ll be discussing Her America, released just a few weeks ago.

Book Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m. in person or on Zoom, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, “Somewhere Beyond the Sea,” by TJ Klune, Contact Suzanne at salpert@cwmar.org

September 15

Tech Tuesday, 4-5 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, topic: email, registration required, contact salpert@cwmar.org for questions.

Online Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> . The Art of Fighting: Building Better, Stronger Relationships with Priya Parker, 4 p.m.

Writing Group for Adults, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library or on Zoom, contact Marjorie Turner Hollman at marjorie@marjorieturner.com

Fiber Arts & Other Crafts, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, bring your craft and enjoy others’ company

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or

fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9> .

September 17

Exploring Your Canadian Roots After Bill C-3, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Ann Marie Genereux will explain how Americans with French Canadian ancestry may qualify to be a Canadian citizen.

September 18

Main Street Live, 4 p.m., presented by Bellforges Arts Center, Walpole Town Common, free event includes live music, local vendors, food trucks, cocktails, and community, register at www.bellforges.org.

September 19

St. Blaise Annual Vendor Fair, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Rain or Shine), Saint Blaise Parish, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham

The American Story in Song: A Live Musical Show, 1 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, made possible by Cultural Council grant

Lucy Kaplansky, Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. (doors open 7 p.m.), First Universalist Society of Franklin meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, tickets at www.circlefolk.org

September 21

Monarch Migration Story Time, 10:30 a.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, family program, check online calendar for location

September 21

BBA Golf Tournament, 3 p.m. tee-off, 2 p.m. raffles & registration, Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chococog Rd., Uxbridge, contact contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org

September 22

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9> .

September 23

Wicked Strange New England with Jeff Belanger, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, registration required
Bellingham Night at Fenway, 6:45 p.m. Anthem by BHS Band, colors by Bellingham Fire & Police, 7:10 p.m. game Boston vs. Cleveland, Fenway Park, \$23 a ticket grandstands 28 & 29, www.gofevo.com/event/BellinghamNight

September 24

Online Author Talks – to register for these talks, go to: <https://libraryc.org/bellinghamma> . Where the Paletero Man Goes: A Journey of Neighborhood, Music, and Art with Lucky Diaz, 7 p.m., Paletero Man: un viaje por el barrio, la música y el arte con Lucky Diaz, 8 p.m.

SOUR GRAPES by Tim Jones



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CALENDAR

September 26

16th Annual SVdP Friends of the Poor Walk, registration 8 a.m., walk at 9 a.m., St. Blaise Church, 1158 South Main St., Bellingham, from church to town common, around common several times and back to the church, 1.5 miles. T shirts, beverages and snacks available to participants. Sign up or donate at www.saintblaise.org
Harvest Fest (Bellingham), 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Bellingham Town Common, presented by First Baptist Church and Bible Baptist Church, vendors, free

September 28

Bellingham Genealogy Club, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, contact Molly Garten at mgarten@cwmmars.org

September 29

Tech Tuesday, 4-5 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, topic: social media and information literacy, registration required, contact salpert@cwmmars.org for questions.
Fiber Arts & Other Crafts, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, bring your craft and enjoy others' company
America's 250th Anniversary Book Club, 6:30 p.m. "A Resistance History of the United States" by Tad Stoermer. Registration required.

October 1

60th Birthday Party, 6 p.m., Bellingham Senior Center, 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham, call (508) 966-0398 to reserve your spot if you turn 60 this year!

October 3

The Franklin Rotary Club & New England Chapel 10th Annual Car Show, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., New England Chapel, 300 Central St., Franklin, MA 02038. Registration is \$20, free for spectators, sponsors welcomed through 9/11, contact gconvertino@cox.net.
CultureFest, 10 a.m., Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Road, Medfield, annual community celebration of music, food, dance, and cultural traditions from around the world — presented in partnership with Medfield Together. Register at www.bellforge.org.

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9>.

The photograph you'll be grateful you took

How to capture your pet's personality, not just a pose

BY RIDDHI SHAH

Most pet owners have hundreds of pictures on their phones. There are photographs of their pets sleeping, playing, and staring suspiciously at the camera. Yet only a few may truly preserve what living beside that animal felt like.

A meaningful pet portrait does more than document appearance. It records attention, trust, habit, and the small gestures through which an animal becomes part of a family.

Throughout my work in school, senior, sports, and environmental portraiture, I have learned that the strongest photographs rarely come from forcing a perfect pose. They emerge when the subject stops performing and begins behaving naturally. Animals make that lesson especially clear. A photographer must learn to observe and respond.

When photographing a pet, I use a three-part approach: Presence, Connection, and Place.

Presence

Begin with a portrait that treats the animal as an individual.

People often photograph pets from their normal standing height. Lowering the camera to the animal's eye level creates a more direct and personal encounter. In my seated portrait of Roxy, her white coat separates her from the green background, while her red collar provides a strong point of contrast.

Focus on the eye closest to the camera. On a phone, tap that eye on the screen before taking the picture. Rather than repeatedly calling the animal's name, wait for a natural moment of curiosity or attention.

Connection

A traditional portrait shows what a pet looks like. A relational portrait begins to show what the pet means to someone.

In the second image, the dog's face is absent. The photograph concentrates on a paw resting across a human hand. Close framing and a softened background direct attention toward the gesture, while the hand, bracelet, and leash quietly communicate affection, responsibility, and care.

Look for gestures already present in the relationship. An animal may rest its head on someone's knee, wait beside a particular chair, or carry the same toy everywhere. These details may feel ordinary now, but they often become the ones people remember most clearly.

Place

Every pet develops a relationship with certain places: a favorite patch of grass, a window filled with afternoon light, or the end of a sofa.

In the final photograph, the dog reclines in a field. The wider frame allows the environment to become part of the portrait and gives the image a sense of familiarity and rest.

Before taking a picture, examine the edges of the frame. Moving a few feet can remove a distracting vehicle, sign, or tree more naturally than repairing the background later.

Together, the three photographs create a simple story: one portrait establishing presence, one detail showing connection, and one wider image preserving place.

Good pet photography depends more on patience and observation than expensive equipment. Soft shade or window light usually preserves more fur detail than direct sunlight or flash. Give the animal



Presence: Roxy photographed at eye level, allowing her expression to remain the center of the portrait.



Connection: Roxy rests her paw in her owner's hand during the portrait session. Photos by Riddhi Shah.

time to become comfortable, and never risk its safety for a photograph.

Editing should clarify what the photographer observed, not replace it. Cropping and restrained adjustments can strengthen an image, but changing the animal's expression or reshaping its body removes the individuality the portrait was meant to preserve.

Years later, technical perfection will matter less than recognition. The photograph that matters most may not be the one in which a pet sat perfectly. It may be the one in which the

animal felt safe enough to simply be itself.

About the Author

Riddhi Shah is a Bellingham-based digital artist and photographer with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Digital Media from Florida State College at Jacksonville. Her experience spans photography, graphic design, visual storytelling, branding, and community-focused creative work. She has worked with and photographed nearly 15,000 students and young adults across three states.

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SPORTS

Built in February: Haddad's standards set the tone for Bellingham High Football

BY MATT HYLEN, SPORTS STAFF WRITER

Ask Bellingham High School Football Head Coach Dan Haddad about team culture and the first thing he does is take issue with the word.

"Culture is one of the most overused words, but so important," the Bellingham head coach said. "Most can't tell you what their culture is unless it's clearly defined."

So, in his program, culture is defined immediately. "Culture to our program starts with who you become when you walk through our locker room doors," Haddad said. "Then it's clearly defined on what high standards you need to follow. It is driven by our captains."

What Haddad stated about his captains is not a courtesy.

Haddad describes his captains as the mechanism the whole operation runs on, and he is specific about when their work actually happens.

"Our captains, and leadership, is everything to us," he said. "They need to set the standard for the team. Everyone needs to believe in each other, and that's not built in August. That is built in February."

Few coaches in the Tri-Valley League have had longer to arrive at that view. Haddad has been involved in Bellingham youth football for 26 years, coaching Pop Warner teams and all five of his own children before moving up through the freshman and junior varsity levels. When the high school job opened in 2015, he took it.

"When this job became available, it was a no-brainer to go for it," he said. "I have loved every minute of it."

Looking back at last season, it was very challenging for Haddad and the team. The Blackhawks finished 5-6 and closed Thanksgiving with a 3-0 loss to Norton, a game in which they did not score. Haddad attributes the year less to personnel than to luck.

"Last year was the first time in a while where injuries really impacted us, and at the worst time," he said. "We have been working on our depth and putting the players in the best position to be successful."

Depth is a particular kind of problem at a school Bellingham's size, and Haddad's answer starts with who comes



Coach Dan Haddad with his two sons and coordinators, Danny Jr and Chris. Courtesy of Danny Haddad Jr's X page.

out for the team with the level of toughness needed to succeed in the sport.

"Talent is good to have, but give me toughness over talent any day," Haddad said. "That's my ideal player. Tough men-

tally and physically."

Running the day-to-day is a staff he did not have to look far to assemble. Haddad's sons

HADDAD

continued on page 26



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SPORTS

Bellingham field hockey looking to be competitive

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

During her first year with the Bellingham varsity field hockey team, Coach Kerry Cowell was able to take the Blackhawks into the Division 4 State Tournament, where they were able to come out of the preliminary game with a win. Unfortunately, Bellingham then had to take on DoverSherborn the number three seed, who would advance all the way into the Semi Finals. The Blackhawks would get shut out 4-0, and just like that their season had come to an end.

"We had a very tough schedule against some powerhouse teams, and despite our record, every game was battle," Cowell said. "The preliminary tournament game was a highlight of the season; the team played well together and earned their spot in the tournament.

In her second year with the program, Cowell is looking for her team to once again be competitive and hopefully push ahead further into the tournament.

"My goals this year are to be a competitive team once again and improve upon our record from last year," the Blackhawk Coach said. "By using the talent of each individual player, I am hoping to build a team that is versatile in positioning to give us depth for game time needs."

This year, Bellingham finds themselves 32 players strong and able to not only field a varsity team but a junior varsity program as well. Thanks to the consistency and strength of Coach Sam Cowell's middle school program and the Lady Hawks town youth program run by BHS alumni Erin Mckenzie and Rachel McCullough, the varsity team is hoping to build the future of the program on the high school level. Moira Phillips will once again takes the reins of the JV program.

Leading the Blackhawks into battle on the field this fall will be tri-captains Ella Park and Megan Skarin, both seniors, as well as junior Shannon Marino.

Park, a multi-sport athlete that plays field hockey as her primary sport, has been using her



Bellingham High Field Hockey captains Shannon Marino, Megan Skarin and Ella Parks. Photo used courtesy of Kerry Cowell.

defensive skills since elementary school when she began playing for the Lady Hawks program. She empowers strong stick skills and brings great vision to the field, while dedicating herself to the sports and the Bellingham High School program.

"She has grown up supporting all the players before her, and I am excited to watch her shine during her senior year," the Coach said. "As a major contributor on the field, we relied heavily on her defensively."

Megan began playing field hockey in her freshman year, jumping into the role of goalie. The four-year field hockey player also participates in indoor track and softball in the spring. According to the Coach, she is the best-conditioned athlete on the Bellingham squad and is willing to go the extra mile for the team.

"Megan is a great communicator and has excellent positioning, while being aggressive and hungry to protect the net," Cowell said. "She is a natural leader and will make a great captain for our team."

Much like Skarin, Marino also started playing field hockey

during her freshman campaign and also plays basketball and lacrosse in addition to field hockey. Although only a junior, Marino is not only a fierce competitor on the field, but she seems to always be at her peak performance level.

"Shannon's peak performance level is due to her commitment she places on conditioning," the Bellingham Coach said. "She is always the fastest player on the field and continues to develop into a strong midfielder with excellent stick skills and ball distribution."

In addition to the three captains, the Blackhawk Coach will be looking to three other returning athletes to help get this team back into the tournament.

Sophomore forward Emme Henchey was Bellingham's leading goal scorer last year as only a freshman. The youngster has the natural ability to see plays before they actually happen. In doing so, she is able to properly position herself to obtain the best possible offensive situations where she can get her stick on the ball without any hesitation. The sophomore also seems to bring a sense of humor and ability to the field in order to pick

her teammates up.

Another sophomore, Chloe Goodwin, will patrol the mid-field as well as the defense and is an individual that continuously lives and breathes the game of field hockey. Her depth of field hockey knowledge is vast and evident.

"No matter what is happening on the field, she is exactly where she needs to be at every moment," Cowell said. "She is patient and confident with the ball, allowing her teammates to make runs in the open space on the field. She has an incredibly bright future in field hockey and should be able to do some big things on the field for us this year."

Junior midfielder Lara Laquerre only joined the Bellingham field hockey team last fall and over her first season the coach has watched her skills grow. She has excelled in her positioning and has been able to anticipate plays, while also creating opportunities. According to the coach, she is a great teammate and well respected by all.

As the season gets closer Cowell believes that the changes the team made to their schedule this year should allow the team to feel more competitive and that should translate into more wins. Bellingham will get the season underway on Tuesday September 8 when they travel to TVL foe Medway.

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Bellingham Public Library September Special Programs

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

Closed: Saturday, 9/5 and Monday, 9/7 for Labor Day.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month!

For questions, contact Suzanne at salpert@cwmar.org or 508-966-1660.

Special Programs

OUT MetroWest Bellingham Satellite Night – Thursday, September 3 at 5 p.m.

Meets on the first Thursday of every month at 5 p.m. No registration. This year, we are partnering with OUT MetroWest to bring their Satellite program to the Bellingham Public Library! This free monthly

program is open to LGBTQ+ youth and their allies in middle and high school. Join us in the Teen Room.

Fri-Yay Open Play – Friday, September 4 at 10:15 a.m.

The Community Room will be set up with some open-ended art and activities for ages 0-5. If you're looking to beat the heat or get your weekend started early, come play from 10:15 to 11 a.m.

West African Drum Fundraiser with Logan Amaral – Wednesday, September 9 at 6 pm

For all ages - Registration appreciated. Join Logan Amaral, Director of Kekeli Drum Dance and Founder of Spread the Light Music and Dance, for an evening of drumming! On the second Wednesday for the next few months Logan will be lead-

ing this drumming program at the library as a Fundraiser for the Friends of the Library. Each session is \$15 to participate (cash only) with \$5 of the fee going to the Friends of the Library! Open to all ages, but anyone under 15 must be accompanied by an adult (the adult does not have to participate if they do not wish to).

Chat & Craft for Adults: Fall Picture Pointillism – Thursday, September 10 at 6:30 pm

For ages 18 and up. Registration required. Join Molly for our Chat & Craft Fall Kickoff! We will be painting a Fall landscape using a pointillism technique. This craft requires the ability to grasp a q-tip using fine motor skills. *This program is made possible through support from the Friends of the Bellingham Library.*

Tech Tuesdays – Tuesdays, September 15 and 29 at 4 p.m.

Registration required. Join Assistant Director Suzanne for "Tech Tuesday" small group technology instruction lessons. On the 15th, we'll discuss email-differences between providers, using it on your phone and desktop, and security concerns. On the 29th, we'll discuss social media and "information literacy."

ADU's and Construction Loans – Wednesday, September 16 at 6 p.m.

Please check our online calendar for more information!

The American Story in Song: A Live Musical Show – Saturday, September 19 at 1 p.m.

In *The American Story in Song*, the duo Sultana weaves history, original songs, and a slideshow for a unique and fun look at U.S. history and legends. It is a story of heroes and celebrities, immigrants and indigenous peoples, injustices and progress. The program is part of the series "Live Music Making History Live." *This program is made possible through a Cultural Council Grant.*

Monarch Migration Story Time – Monday, September 21 at 10:30 a.m.

For families - No registration needed. Monarch butterflies are making their way south this month! Join us in learning about their life cycle and migration pattern. We'll also be making some seed balls to help grow native plants that are helpful to butterflies and other local insects. If possible, we will be trying to hold this event at an outdoor location. Please check the online calendar closer to the event date for location!

Wicked Strange New England with Jeff Belanger – Wednesday, September 23 at 6:30 pm

Registration required. Based on his best-selling book *Wicked Strange: Your Guide to Ghosts, Monsters, Oddities, and Urban Legends from New England*, Jeff will share creepy and compelling tales of the strange and frequently unseen world--New England style! Covering haunted places, swamps, forests, and lakes where mysterious creatures have been spotted, areas where unusual events have happened, eccentric locals, and roadside oddities, noted expert of the strange Jeff Belanger is your guide.

Teen After Hours – Friday, September 25 at 5 p.m.

The Library is staying open late just for teens! Stick around after the Teen Room usually closes for a night of fun activities before the Blackhawks football game at 7 p.m. Join us for food, games, prizes, and crafts. Plus, a karaoke and a photobooth!

America's 250th Anniversary Book Club – Tuesday, September 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Registration required. "A Resistance History of the United States" by Tad Stoermer. We will be meeting in the Library's Conference Room and on Zoom.

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HADDAD

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hold both coordinator positions: Chris runs the defense, Danny the offense.

"I am blessed beyond my means to have the most incredible group of coaches," Haddad said. "They take care of all the practices and organize what needs to be done on the field."

The arrangement is not new. Haddad brought both sons onto the staff when he took over the program, neither with much coaching experience, and the three of them have run it together since. Chris played defensive back at Curry College and has since built a side business producing instructional material for youth and high school coaches. Danny came straight from playing at Bellingham.

In 2021, the staff was named USA Today's high school coaching staff of the year. The trio knows what they can accomplish together, but it is a matter of translating those expectations into achievable goal setting for their players.

"Expectations are given at the beginning of the season, in writing, so they clearly understand what is needed," Haddad said.

The goals attached to them are short, and the last one is the one every program in the state measures itself against. The MIAA Super Bowls are played at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough.

"We hope to stay healthy this year and try to achieve the goals we set for them," he said. "Make playoffs and try to get to Gillette."

Everything else Haddad wants from the season has a longer horizon than November.

Asked what he hopes players carry out of the program, he did not mention wins.

"I hope when they leave us, the discipline and high standards we set carry over to the next adventure in their journey," Haddad said. "I want them to fear no task and approach every one of life's challenges with the same mental toughness they had on the field."

That is the argument underneath the written expectations, the no-cut roster and the February workouts. Tough over talent is not only how Haddad picks a football team.

"Life is hard," he said, "we do everything we can to prepare them for those challenges."

Franklin’s September 26th Harvest Festival

Full of Fun, Food and Music

Franklin’s 24th Annual Harvest Festival is set for Sat., Sept. 26, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Rain date is Sun., Sept. 27. Like last year’s festival it will extend up Main Street with more vendors and activities at Dean College and Franklin Library.

Main Street will be busy with more than 130 booths and thousands of visitors from Franklin and beyond. Come and enjoy live music and dance performers, lots of food choices, children’s activities, unique artwork and crafts, merch and services from local businesses, and meet local community groups. Celebrate the golden end of summer and get ready for the vibrant colors of autumn.

Franklin Downtown Partnership organizes the festival. “The Harvest Festival is the ideal time to socialize, relax, and enjoy the community spirit,” said Kevin Johnson, Harvest Festival Chair.

“Each year we try to add something different and recently we have expanded further north on Main Street. It is a special day.”

Here are some highlights:

- Live music performances by the Padula Family Band and Critical Mass. Dance performances by Feet in Motion, Desi Swag Queens and Franklin School of Performing Arts (FSPA).
- Touch-a-Truck, courtesy of Franklin Fire.
- Radio station MyFM will broadcast live from Main Street near the center island/bridge. In partnership with the FDP, Franklin TV & WFPR 102.9 FM will broadcast live near the library.
- Franklin Library will have children’s activities on the lawn.
- Dean College will have activities on the quad.

- Franklin Historical Museum will be sharing info and Franklin-themed items at the Cultural Hub.
- Great food all along Main Street. Dean Bank will be selling apple cider and donuts, popcorn and water. Proceeds from their sales support FDP and the festival. Take a few extra steps to downtown and you can enjoy more restaurants and cafes.
- Downtown activities: the Children’s Museum of Franklin will have kid-friendly fun at their home at 157 Cottage Street.

The Harvest Festival is made possible because of generous local business sponsors. Franklin Downtown Partnership is very grateful to this year’s sponsors:

Platinum – Dean Bank; G&C Plumbing & Heating, Local Town Pages



Gold – Dean College; Glen Meadow Apartments; Middlesex Savings Bank; Sunrise Montessori School

Silver – Doherty, Dugan, Cannon, Raymond & Weil, P.C.; Eagle Stainless Tube & Fabrication, Inc.; Hockomock YMCA; Notturmo Home Services; Rockland Trust Bank; The Enclave of Franklin

Bronze – ABI New England; Camford Property Group;

DCU; DG Ranieri; Fenton Financial Group; Franklin Kitchen Center; LeafFilter; MyFM; Simon’s Furniture

For festival updates and to stay in the know about activities throughout the year follow the FDP on Instagram and Facebook:

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



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