

localtownpages Norfolk & Wrentham

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

November 1, 2026

Kingsbury Pond: What to know before the Nov. 19 meeting

By JOE STEWART

Residents of Norfolk and Franklin can hear from state and local officials about Kingsbury Pond at a community meeting on Thursday, Nov. 19, at 7 p.m.

State Senator Becca Rausch, who represents both towns, is hosting. According to her office, attendees will include the state representatives and town administrators for both towns, plus representatives of the Norfolk Select Board and the Franklin Town Council. Information from the Department of Environmental Protection, which oversees wells, will be shared. The location had not been announced at press time. Rausch's office says it will be posted on her social media channels.

Here is a refresher on the issue, along with questions attendees may want to ask.

The pond and the well

Kingsbury Pond, in northwest Norfolk near the Franklin line, is a glacial kettle pond. No stream flows in or out. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), its level depends on groundwater and rain.

In July 1964, Franklin began pumping a new town well about 1,300 feet from the pond. Today it is called Well 4. A regional drought was already under way. By December 1966, the pond had dropped about 13 feet. It shrank from 26 acres to about 9, according to a 1967 USGS report.

USGS found that groundwater that once flowed toward the pond was now flowing toward the well. It could not say how much of the drop came from pumping and how much from drought.

Norfolk and pond residents later sued Franklin. A court-appointed master found the well caused the decline. A judge dismissed the case in 1973.

Why the pond rises and falls

A 2023 USGS study, done for the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), used a computer model of the area's groundwater.

The model estimated the pond would average about 136 feet above sea level with no

KINGSBURY

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Wrentham toy swap keeps playthings in play

**5th annual event
set for Nov. 28**

By GRACE ALLEN

In the "Toy Story" films, Woody, the toy cowboy, is determined to help discarded or lost toys find a home. Toys, he reminds Buzz Lightyear, are meant to be played with.

Alexander Cassie might just be Wrentham's own real-life Woody, making sure forgotten toys find their way back into children's hands.

Five years ago, Cassie saw an opportunity to give discarded playthings another chance. He decided to start an annual toy swap as a way to rehome unwanted toys and



PLAY IT AGAIN: Donated toys await new homes at last year's toy swap. The fifth annual event returns to the Fiske Library on Nov. 28, offering free toys and books just in time for holiday giving. (Contributed photo)

also tame the excess around the holidays. By all accounts, it's been a resounding success, with a conservative estimate

of thousands of toys finding new homes.

TOY SWAP

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*Holiday
Guide*

**LOOK
INSIDE!**

Wrentham Fall Town Meeting Set for November 9

By JOE STEWART

Wrentham’s Fall Town Meeting is Monday, November 9. As usual, the meeting will be held at King Philip Regional High School beginning at 7 p.m.

The warrant has eight articles and covers the fire union contract, recreation funding, police hiring rules, and a new zoning definition for data centers.

Spending articles

Article 2 funds Wrentham firefighters. Article 7 asks for \$350,000 to light a Little League field at the William Rice Recreation Complex. The money would come from Community Preservation accounts.

Article 6 does not ask for new money. It would extend the deadline to spend \$200,000 that voters approved in June 2024. That money is for an engineering design study of the

Metacomet Greenway. The new deadline to finish spending would be December 31, 2028.

Police hiring age limit

Article 5 deals with police hiring. In 2002, Town Meeting adopted a state law that sets a maximum age of 32 for new police officers. The Select Board is asking voters to rescind the restriction.

Data centers

Article 8 comes from the Planning Board. It would add a definition of “data center” to the town’s zoning bylaws. The proposed definition describes a mainly commercial or industrial building that houses large computer servers, data storage, and networking equipment. Small server rooms that support another business would not count.

The article would add data centers to the town’s table of

allowed uses; however, each zoning district is marked “N” for “not allowed” effectively excluding data centers from the Town’s current zones.

Other articles

Article 1 recognizes Wrentham’s 2026 Volunteer(s) of the Year.

Article 3 updates job titles in the town’s general bylaws. “Town Administrator” would become “Town Manager.” “Superintendent of Public Works” would become “Director of Public Works.” “Town Planner” would become “Director of Planning and Economic Development.”

Article 4 asks voters to let the Select Board seek a special act from the State House. It would extend the deadline for issuing certain alcohol licenses under a 2024 state law. The new deadline would be January 3, 2031.

Norfolk Lions to host Holiday on the Hill tree decorating contest

The Norfolk Lions invite residents, businesses and organizations to get into the holiday spirit by participating in the annual Holiday on the Hill Christmas tree decorating contest on Sunday, Nov. 29.

For a \$40 entry fee, participants will receive a Christmas tree and access to electricity along Main Street. Entrants are encouraged to choose a theme and decorate their trees with creativity and holiday flair. Businesses may also incorporate advertising into their displays.

The Lions will set up the trees, which will be available for decorating beginning the week of Nov. 23. The decorated trees will be unveiled following the Santa Parade on Nov. 29, when the parade concludes on Town Hill.

Parade attendees can vote for their favorite tree that day, with additional voting available at the



Norfolk Public Library during the following week. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

The decorated trees may remain on display through Christmas for the entire community to enjoy. Participants are asked to secure all decorations to ensure they withstand the weather throughout the contest.

The contest is open to everyone. For more information or to register, visit norfolkmalions.org.



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Save the date for the Norfolk Lions annual Santa Parade

Santa Claus will roll into Norfolk on Sunday, November 29 and a host of groups will turn out to celebrate his arrival with a variety of activities.

Santa and his entourage will be ushered into town by the highly acclaimed King Philip High School Marching Band under the direction of Mr. Michael Keough. Prior to the parade, Santa stops in at Hillcrest Village where his elves will hand out cookies and treats.

Santa's parade will begin at 3:30 p.m. at the Hillcrest Village on Rockwood Road. Mrs. Claus, Rudolph, Santa's elves, Frosty the Snowman, the Grinch, Buddy the Elf, the Nutcracker, Ebenezer Scrooge, King Rat, the Nutcracker, the Gingerbread Man, Norfolk Police and Fire Departments, area Scouts, KP Cheerleaders, Junior Cheerleaders, Sports Teams, Exhale dancers and others will join Santa along Route 115, through the center of town, turning right onto Liberty Lane and ending at the Norfolk library.

At 4 p.m. residents are in-



vited to visit with Santa in the community room inside of the library. Please bring your own smart phone or camera to take pictures with Santa. Refreshments will be provided by the Norfolk Recreation Department.

Children are invited to bring their homemade ornaments

to help the adults decorate the town Christmas tree, which will be lit for the first time to mark the beginning of the season.

In the event of rain, the parade will be canceled but Santa will visit with children inside the library for picture taking.

The Santa Parade and festivities are sponsored by the Nor-



folk Lions Club and the Norfolk Recreation Department, with the cooperation of numerous town departments, including

our Fire, Police and Highway Departments and the staff of the Norfolk Public Library.

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From the Office of the Norfolk Town Administrator

Norfolk Town Meeting set for November 10

Norfolk has one of its two annual celebrations of small town New England democracy—Fall Town Meeting—Tuesday, November 10, at 7 p.m. at the King Philip Middle School.

As usual, several financial articles will kick off the evening, including budget transfers intended to respond to items raised in the recent Inspector General’s letter on procurement and internal controls issues. The town will also consider releasing funds for opioid mitigation grants, a small number of capital needs, and the annual transfer of cable company funds to NCTV for its operation.

The Community Preservation Committee will have recommendations for \$198,000 in

Community Preservation grants, including funds to repair the Ware Crypt at the library, make improvements to the Norfolk Grange, treat invasive weeds at Highland Lake, update the town’s Housing Production Plan, and start planning for Phase 3 of the Medway Branch Shared Use Path. These projects use existing Community Preservation funds earmarked for historic, conservation, and housing purposes.

The warrant concludes with a number of articles addressing important questions for the town.

A citizens’ petition begins the process to create a recall procedure in Norfolk. This article would authorize the Select Board to petition the Legislature for special legislation adding a

provision to our bylaws allowing voters to initiate a recall election after collecting signatures of 10% of registered voters in each precinct.

The Freeman-Kennedy School Building Committee will ask Town Meeting to authorize a \$2.7 million debt exclusion for a feasibility study to evaluate long-term solutions for the school’s growing enrollment, including a potential expansion. Norfolk has been accepted into the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s core building grant program. Completing this study is required by the MSBA to access state grant funding. Participating in the MSBA program qualifies Norfolk for reimbursement on both the study and

future construction costs—historically around 50% for similar projects. If this article passes, a special election will be held in December to give final approval for the debt exclusion.

Another article would change the order of the spring town election and Town Meeting, moving the annual election to after Town Meeting so that the elected officials who developed the warrant articles, particularly the budget, are still responsible for bringing them to Town Meeting. It would also move the election and Annual Town Meeting to Saturday. The Town Clerk asked for the election change so that town elections don’t conflict with a school day.

Other articles include accept-

ing Norway Farms Drive as a public way and a change in how warrant articles are presented at Town Meeting. Finally, an article supported by the Planning Board would place a moratorium on permitting data centers in Norfolk. While there are no current applications, the Planning Board thinks it is important to allow time for careful consideration, and this article would not allow data center applications through at least January 1, 2028.

You can read all of the articles, and the Advisory Committee’s recommendations, on the town’s website (norfolkmass.gov). On the home page click the “Town Meeting” button and go to “Warrants and Exhibits.” See you at Town Meeting!

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Add a few sheets to the bottom of your produce drawers to absorb odors, moisture and mess.

Guest Column

Old Flags, Old Strength

By LtCol A. FAITHFUL
RETIRED U.S. MARINE

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

There is a folded American flag hanging on the wall of my family room.

It sits in a simple cherrywood display case above my Marine Corps medals, ribbons, and rank insignia. Most visitors probably never notice it. If they do, their eyes are naturally drawn to the

decorations beneath it rather than the faded flag above it. I understand.

Everyone admires bright things.

The flag itself is not particularly impressive. It was folded at my father’s funeral years ago. The folding was not perfect. Through the glass, only a handful of stars are visible, and some of those are only partial stars. The edges are not crisp. The

folds are not precise.

For a long time, I considered taking it out and folding it properly.

I never did.

Now I doubt I ever will.

Every spring across New England, new flags begin appearing again.

They rise above town halls and churches. They hang from porches along Main Street. They stand beside veterans’

memorials and old cemeteries where generations of names are carved into stone.

Their colors are bright.

Their folds are sharp.

The fabric snaps proudly in the wind.

Everyone admires a new flag. New flags symbolize beginnings. Possibility. Strength. They

OLD FLAGS
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TOY SWAP

continued from page 1

"I'd always thought a toy swap was a neat idea, but had never seen it in practice," said Cassie. "That first year was an experiment and a bit scrappy because we didn't know what to expect, but last year was bonkers, like Black Friday."

The swap is held every November, right before the holiday shopping season starts in earnest.

This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 28 at the Fiske Library. Toys and books can be dropped off on Tuesday, Nov. 24 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Wednesday, Nov. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon. Donations should be in good condition, and bicycles and clothing will not be accepted. Shoppers are asked to bring their own bags on the day of the swap. Children are encouraged to shop for friends and siblings, too.

Cassie and volunteers sort donations and books into categories just like in a department store, to make shopping easier for attendees. Last year, the Fiske Library provided a second room just for books, which helped alleviate the crush of people.

The swap works best if people donate things they'd want to get, Cassie said. Everything at the swap is free, and donating toys or books is not a prerequisite to take items home.

"We call it a swap just because that's the quickest way to conceptualize it, but it's not

transactional at all," he explained. "You can come on Saturday and take home 1,000 toys, having never come to the library before in your life. Or you can clean out your attic and drop stuff off as long as it's clean and in good shape and you think someone else would enjoy it. Or you can do both."

Cassie and his wife, Krista Andberg, have three children and, like most parents, found themselves overwhelmed with toys and books their kids outgrew. They were also disheartened by all the packaging that came along with new toys and wanted a more mindful way to acquire playthings without generating additional waste.

According to the Closed Loop Center for the Circular Economy, 90% of toys are made from plastic and other materials that complicate recycling efforts, and 80% of toys end up in landfills, incinerators, or nature. Most toys have an average use of six months before children tire of them.

"The swap is a great way to get stuff out of your house and into the hands of children that will want to play with them," says Cassie. "A toy could be great when you're eight but by the time you're eight-and-a-half you lose interest. That's an opportunity to give it to the next kid."

Cassie emphasizes the community aspect of the swap too, noting most toys at the swap aren't going to a nameless donation place, but perhaps to a child down the street who will want to

play with them. It's also a snapshot of what's popular in a given year, because the following year might see many donations of the same item.

Items that are left at the end of the swap are donated, with some, including books, staying at the Fiske for the library's ongoing craft and game swap area. According to Cassie, only a few boxes of toys remained after last year's swap, confirming that it had worked exactly how he thought it would.

"Anecdotally, we received the most toys we've ever gotten but almost as much went out the door again," he said. "The swap was conceptual for me for a long time, but I knew if people would just come they would get it. It's a real opportunity to do a lot of neat things at the same time. You get to clean stuff out, you get to recycle this stuff and keep it in your community. You can treasure hunt or find stocking



Toy swap organizer Alexander Cassie stands amid donated playthings at a previous swap at Wrentham's Fiske Library. He launched the annual event to help families pass along outgrown toys and find new favorites for free. (Contributed photo)

stuffers...there's just so many cool things about this event, I want to shout it from the rooftops."

Perhaps the magic of the toy swap isn't just about clearing out clutter, however. Maybe it's also about ensuring every toy gets the

chance to fulfill its true purpose. Just as the toys in "Toy Story" found new homes, the playthings exchanged in the swap might be thought of as headed off to infinity and beyond, right into the hands of another child to play with them.

Trinity Church to Host Beatles Concerts and Holiday Fair

Trinity Church, 47 East St., Wrentham, will host two Beatles-themed candlelight concerts and its annual holiday fair in November.

On Friday, Nov. 13, LUMOS will return to the church for its second appearance, presenting "The Beatles Candlelight Experience" at 6 and 8 p.m. Each concert will last approximately one hour. Tickets range from \$27.40 to \$77 and are available at lumos-experiences.com.

The church's "Holiday Lights, Merry & Bright" holiday fair will take place Friday, Nov.

20, from 4 to 7 p.m., and Saturday, Nov. 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The fair will feature a penny social, raffles, a white elephant room, jewelry, books, CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, collectibles, baked goods, crafts and café meals. Frozen lasagna and apple crisp will also be available to take home.

Donations for the white elephant room, jewelry and book sales are requested by Nov. 10. To arrange donation drop-off or pickup, call the church office at 508-384-3958.



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Figuring out who to call can be challenging. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

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

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

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

Business spotlight

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

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

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

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted



things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices,

so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

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

Jay and his family are deeply

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

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

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Join the American Legion Auxiliary

Norfolk American Legion Post 335 is looking to establish an American Legion Auxiliary unit and invites eligible community members to learn more about this opportunity to serve

veterans, military families, and the wider community.

A partner in service

The American Legion Auxiliary is a separate but closely

connected organization within the American Legion Family. Auxiliary members work alongside Legion members to honor those who have served our country and to support veterans, active-duty service members, and their families.

What does the Auxiliary do?

Auxiliary members help support veterans and military families, promote patriotism and good citizenship, encourage young people, take part in community service projects, volunteer with veterans, support local Legion programs, participate in memorial and patriotic events, and help neighbors in need. The work is guided by a spirit

of service, compassion, and community.

Who can join?

Women who meet American Legion Auxiliary eligibility requirements may qualify through a qualifying relationship to a veteran or current or former service member, including as a mother, grandmother, sister, spouse, daughter, or granddaughter. Women who qualify for American Legion membership through their own military service may also be eligible to join the Auxiliary. Eligibility may be based on qualifying service by a living or deceased veteran, and applicants may be asked to provide documentation such as a DD-214 or other official military records.

Men may also be eligible to join the Auxiliary when they meet the Auxiliary's applicable eligibility requirements, including through a spouse who is or was a member of the U.S. military. Prospective members are encouraged to contact us so eligibility can be confirmed.

If you believe in service, patriotism, and helping others, we invite you to be part of this new chapter of the Norfolk American Legion Family. Your time, ideas, and willingness to help can make a meaningful difference in the lives of veterans and throughout our community.

For more information, contact Wendy Bozza, Norfolk American Legion Post 335, at 774-571-5174 or Wendybozza@gmail.com.



Your Money, Your Independence

Spend it forward: In retirement 'someday' is the real risk



Glenn Brown, CFP

For anyone nearing retirement or just starting out in it, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel brings incredible excitement and gratitude. You worked decades for this moment.

Yet, as a Certified Financial Planner, I often witness a quiet paradox play out among diligent savers: they build a nest egg to secure their future, but when the day comes to actually enjoy it, their mindset doesn't change.

A recent *Bloomberg* article highlighted a trend: retired Americans are putting off fun out of fear of running out of money. Studies show over 60%

of retirees with substantial savings feel uncomfortable spending on pure enjoyment, while nearly 90% feel guilt over bucket-list purchases or travel.

Researchers call this the tension between FOMO (Fear of Missing Out on life) and FORO (Fear of Running Out of money). After decades of watching accounts grow, spending down principal triggers a loss reflex. But here's the truth many don't talk about: money delayed is often an opportunity denied.

The three phases of retirement

While gerontologists and planners traditionally stretch post-career phases out to age 75 and 85, my experience with clients shows these transitions happen sooner. Here is how those years typically unfold in practice:

- 1. "Go-Go" Years (ages 60 to 72):** You have the health, energy, and mobility to hike, travel, or explore demanding itineraries.
- 2. "Slow-Go" Years (ages 72 to 80):** Health slows you down slightly. Trips become simpler, closer to home, and less physically taxing.

- 3. "No-Go" Years (ages 80+):** Life centers around home, routine, and medical care.

The biggest tragedy in retirement isn't spending a little extra in your early 60s, it's saving all your fun money for a phase when your body can no longer support the adventure. Spending it forward means funding your "Go-Go" years while you can fully experience them.

Cash flow analysis & scenario modeling

How do you overcome FORO without jeopardizing your future? Through interactive cash flow analysis and scenario modeling.

Instead of relying on static rules, dynamic modeling tests "what-if" scenarios side by side. For example, we can test adding an extra \$25,000 per year specifically for travel during your first 7 "Go-Go" years.

By modeling this \$175,000 front-loaded investment, you measure the actual delta on your total portfolio in your 80s and 90s. Because spending naturally dials back in the "Slow-Go" and "No-Go" phases, front-loading \$25K a year early on typically creates a surprisingly negligible

impact on long-term security. Seeing that tiny delta on paper provides the empirical proof (and emotional permission) to travel guilt-free.

Structured security: The strategic 3-bucket strategy

If scenarios make sense on paper but your stomach still churns, structure provides peace of mind. Segmenting wealth into 3 time-horizon buckets insulates your lifestyle:

- BUCKET 1: Cash (Years 1 to 3).** This covers the income shortfall or gap between income sources (Social Security, pensions, rentals, dividends) and actual spending. Keeping this gap in liquid cash insulates your planned lifestyle from market swings.
- BUCKET 2: Conservative Growth (Years 4 to 5).** Structured conservatively (like a 40/60 stock-to-bond allocation), this medium-term bridge earns modest returns while systematically replenishing Bucket 1.
- BUCKET 3: Moderate to High Growth (Years 5+).** Positioned for capital appreciation, this bucket fuels long-term needs, healthcare

inflation, or legacy goals (like passing tax-free growth in a Roth IRA to heirs).

When your short-term cash flow gap is secured in Bucket 1 and your legacy is compounding in Bucket 3, taking that dream vacation isn't "depleting wealth," it's executing a well-designed plan.

Give yourself permission to shift from a mindset of accumulation to one of fulfillment. You worked hard to earn your independence, now make sure you're around to enjoy it..

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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A milestone birthday, a celebration of service

By MAUREEN SULLIVAN

Raymond V. "Bucky" Calleaux is about to reach another milestone.

The Marine Corps veteran who served in the Korean War will turn 100 in early November – just in time for Veterans Day, and also for the third annual Veterans Dinner sponsored by Norfolk American Legion Post 335.

Calleaux will be among the honored guests for the dinner, which will be held Nov. 8 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the ballroom of Lake Pearl Wrentham at 299 Creek St. The event, free for veterans and their guests, will include a guest speaker, music and a chance to socialize with fellow veterans.

According to Al Bozza, the post's junior vice commander, invitation letters to veterans have been sent, with a deadline to RSVP set for Nov. 1. Last year,



Bucky Calleaux received the Boston Post Cane on June 3 at the Norfolk Senior Center. (Photo by Maureen Sullivan)

the event drew about 125 veterans and guests.

Bozza said that committees have been formed to help with

the dinner, and that financial donations and volunteers would be welcome.

To learn more about the din-

ner, call Bozza at 774-571-5170, or email ABozza@aol.com.

Earlier this year, the town honored Calleaux with the Boston Post Cane, which is given to the town's oldest resident. In 2025, he received a special cer-

tificate marking his 75 years of membership with the American Legion.

For information about the post, visit <https://norfolk-maamericanlegion.com/>.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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Student Voice

More than a care kit: How Purple Hour supports young people with epilepsy

By Alisa Kireyev

For a young person with epilepsy, support can mean more than doctors' appointments and treatment plans. It can also mean having someone to talk to, a community to belong to, or a reminder that others are thinking about them.

This is the need Nehashree Bheemu hopes to address through Purple Hour, the non-profit she founded in July 2025. The Wrentham high school senior works with a team of volunteers at Purple Hour to provide care kits, tutoring and opportunities for connection to children and teenagers with epilepsy. Since its launch, Purple Hour has delivered more than 550 kits across five states, with

support from hospitals including Boston Children's.

The care kits are designed to offer comfort during difficult moments. Bheemu worked with neurologists to help develop the kits, which include a custom Purple Hour T-shirt, anxiety strips, stress balls, coloring books, slap bracelets, affirmation cards, and a pocket hug—a card reminding the recipient that support is always within reach.

Each item serves a purpose: the fidget toys and calming strips are designed to reduce stress and overwhelm, while affirmation cards provide emotional support. Coloring books provide an outlet for creative expression, and the T-shirt represents a connection to other children and



Nehashree Bheemu, a Wrentham high school senior and founder of Purple Hour, displays care kits assembled for children and teenagers with epilepsy. Since its launch in July 2025, the nonprofit has distributed more than 550 kits across five states. (Contributed photo)

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teenagers who may be experiencing the same challenges.

"I thought care kits were a good way to go about this because they give children and teenagers something to look forward to and something they can take home with them from their hospital trips or whatever they're going through," said Bheemu, a student at the Advanced Math and Science Academy in Marlborough. "They can look back on it and think, 'There's someone in this world who has thought about me and put this together for me.'"

Bheemu was inspired to start Purple Hour after seeing her cousin struggle with the condition and realizing how few mental health resources were available. For Bheemu, the kits go beyond a collection of objects; they are a way to make young people feel seen and remembered.

The T-shirts extend that message beyond the individual recipient. Even when young people with epilepsy live in different states, the T-shirts serve as a visible reminder that they are part of a community.

"Some of it is also a re-

minder that you're not alone," Bheemu said. "One person in California could be wearing a Purple Hour T-shirt, and someone in New York could also be wearing it. You have a connection, even if you don't really feel like you do."

The sense of connection is central to Purple Hour's larger mission. While epilepsy research and medical treatment are necessary, Bheemu pointed out that young people with epilepsy can have difficulty finding spaces focused specifically on their emotional and social needs.

"Kids and teenagers with epilepsy don't have much of a voice out there," Bheemu said. "There are very few mental health groups that are really active in their cause and support the specific age range that Purple Hour is tailored to."

Purple Hour's work therefore extends beyond care kits. Its free virtual tutoring program provides individualized academic support, matching students with tutors based on age group, academic need, and subject.

The organization grew from Bheemu's original idea of hosting monthly virtual meetings

for teens with epilepsy to come together, play games and make crafts. These meetings give participants an opportunity to connect with others who may understand experiences that can be difficult to explain to friends or classmates.

For Bheemu, creating that community is just as important as providing physical resources. She wants epileptic teens and children to know that they are not defined solely by their condition. They are students, friends and individuals with ambitions, interests and identities beyond their diagnoses.

Purple Hour's program reflects that goal in different ways. A care kit can offer stress relief and comfort during a difficult day, tutoring can help a student manage academic challenges, and virtual meetings provide community and understanding.

Through each part of the organization, Bheemu hopes to make one message clear: young people with epilepsy deserve support that recognizes them as whole individuals, not just patients.

The family conversation your estate plan is waiting for



Todd Miller, CFP®

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Finishing your estate plan is a big step, but failing to notify the people involved can lead to confusion and complications when it's time to use it. Since the events that bring those plans into action, such as an accident, serious illness

or hospitalization, rarely come with a warning, talking with your family about your estate plan before a crisis occurs can provide clarity and help reduce uncertainty, conflict and stress later.

Would your loved ones know what to do?

About half of Americans turning 65 today will need some form of long-term care, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If you became unable to make medical or financial decisions, documents such as powers of attorney and advance directives can help ensure someone you trust can step in. Just as important is making sure your loved ones know those documents exist and where to find them. Without access to them, even close family members may be unable to access bank accounts, pay bills or make medical deci-

sions on your behalf without going through a court.

Who should be included in an estate plan conversation?

When you're ready to talk with loved ones, start with anyone named in a formal role in your estate plan, such as a financial power of attorney, health care proxy, trustee or executor. You may also want to include family members who are likely to be involved in your care or inherit assets.

Think about the dynamics of your family as you plan the conversation. Some families are comfortable discussing everything together, while others communicate more effectively through smaller group discussions or one-on-one conversations.

What should your family know about your estate plan?

Start with your values and the goals behind your deci-

sions. Explaining what matters most to you can help family members better understand your wishes.

From there, review practical details, including who serves in key roles, where important documents are stored and how to contact your estate-planning attorney. You may also want to discuss your care preferences if you were to lose independence and any decisions that family members might find surprising. For example, if inheritances will not be divided equally, sharing your reasoning now may help prevent misunderstandings later.

Most importantly, leave time for questions. The goal is not to cover every possible scenario in a single meeting. It's to create understanding and give loved ones confidence about what matters to you.

If a single conversation feels overwhelming, consider breaking it into a few shorter discus-

sions over time.

Need help starting the conversation?

Many people worry about how family members will react or feel unsure about where to begin. A financial advisor can help you prepare for the conversation and, in some cases, facilitate it. Having a neutral third party involved can help keep discussions productive and ensure everyone leaves with greater clarity about your wishes.

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

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Thinking of running for town office? Wrentham tutorial explains how

By JOE STEWART

Wrentham residents considering a run for local office can learn how the process works at

Wrentham Engagement's third annual Candidates Tutorial on Thursday, Dec. 3. The session runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Sweatt Room at the Fiske Public Library. The event is organized in collaboration with the Wrentham Town Clerk's office.

The tutorial addresses questions

many would-be candidates ask. How do I get started? How do I campaign? What does the job demand when I win?

What will be covered

The session will cover three topics:

- The nomination process, often called "taking out papers"
- The responsibilities and time commitment of the offices on the April 2027 Town Election ballot
- Tips and insights on campaigning

Who will take part

Wrentham Engagement

describes itself as a local, non-partisan, grassroots effort. Its goal is to encourage awareness of and participation in the decisions that shape Wrentham's government and future.

The Town Clerk will participate. So will members of elected boards who are not running in the next election who will share their experiences serving in office.

Open to all residents

The tutorial is open to anyone thinking about running. It is also open to residents who simply want to understand how local elections work.

Organizers say the event is

not a campaign event. They describe it as a way to encourage more participation in local government.

The election calendar

The local election season begins in earnest on Jan. 4, when candidates can take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk. It concludes with the Annual Town Election in April.

Wrentham Community Media, formerly known as Cable 8, will record the tutorial.

For more information, email wrenthamengagement@gmail.com.

The Old Swimming Hole

By G. GREGORY TOOKER

There is a place where the river bends,
Where we exercised our real intend,
To tie the bonds among true friends,
And in so doing a message send.

To those who struggle in this world,
Where stress and conflict oft unfurl,
That friendship is a source so real,
Of peace, happiness, with ties that seal.

With unfettered innocence we did cavort,
In the flowing waters, with great resort,
To conquer fear and openly court,
The confidence which can't be taught.

Now decades passed, my mind recalls,
With warm embrace of memories all,
The clasping fragrance of green grass tall,
Beside the oasis where blackbirds call.

Although my friends no longer swim,
In the eddying current of Nature's whim,
Those sunlit days will never dim,
In the treasure trove I guard within.

Stony Brook Camera Club announces November programs

The Stony Brook Camera Club (SBCC) has announced its November schedule, featuring a member competition and presentations designed to help photographers improve their skills.

The club meets Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September through June, with meetings held in person,

via Zoom or in a hybrid format. In-person meetings take place at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main St., Franklin.

The November schedule includes:

- Nov. 5: Member competition (hybrid).
- Nov. 12: "How Competition Can Save Pho-

tographs," presented by Essdras Suarez (Zoom).

Nov. 19: "Be in Control of Your Camera," presented by Mollie Isaacs (Zoom).

Club meetings feature guest speakers, photography competitions, image studies and discussions on topics of general interest. SBCC also sponsors

photography activities and workshops throughout the year.

Photographers of all skill levels are welcome to join.

For a complete calendar of events and membership information, visit stonybrookcc.com.

KINGSBURY

continued from page 1

nearby pumping. With Franklin's 2010–2019 pumping, the estimate dropped to 132.2 feet, about 3.8 feet lower.

Well 4 had the largest effect. Franklin's Well 5, farther from the pond, had a smaller one.

Pumping does not drain the pond like a bathtub. Steady pumping lowers the surrounding water table to a new, lower balance point, and the pond settles there. In the model, pumping Wells 4 and 5 at their maximum allowed rates all year lowered the average to 129.3 feet.

Weather moves the pond up and down around that point. From 2001 to 2007, measured levels ranged from 126 to 137 feet. In 2024, the pond peaked at about 136.4 feet in May and fell to about 128.3 feet by December, according to USGS data.

Norfolk resident John Griffin, who has pressed officials on the issue, reports provisional September 2026 readings of about 126.1 feet. That is close to the 1966 low.

The 2023 study also tested a change. It cut Wells 4 and 5 to about one-third of their practical capacity and shifted the pumping to Franklin's other wells. The pond's modeled

average rose to 134.1 feet, recovering about half the effect of pumping.

There was a tradeoff. Less water would flow in Mine Brook in Franklin, including two protected trout streams. USGS also said it had not confirmed the changes would be workable for Franklin's system.

Franklin's need for water

Franklin relies entirely on groundwater, Town Administrator Jamie Hellen said in a May interview with Norfolk Wrentham Town News. Hellen said the pond's decline cannot be blamed on pumping alone. He cited recurring drought, climate pressures and the nature of kettle ponds.

According to a July 2026 memo prepared for Franklin by its consultant, Wells 4 and 5 averaged about 880,000 gallons a day in 2025. DEP reports Franklin's total withdrawals ranged from 2.2 to 2.5 million gallons a day from 2020 to 2024.

The memo calls the two wells critical backups. Other Franklin wells have been shut down at times, including two offline from 2022 into 2026 for PFAS treatment. PFAS are the so-called "forever chemicals."

The permit decision

DEP is reviewing Franklin's

water withdrawal permit, which allows up to 3.44 million gallons a day. In May 2025, DEP asked Franklin to justify that amount and to evaluate reducing pumping at Wells 4 and 5.

In its July 2026 memo, Franklin said it would consider reducing those wells toward 200 and 100 gallons per minute. All of its listed conditions would first have to hold for two weeks. They include:

- the pond being below normal levels
- all Franklin wells online at full capacity
- no drought
- no construction at Franklin's Fisher Street treatment plant

If any condition changes, pumping would return to normal levels.

Griffin argues that under these terms, a low pond alone would not require a reduction, and a drought would block one. In emails to Rausch's office, he cited Franklin records showing Wells 4 and 5 pumped about 22 percent more from January through September 2026 than in the same months of 2025.

DEP has said it will release a draft permit for a 30-day public comment period.

What Norfolk is doing

On Sept. 9, Norfolk's Advisory Committee approved about \$8,800 to restart USGS water-level monitoring at the pond for one year. The town has discussed forming a Kingsbury Pond working group.

DEP also plans to require Franklin to make "best efforts" to have Norfolk add the land around Wells 4 and 5 that extends into Norfolk to Norfolk's aquifer protection district. That would bar certain new land uses there, such as landfills and hazardous waste facilities. A zoning change would require a Town Meeting vote.

Wrentham also operates wells in the same river basin. The 2023 USGS study did not report any effect from them on the pond.

Questions to consider asking

Residents attending on Nov. 19 may want answers from their elected officials and from DEP on questions like the following.

For DEP:

- Will the permit set a pond level that requires Franklin



Kingsbury Pond on September 24, 2026, showing a very low water level. (Photograph from John Griffin, used with permission)

to reduce pumping? What protection applies during a drought or when another Franklin well is offline?

- Kingsbury Pond is a state-designated Great Pond, held for public use. How does DEP weigh that in the permit decision?
- How will Norfolk's new monitoring data be used?

For state legislators:

- What happens after this meeting, and on what timeline?
- Will DEP be asked to explain its decision publicly before the permit is final?
- Beyond the permit process, what can the state do?

For Franklin's elected officials:

- Did pumping at Wells 4 and 5 increase in 2026, as records obtained by residents indicate? If so, why?

- Will Franklin publicly release daily pumping records for Wells 4 and 5?
- How much water does Franklin expect to need over the next decade? Could it operate under a lower permit limit?
- What steps could reduce reliance on Wells 4 and 5, such as other wells or purchased water? What would they cost?

For Norfolk's elected officials:

- What permit conditions is Norfolk asking DEP to include?
- Which properties would a possible aquifer protection change affect, and how?
- What will the Kingsbury Pond working group do?
- Does the town expect further costs beyond the \$8,800 for monitoring?

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The College Admission Interview: Let Your Personality Shine!

A college application tells an admission counselor a great deal about a student - their grades, activities, accomplishments, and interests. But what about the person behind the application?

That's where the college admission interview comes in! An interview is a wonderful opportunity to humanize the application, allowing students to share their story, show their personality, and explain what makes them unique. And just as importantly, it gives students a chance to learn whether the college is the right fit for them.

What is the purpose of the college admission interview?

There are generally two types of interviews: evaluative and informational. Evaluative interviews, sometimes offered by more selective colleges, may be considered as part of the admission decision. Informational interviews are more casual conversations designed to help students and colleges learn about each other and generally do not factor into admission decisions.

Regardless of the format, the goal is to have a genuine conversation. Colleges want to learn

about students beyond their transcripts - their passions, interests, future goals, and how they might contribute to campus life. Not all colleges offer interviews, so check each college's admission website for availability, registration requirements, and deadlines.

For students who find interviews intimidating, remember that an interview is rarely the deciding factor in an admission decision. You don't need perfect answers or an impressive list of accomplishments. You just need to be yourself!

Preparing for the college interview

The most effective way to have successful results is simply to prepare. One of my favorite resources is College Essay Guy's approach to preparing for a college interview. I have used this approach with students for years because it is simple and effective. Here are a few steps to help students feel confident and prepared:

5 Minutes: Read the College's Mission Statement: Google "XYZ College mission statement." This is one of the

easiest ways to understand what matters to a college. Does it emphasize service, leadership, intellectual curiosity, or community? Think about how those values connect with your own experiences and goals.

15 Minutes: Research the "Why Us?": Why are you interested in this particular college? Explore its academic programs, campus life, clubs and organizations, and anything that connects with your interests and goals. Be specific!

10 Minutes: Explore Your Academic Interests: Think about potential majors or fields of interest. What sparked your interest? Have you taken classes, participated in activities, or had experiences that influenced your direction? It's totally fine to be undecided - just be ready to discuss what you're curious about.

5 Minutes: Identify Your Interests Outside the Classroom: What do you do in your free time? Sports, music, service, a part-time job, or a fun hobby? These interests help the interviewer get to know you - and even better if you can connect them to opportunities at the college.

5 Minutes: Identify Four or Five Things You Want to Share: It can be a bit daunting when someone asks "tell me a little about yourself." Think of four or five things that are important to

you: a meaningful experience, a proud moment, an achievement, or even that you love your three dogs and two cats. Whenever possible, bring your answers to life with a short personal story that illustrates your interests, personality, or strengths rather than simply describing them.

5 Minutes: Prepare Three Questions: Remember, you're interviewing the college, too! Ask thoughtful questions that aren't easily answered on its website. For example:

- What makes students at your college unique?
- How does the college help first-year students adjust to campus life?
- What internship or career exploration opportunities are available?



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

5 Minutes: Organize Your Notes: Put your key points and questions on one sheet of paper. Review them before the interview, but don't memorize answers. The goal is a natural conversation, not a rehearsed speech!

The best interviews aren't necessarily the ones with the most impressive answers. They're the ones where students are genuine, curious, and engaged!

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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OLD FLAGS*continued from page 4*

remind us of youth itself.

But the flags that increasingly hold my attention are the old ones.

The faded flags.

The weathered flags.

The ones that survived winter.

Months of snow, rain, ice, wind, and summer sun have left their mark. The colors soften. The edges fray. The fabric loses some of its stiffness.

Yet somehow those flags seem more meaningful.

The weathering became part of the beauty.

The old flags tell the better stories.

Perhaps that is because the same thing is true of people.

When I was young, strength seemed easy to recognize.

Strength looked like speed, confidence, ambition, and physical ability.

It looked like youth.

Youth inspires admiration.

Old strength inspires something else.

Reverence.

Old strength is harder to see because it rarely calls attention to itself.

It is found in the husband who faithfully cares for his wife after decades of marriage.

In the widow who quietly carries on after loss.

In the grandfather who spent a lifetime providing for his family.

In the elderly parishioners who still fill the pews each Sunday, carrying burdens, memories, and prayers known only to God.

Old strength is rarely dramatic.

Most of the time, it looks like showing up.

Again.

And again.

And again.

The older I get, the more I believe endurance may be one of the most overlooked virtues in modern life.

We celebrate beginnings.

We celebrate achievement.

We celebrate potential.

But we often overlook faithfulness.

The people who remained.

The people who endured.

The people who carried responsibilities year after year without applause or recognition.

My father possessed that kind of strength.

He grew up with hardships that could have easily hardened him. Instead, he became a different kind of man. He worked hard. He provided for a large family. He built a home filled with laughter, stability, and love.

As he grew older, he softened.

Not weaker.

Softer.

He hugged more.

He said "I love you" more.

He became gentler.

Looking back now, I realize that was not weakness.

It was wisdom.

It was maturity.

It was strength.

Old strength.

The kind of strength that finally understands what matters most.

A civilization reveals itself by what it chooses to honor.

We understand how to honor old flags. We handle them carefully. We retire them respectfully. We recognize that their weathering is evidence of faithful

service.

I sometimes wonder if we remember to do the same for the elderly among us.

The old veterans.

The widows.

The grandparents.

The aging tradesmen whose hands built much of the world we inherited.

They are living inheritance.

They carry stories we have not heard.

Sacrifices we did not see.

Lessons that cannot be learned from books.

Many of the greatest things we inherit cannot be owned.

They can only be received.

My youngest children never met my father.

He died before they were born.

They know him only through stories.

I tell them that he was a good daddy.

For now, that is enough.

One day they will notice the old flag hanging on the wall.

One day they will ask about the man behind it.

One day they will want to know why I left it exactly as it is.

And when they do, I will tell them.

The flag still hangs in its cherrywood case above my medals.

The folding remains imperfect.

Only part of the stars are visible.

For years I considered correcting it.

Now I think I will leave it alone.

The older I get, the less interested I become in perfection.

The more interested I become in gratitude.

After all, the value was never in the folding.

The value was always in the life it represents.

New flags inspire admiration.

Old flags deserve reverence.

Perhaps the same is true of people.

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

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Before the holiday rush, a little thanks

By GINA WOELFE

Somewhere between booking your November appointments and deciding whether last year's party outfit can make another appearance, the holidays start taking over the calendar. There's gifts to buy, people to see, and at least one family group text that could use a mute button.

We'll get to the shopping... In fact, b.LUXE is having a sale that will help!

But first, a little appreciation for the people who make b.LUXE Hair & Makeup Studio what it is. The team behind your appointment. The guests who keep coming back. And the neighbors and organizations that give us reasons to gather beyond the studio.

First, our team

A salon runs on talent, but talent alone doesn't keep a busy day moving.

That takes people who offer a second opinion, share a technique, or step in when a colleague needs help. It takes experienced stylists who make time to teach and apprentices who bring good questions to the conversation.

That exchange is part of daily life at b.LUXE. You may come in to see one person, but there's a whole team invested in your visit.

The b.LUXE front desk team deserves its own thank-you. They answer your questions, help you find time in the schedule, and welcome you when you arrive. They make a busy day feel easy, even when the phone has other plans.

As we head into the holiday rush, we want everyone on our studio team to know how much we appreciate the work they do, including the things that happen quietly between appointments.

And then, there's you

You've trusted us with the haircut you saved on your phone for six months. With your wedding morning. With the appointment you finally made for yourself after putting everyone else first.

You've also sent your friends, brought in your family, and made b.LUXE part of your routine.

Those relationships matter to us. We get to know the person in the chair, hear what's happening in your life, and help you decide what you'd like to see in the mirror. It's one of the pleasures of this work.

To our guests in Medway and the surrounding communities, thank you for continuing to choose us.

"When I think about what I'm most thankful for, it's the people. Our team, the guests who have become friends, and the community that has supported us over the years. b.LUXE has grown into so much more than I ever expected, and I never take that support for granted." - Heather Cohen, Owner

To our wig community

This year, we want to give special recognition to our growing wig and topper community.

To the women who have shared their stories and allowed us to help them find hair that feels like their own: thank you. That first appointment can come with uncertainty. Heather understands that personally, and your trust means a great deal to her and our team.

We're thankful for the loved ones who come along for support, too. And for everyone who has shared their experience or recommended our studio to another woman facing hair loss. You may have made that first call a little easier.



Gratitude beyond the studio

Our community connections have taken many forms over the years, including support for PAWS New England, the Medway and Franklin food pantries, Stairs for Troops, Gilly's House, The Hummingbird Foundation, and local school programs and sports teams.

This fall, we also participated in Making Strides Against Breast Cancer in Boston, the Patriots Foundation's Crucial Catch event, and contributed to the Susan G. Komen MORE THAN PINK Walk.

We appreciate the organizations that include us and the volunteers who put so much time into making these efforts happen.

Helping make the holidays happen

This season, we're proud to contribute again to The Santa Foundation.

The Franklin-based organization provides holiday gifts for families in need in Franklin and surrounding communities. When the pressure to provide feels especially heavy, that support matters.

You can join the effort, too. Visit sfjoy.org for information about donating, sponsoring a family, or volunteering.

And a little something for your shopping list...

Beginning November 1, our Buy 3, Get 1 FREE sale includes all salon hair, skincare, and makeup products.

Pick up gifts, replenish your favorites, or do a little of both. Our team can help you choose. Useful gifts count. So does replacing that shampoo you've been turning upside down for a week!

Before the calendar fills up, thank you for making room for

us. In your routines, in your conversations, and in the recommendations you pass along to a friend.

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LIVING HEALTHY

Beyond daily drops: How modern advances are changing glaucoma care

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

Glaucoma remains one of the leading causes of preventable blindness worldwide. Widely referred to as the “silent thief of sight,” this condition typically develops gradually without warning signs. Because vision loss begins in the periphery, many people do not notice changes until significant and irreversible optic nerve damage has already occurred.

Understanding how glaucoma develops—and how modern medical technology has transformed its treatment—is key to protecting your vision.

Understanding the mechanics of glaucoma

Inside the front section of a healthy eye, a fluid called **aqueous humor** continuously circulates to nourish surround-

ing tissues and maintain internal pressure. In a properly functioning eye, fluid drains out through a specialized mesh network known as the trabecular meshwork.

When these drainage channels become clogged or inefficient, fluid builds up, causing elevated intraocular pressure (IOP). This excess pressure exerts mechanical stress on the **optic nerve**—the biological cable transmitting visual information from the retina to the brain.

- **Open-Angle Glaucoma:** The most common form, where the drainage angle remains open but becomes progressively inefficient over time.
- **Angle-Closure Glaucoma:** A less common, sudden block of the drainage angle that can cause rapid

pressure spikes and requires immediate medical attention.

• **Normal-Tension Glaucoma:** Optic nerve damage occurs even when eye pressure measures within standard, normal ranges.

Comprehensive early detection

Because early-stage glaucoma causes no physical discomfort or noticeable blurriness, routine comprehensive eye exams are vital. Modern clinical evaluation relies on multiple diagnostic technologies:

1. **Tonometry:** Measures internal intraocular pressure.
2. **Ophthalmoscopy & OCT Scans:** Optical Coherence Tomography generates high-resolution cross-sectional images of the retina and optic nerve head to detect microscopic nerve fiber loss.



3. **Visual Field Testing:** Maps peripheral vision to identify subtle blind spots.
4. **Gonioscopy:** Directly inspects the eye’s drainage angle structure.

Modern treatment paradigms: From daily drops to sustained care

The primary goal of glaucoma management is lowering eye pressure to halt or slow disease progression. Historically, daily prescription eye drops were the standard starting point. Today, frontline care has shifted toward longer-lasting, low-maintenance therapies.

1. Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) as first-line care

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) has increasingly replaced daily eye drops as a preferred first-line therapy for open-angle glaucoma. Performed in-office in just a few minutes, SLT applies gentle laser energy to stimulate the body’s natural cellular repair mechanism, clearing drainage channels. It is painless, repeatable, highly effective, and eliminates the daily burden of managing medication schedules.

2. Sustained-Release Drug Implants

For patients needing pharmaceutical control, novel sustained-release delivery systems solve the

compliance challenges associated with eye drops:
• **iDose TR:** A tiny, bio-compatible ocular implant placed inside the anterior chamber that steadily releases travoprost over many months, maintaining consistent pressure control without daily dosing.
• **Durysta:** A biodegradable implant inserted into the eye that gradually dissolves while continuously delivering a pre-specified dose of bimatoprost.

3. Traditional topical medications

When drops are prescribed, several classes exist, each targeting fluid dynamics differently:
• **Prostaglandin Analogs** (e.g., latanoprost, bimatoprost): Enhance fluid outflow.
• **Beta Blockers** (e.g., timolol): Decrease fluid production inside the eye.
• **Alpha Agonists & Carbonic Anhydrase Inhibitors:** Lower production and promote drainage.
• **Rho Kinase Inhibitors** (e.g., netarsudil): Target the trabecular meshwork to lower resistance to fluid outflow.

4. Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS)

MIGS procedures have altered surgical glaucoma management. Using tiny microscopic

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LIVING HEALTHY

Overcoming autumn yard work strain with chiropractic care

As the leaves begin to change and the crisp fall air rolls in, many people are spending more time outdoors raking leaves, cleaning up their yards, and preparing their homes for the colder months ahead. While these seasonal chores may seem harmless, repetitive bending, twisting, lifting heavy bags, and working in awkward positions can place significant stress on the lower back, neck, and shoulders. What starts as a simple afternoon of yard work can quickly turn into lingering

pain and stiffness that interferes with everyday activities.

Sarah, a 42-year-old female, presented to our office complaining of lower back pain and stiffness after spending the weekend raking leaves and clearing her yard. Although she regularly stays active and enjoys taking care of her home, she began experiencing discomfort that made it difficult to bend over, twist, and move comfortably. After beginning a course of chiropractic care, including chiropractic

adjustments, at-home stretches, and recommendations for proper lifting mechanics, Sarah experienced significant improvement in her symptoms and was able to return to her daily activities with greater comfort and mobility.

If you are suffering from a similar problem give our office a call at 508-660-2722 and make an appointment with Dr. Molly Rappaport or Dr. Michael Goldstein today. We are located at 1426 Main Street Suite #6, Walpole, MA.



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

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Norfolk Grange to Host 10th annual community Thanksgiving dinner

The Norfolk Grange invites the community to celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional holiday dinner on Thursday, Nov. 26, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Grange Hall, 28 Rockwood Road (Route 115), Norfolk.

Now in its 10th year, the annual gathering will feature a traditional Thanksgiving meal, complete with dessert and coffee. The dinner is free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

All are welcome to enjoy a holiday meal and spend time with neighbors and friends.

Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by Monday, Nov. 23, by emailing Kevin at kevinr11000@yahoo.com or calling 508-328-5604.

The event is sponsored by the Norfolk Grange.

EYES
continued from page 14

equipment and small self-sealing incisions, devices such as the iStent, Hydrus Microstent, or Xen Gel Stent are inserted to create reliable drainage routes. Often combined with routine cataract surgery, MIGS offers a fast recovery profile and significantly reduced risk compared to traditional surgeries.

5. Advanced incisional surgeries

In severe, advanced cases where non-invasive options fall short, traditional incisional surgeries are utilized to achieve maximum pressure reduction:

- **Trabeculectomy:** Creates a small flap in the sclera (white part of the eye) to allow fluid to bypass blocked channels into a reservoir beneath the conjunctiva.
- **Aqueous Shunt/Tube Implants:** Places a tiny silicone tube that drains fluid into an external reservoir plate implanted under the eye tissue.

Summary and clinical commitment

Glaucoma care has evolved beyond reliance on daily topical drops. Today's patients benefit from a comprehensive toolkit ranging from targeted lasers and sustained-release implants to minimally invasive microscopic stents.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we are committed to providing the latest evidence-based technologies. Our team was among the first in New England to offer DSLT laser treatment for glaucoma and perform the iDose TR procedure at the Cataract and Surgery Center of Milford—an achievement highlighted on local Channel 5 news. Through early detection, personalized treatment, and advanced technology, protecting your long-term sight is more achievable than ever.

For more details, see our ad on page 14.

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Gilly's House to host free luncheon for mothers who have lost a child

Gilly's House will host its annual Mothers Luncheon on Monday, Nov. 16, at noon at the Chabad Jewish Center, 34 Cedar St., Milford.

The free event, themed "Unbreakable," supports mothers who have lost a child, regardless of the child's age, how much time has passed or the circumstances of the loss. Aliza Bulow of Denver, Colorado, will be the guest speaker.

Space is limited. To register, visit www.gillyshouse.org and select the Events tab. For questions, email maureen@gillyshouse.org.

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KPMS teacher named finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year

King Philip Middle School English teacher Cody Michael has been selected as a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program honors a Bay State teacher who exemplifies excellence in teaching in the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year serves as a DESE liaison and as an ambassador to other teachers in the state.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Pedro Martinez and representatives from DESE visited King Philip Middle School on Friday, Oct. 9, to honor Mr. Michael as a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. The visit included school and district administrators.

“Throughout his time at the middle school, Mr. Michael has made a lasting impact on students and colleagues,” KPMS Principal Michelle Kreuzer said. “He is a true champion for students, helping them build confidence in themselves as learners while tailoring curriculum and instruction to meet their indi-

vidual needs. He has also demonstrated strong leadership as a mentor and collaborator, both inside and outside the classroom. He is extremely deserving of this recognition, and I hope you will join me in congratulating him on being named as a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year.”

Mr. Michael has been teaching since 2018 and has worked in the King Philip Regional School District since 2021. He has served as an English teacher at King Philip Middle School since 2024. Mr. Michael has taught students in college preparatory programs, honors courses and co-taught classes, covering topics including World Literature, Mythology, American Literature and the works of William Shakespeare.

Mr. Michael was recognized for successfully adapting his teaching methods for remote and hybrid learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping students continue to succeed. He is also known for his collaboration with colleagues to audit and revise existing course curricula, while analyzing student data as a way of evaluating and improving teaching practices.



On Friday, Oct. 9, teacher Cody Michael, at center, received a banner naming him a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Massachusetts DESE Commissioner Pedro Martinez, at left, and KPMS Principal Michelle Kreuzer, at right, helped Mr. Michael hold the banner. (Photo courtesy King Philip Regional School District)

In 2025, Mr. Michael became an English language arts curriculum team leader for King Philip Middle School. In that role, Mr. Michael has helped facilitate monthly department meetings, coordinate with special education teachers and formalize common course assessments, while also assisting with hiring decisions and serving as a member of the school’s instructional leadership team.

Additionally, Mr. Michael has secured competitive grants and scholarships to support instructional innovation and professional growth, including funding

from the King Philip Parent/Teacher Organization, Massachusetts ASCD and the Mass Cultural Council.

Mr. Michael has also contributed to regional and statewide educational improvement efforts, serving on accreditation teams with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and as a member of the Massachusetts DESE Principal and Teacher Advisory Cabinet. During regional and statewide professional development conferences, Mr. Michael has delivered presentations focused on personalized learning platforms, digital engagement strategies, and family communication best practices.

Mr. Michael holds a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching from Fitchburg State University and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Secondary Education from Bridgewater State University. Mr. Michael is currently working on a doctorate in education from Northeastern University, with a focus on Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership, which he anticipates completing in 2027.

“Mr. Michael is truly a leader among his fellow teachers,” Principal Kreuzer said. “He brings a thoughtful, research-informed approach to instruction while consistently centering students in everything he does. His leadership in our curriculum work, his collaboration with colleagues, and his commitment to continuous improvement make him an outstanding representative of King Philip Middle School and incredibly deserving of this recognition as a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year.”

“Cody Michael exemplifies the level of instructional excellence and professional dedication we strive for across our district,” Superintendent Dr. Rich Drolet said. “His work in the classroom, his leadership at the curriculum and district levels, and his contributions to broader educational initiatives reflect a deep commitment to students and to the teaching profession. We are proud to see him recognized among the state’s top educators.”

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Cody Michael, an English teacher at King Philip Middle School, was named as a finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. (Photo courtesy King Philip Regional School District)

SPORTS

Geuss says KP volleyball's best is yet to come

BY MATT HYLEN
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

After what has been an up and down first half of the season, King Philip volleyball head coach Kristen Geuss believes her team still has its best volleyball ahead of it.

Coming into the season, Geuss knew this team was a young group. "We have a young team with only three seniors and have been working each day to get better," Geuss said.

The roster also looks different than it usually does. "We've normally had a more even mix of grade levels represented on our teams," Geuss explained. "We lost nine seniors to graduation and have had to really focus on preparing the younger players to make meaningful contributions. This has been a work in progress, but we are getting better."

Senior Amie O'Neil, the team's only returning senior and a captain, has led the way by stepping into the outside hitting position. Junior captain Charlotte Bailey, a returning varsity setter, suffered a season-ending injury but is providing leadership from the sidelines.

The rest of the roster, as Geuss described it: junior Mia Keays, also a captain, anchors the back row as the libero. Juniors Molly Sweeney and Nora O'Brien are returning varsity



The King Philip Regional High School girls volleyball team, pictured with head coach Kristen Geuss (far right), has shown steady improvement throughout the season. With just three seniors on the roster following the graduation of nine players last year, the young Warriors have focused on developing their skills, building team chemistry and strengthening player leadership.

players who, in Geuss's words, "are dominating at the net." Senior Lexi Gebhard is strong as a right side hitter, while junior Lily Richard and sophomore Karlie DiFiore run the offense as setters. Senior Sophia Uriarte is a defensive specialist, along with juniors Isla Robinson, Hailey Dalton and Jackie Chorney.

Finding the right combina-

tion took time. "We've experimented with several different lineups and I believe we are finally at the point where we have positioned our players in the spots where they can maximize their contributions," Geuss said.

Despite the ups and downs, Geuss is extremely proud of how far the team has come. "We've come a long way since

the beginning of the season and have recently been playing some of our best volleyball despite incurring losses to very strong squads," she said.

To keep a young team focused, Geuss pointed to two things. "We've endeavored to break the season into manageable blocks while emphasizing daily effort over final outcomes," she

said. "We've also sought to build a strong, player-led culture."

The captains have helped model that culture. Two of the three are juniors, and Geuss said they are "continuing to grow into their roles." O'Neil, Bailey and Keays have all done "a nice job of modeling the culture and behaviors that we want to instill in the KP Volleyball program," she said.

She also wants the leadership to reach beyond the captains. "We continue to emphasize that everyone can lead in their own unique way whether they have the captain's title or not," Geuss said.

If the team makes the tournament, Geuss said she hopes to see "a group of dedicated hard working players playing up to their potential. Their best volleyball has not been played yet."

Whatever happens, she wants her players to take something with them. "I would hope that the players would take away some learnings that will help them later on in life," Geuss said. "The old adage that you only get out of something what you put into it is one that comes to mind. Are you working hard in the offseason, are you conditioning and do you have a burning desire to win are all essential ingredients to personal and team success."

Wrentham student named National Merit semifinalist

Benjamin Davis of Wrentham, a senior at Bishop Feehan High School in Attleboro, has been named a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The recognition places Davis among the top 1% of test takers nationwide based on performance on the 2025 PSAT.

More than 1.3 million students took the exam.

Davis was among 11 Bishop Feehan seniors who earned National Merit honors. Ten were named Commended Students, including Wrentham residents William Sheehan and Onyeka Moseri.

"We are immensely proud

of these students and their recent honors," said Charlotte

Lourenco, vice principal of academics. "This achievement

reflects years of hard work academically."

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Norfolk County real estate sales rise despite affordability challenges

Norfolk County real estate sales and property values increased in September 2026 compared to the same month last year, despite continued affordability challenges, according to Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell.

The Registry recorded 9,166 documents in September, a 4% decrease from September 2025 and a 10% decrease from August 2026.

A total of 1,439 deeds were recorded, up 3% from September 2025. Of those, 714 represented property sales, a 4%

year-over-year increase.

The average sale price for commercial and residential properties rose 15% to \$1,115,833, while total sales volume increased 20% to approximately \$797 million.

"The double-digit gains in both average price and overall sales volume compared to September of 2025 show there is a demand to live in Norfolk County," O'Donnell said. He noted that higher interest rates and limited housing inventory continue to affect affordability.

Mortgage activity declined

slightly, with 1,443 mortgages recorded, down 2% from September 2025.

Foreclosure activity also increased. Nine foreclosure deeds were recorded, compared to six a year earlier, while notices to foreclose rose from 23 to 35.

O'Donnell said the market remains fundamentally sound but cautioned that affordability pressures and rising foreclosure activity warrant continued attention.

For more information, visit www.norfolkdeeds.org.

Friends of the Fiske Library receive Community Impact Grant



An EverSource Community Impact Grant was presented by Molly Cullen, Eversource Community Relations Specialist, to the Friends of the Fiske Public Library's Board Members. Pictured from left, Ann Curtin, Kelly Foxx, Micheline Kim, Molly Cullen, Caron Ketchum, and Sheri Allan.

Massachusetts announces winter heating and electric bill relief

Gov. Maura Healey has announced a plan to provide nearly \$150 million in winter energy relief, including expanded heating assistance and reduced electric bill charges.

Heating oil assistance for middle-income households

A new program will provide a one-time benefit of up to \$680 to eligible households earning between 60% and 100% of the state median income. For a family of four, that means income above \$103,049 and up to \$171,749.

Assistance begins in December and continues through April 30, 2027, or until funding runs out. Local heating assistance agencies will administer the program.

Increased assistance for low-income households

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) will increase benefits by 20% for households heating with oil and 15% for those heating with utilities.

Eligible homeowners and renters can apply, including those whose heat is included in their rent. Applicants do not need to receive public assistance or have overdue heating bills. Assistance covers Nov. 1, 2026, through April 30, 2027.

Electric bill savings

The state will cover the SMART solar program charge on residential electric bills from January through March 2027. It will also reduce Alternative

Energy Portfolio Standard requirements by 50% this winter to lower electricity costs.

Additional heating support

A new Emergency Winter Warmth Fund, created with Citizens Energy Corporation, will supplement heating assistance through local agencies. More information is available at citizensenergy.com/warmth.

For eligibility details and heating assistance applications, visit mass.gov/heatinghelp.

The Friends of the Fiske Public Library are pleased to announce that they have been awarded a Community Impact Grant from EverSource MA. This generous grant will help the Friends continue their mission to support programs, services, and resources that enrich the lives of Wrentham residents and the surrounding communities.

"We were grateful to receive a similar grant last year, which allowed us to sponsor multiple programs for children and adults. We look forward to this year's Grant, which will assist us in sponsoring additional initiatives and programs to serve our community and to continue supporting the Fiske Public Library," said

Micheline Kim, president of the Friends of the Fiske Public Library.

The Friends of the Fiske Public Library is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that raises funds to provide resources for the library beyond the town budget. In recent years, the Friends have sponsored museum passes, author talks, children's programs, and technology upgrades. The Community Impact Grant will help fund new initiatives planned for the coming year.

For more information about the Friends of the Fiske Library, upcoming events, or how to become a member, visit <https://www.wrentham.gov/743/Friends-of-the-Fiske> or follow them on Facebook.

 REAL ESTATE CORNER

Federated Church plans Holly Fair, November fundraiser

The Federated Church of Norfolk will host its annual Holly Fair on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring holiday shopping, food and family activities.

Visitors can browse gifts from local vendors, Bountiful Baskets and Grandma's Attic, purchase baked goods, and enjoy food at the FCON Café, provided by Denise Heinz of Custom Catering. Children can visit Santa and shop for loved ones in the Children's Only Christmas Shop-

ping area. Proceeds support the church's ministries.

The church is also continuing its partnership with The HORSE Restaurant in Norfolk. Every Monday in November, 10% of dine-in and takeout bills will be donated to Gilly's House in Wrentham, which supports individuals in recovery.

Sunday worship is held at 10 a.m. For more information about church events and services, visit www.fcon.org.

NCTV celebrates creativity, community with November events

As NCTV celebrates its 40th anniversary, the station is inviting residents to explore local art, music and media through a series of community events.

"Norfolk's blessed to have such a beautiful facility located in the heart of downtown, and we're eager for people to continue to come in and visit," said Carl Pride, NCTV's community media director.

First Friday: Music, Media, and Art Showcase returns Friday, Nov. 6, from 6 to 9 p.m. at NCTV's Gallery & Meeting Space, 158 Main St., Norfolk. The monthly event showcases local artists, musicians, filmmakers and other creators while bringing the community together.

November's featured artist is Norfolk resident Pamela Ruby Russell, a former NCTV president and accomplished photographer, songwriter and writer. Her work explores color, texture and contrast, reflecting her belief that creating beauty can be healing.

NCTV is also launching **Second Saturday Podcast, Camera, and Editing Trainings**, led by Pride. The next session is Saturday, Nov. 14, from 1 to 5 p.m. Training is free for members and \$40 for nonmembers, with attendance limited to 12. There are no age restrictions or prerequisites.

The nonprofit station, which provides local public, educational and government programming, is also seeking volunteers to help cover Norfolk's Town Meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 7 p.m. at King Philip Middle School, 18 King St. Interested residents can contact Pride at 508-520-2780 or carl@nctvmedia.org to arrange training.

The events are part of NCTV's efforts to reconnect with residents and encourage participation both in front of and behind the camera. The station sums up its mission in three words: **Celebrate. Support. Create.**



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