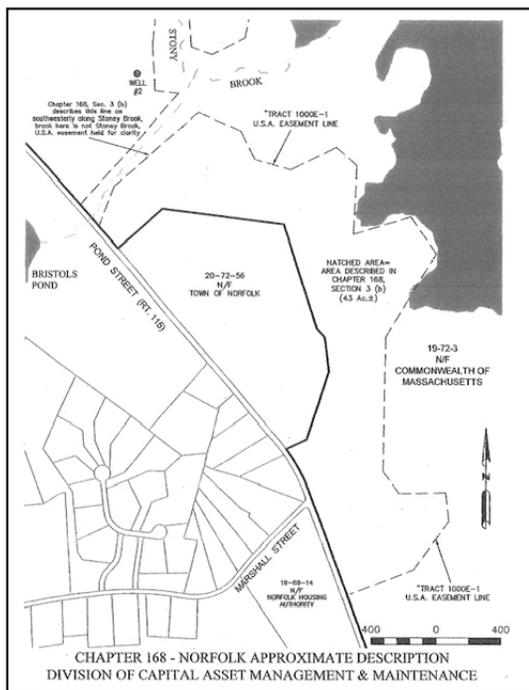


*The Voice of Your Community*

## Pond Street Recreation Complex Grows

BY GRACE ALLEN

Walking and biking trails. Kayaking, fishing, bird watching. New playing fields. These are just some of the possibilities for the soon-to-be acquired land abutting the Pond Street recreation complex in Norfolk.



The transfer of the approximately 43 acres of land belonging to the Department of Correction was approved by the state legislature in September. At the 2018 Town Meeting, residents approved the purchase of 5 acres of the parcel. At this past November's Town Meeting, residents voted to allocate up to \$100,000 of Community Preservation Act money to purchase the additional 38 acres. The money will cover the cost of the land--\$17,200--plus surveying and legal costs.

"This is a real win," said Ann Proto, the recreation department's director. "Open recreation land in Norfolk is valued at \$15,000 an acre."

The popular Pond Street complex consists of about 21 acres, with soccer and baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, a pavilion and playground, skatepark, volleyball sand court, and a walking trail.

The new parcel will essentially double the amount of land available for passive and active recreation in the complex. Of the 43 acres, it's estimated that approximately 20 acres are wetlands and their buffer zones.

**RECREATION**  
*continued on page 2*



Sgt. Dan Morris with Cruiser.

## Cruiser Turns One

BY GRACE ALLEN

It's been a busy first year for Wrentham's top dog.

Cruiser, the police department's community resource dog, joined the force last January when he was only eight weeks old. Although the pandemic impacted some of his public appearances, the puppy still managed to win the hearts of plenty of residents.

On November 20, townsfolk were invited to celebrate Cruiser's first birthday with a drive-by parade. Close to 40 cars filled

with families drove by the police station to wish him a happy birthday.

"It was awesome to see the outpouring of support," said Sgt. Dan Morris, Cruiser's handler. "He even received gifts, which we didn't expect."

The community resource dog was provided through a grant to the Wrentham Police Department by Norfolk District Attorney Michael Morrissey.

**CRUISER**  
*continued on page 3*

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## RECREATION

*continued from page 1*

Part of the parcel backs up to Stop River, opening up possibilities for water-based recreation, says David Turi, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, which is collaborating with the Recreation Commission to determine the best use of the land.

“There is great potential

here,” he noted.

Prior to the pandemic, the complex’s grass fields were in heavy use eight months a year with weekday practices and weekend games.

“Our fields get a lot of use during a normal year,” said Proto. “Maintaining grass fields that get a lot of use can be challenging. Having the ability to rotate playing surfaces so more extensive repairs, such as leveling, can be done is ideal. In the

long run this improves conditions and increases the playability of all the fields, but it’s hard to do this when you don’t have enough fields as it is.”

In 2017, the town published its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) after surveying residents. Priorities included hiking and biking trails, along with turf fields and a town swimming pool.

“With the expansion of Pond Street, the request for more trails can be addressed in the shorter term,” explained Proto. “If you’re talking about more fields, that’s a large capital item and probably a few years away.”

Turi, who also serves on the Community Preservation Committee, says the project was a perfect fit for CPA funds, which can be used for open space and recreation, affordable housing, and historic preservation.

“Norfolk was fortunate to jump on the CPA bandwagon when it was first initiated,” he said. “So the money is there for these types of things.”

Cyndi Andrade, the chair of the Community Preservation Committee, says committee members saw the value of adding 43 acres of open space, at a much discounted price, to the existing parcel at Pond Street.

“All monies expended for projects under CPA must be approved by Town Meeting vote, and any monies not spent at the completion of the project return back to Norfolk’s CPA account to be

available for future projects,” she explained. “This acquisition is a great example of the application of CPA for a recreation and open space project that is unique for its many qualities.”

Rep. Shawn Dooley, a Norfolk resident, was the architect of the bill to transfer the land from the DOC to the town.

“This land will allow Norfolk to expand our recreation fields, create nature trails, and safeguard the ecostructure of the surrounding wetlands,” said Dooley in a statement. “Being able to see it signed into law by Governor Baker was incredibly rewarding. I can’t wait to see how the town utilizes this land for the enjoyment of residents of all ages.”

Will Rigdon, Chair of the Norfolk Recreation Committee, worked with Rep. Dooley for the past four years to see the land transfer through to fruition.

“Thank you to the residents of Norfolk, Representative Dooley, the members of the CPC and Conservation Commission, and everyone else involved for their help and support in assisting us with getting this initiative to this point,” said Rigdon in an email. “The Recreation Commission and I are beyond excited for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work collaboratively to explore how to best utilize this land to expand and improve the recreational and open space opportunities available for residents of our community.”

Proto also acknowledged Dooley’s efforts for the town, adding, “Rep. Dooley really did work hard at keeping this bill active, taking it on as a priority. We’re indebted to him and reaping the benefits of his hard work.”

Before the community starts to see changes at the complex, logistical issues, like regulatory paperwork and surveying, will have to be completed. Both Proto and Turi, however, are hopeful that by summertime, the first efforts at a trail system will have begun.

If there’s a positive in the pandemic, it’s that people have become more aware of recreational spaces and more appreciative of local options to get outdoors for exercise and to de-stress. That will likely continue when COVID-19 is finally behind us. It would seem, then, that the Pond Street complex expansion is well-timed.

“People are coming from other areas to use our recreation facilities and trails in town,” said Turi. “I don’t remember any of that before the pandemic. People are taking advantage of all the opportunities to get outside. We’ve developed the Campbell Forest, we’re going after Lind Farm, and by growing the Pond Street complex we will just continue that progress and that focus on the outdoors. It’s very exciting.”

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## The Little Red Schoolhouse to hold Open House for New Families

The Little Red Schoolhouse will hold an open house on January 9 from 10 a.m. to noon for prospective parents. The school is located at 944 West St., Sheltonville.

Due to the current mandated restrictions, only 2 adults per

family will be allowed inside the classroom. No children at this time. Tours are limited to 2-3 families at a time, for 10 minutes each. Tours will be given on a first-come, first-serve basis. Masks must be worn at all times.

The school is accepting ap-

plications for the 2021-22 school year at the open house. A registration fee of \$75 will be due at the same time. Applications will be placed in a lottery if needed.

Email [Littleredsheltonville@gmail.com](mailto:Littleredsheltonville@gmail.com) or call 508-384-2060 with any questions.

**CRUISER**

*continued from page 1*

According to Sgt. Morris, the puppy has already made a difference in several situations involving children.

“We’ve used him at the school to get some kids with anxiety to their classrooms. We’ve used him at a car accident with a girl who was upset. He just has a very calming effect,” said Morris.

Cruiser, named by Wrentham’s school kids soon after his arrival, is an English cream breed of golden retriever known for its patient and gentle nature.

Cruiser was bred by Golden Opportunities for Independence (GOFI) in Walpole, a non-profit organization that pairs service and therapy dogs with individuals and area police departments.

Community resource dogs serve as a type of ambassador for police departments and offer a softer presence in the community.

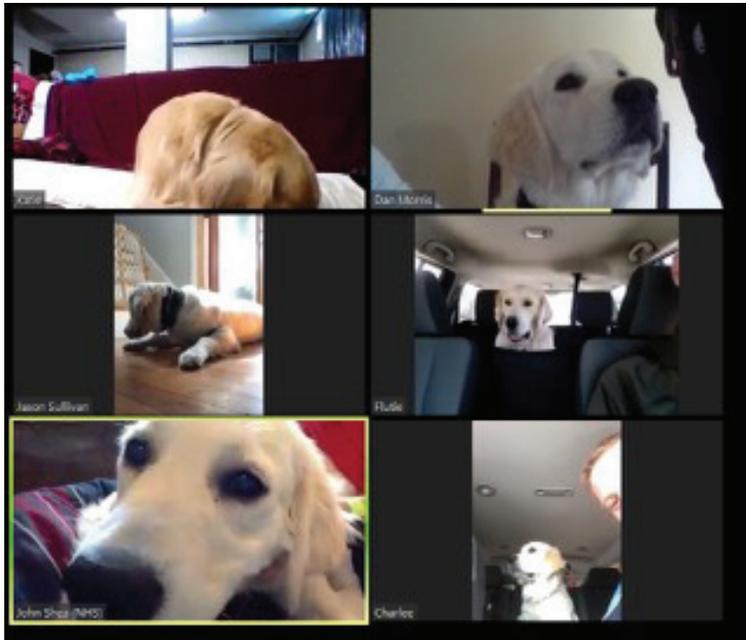
“One of the reasons Cruiser’s role is so important is because in order to see and pet him you also have to talk to a police officer,” explained Sgt. Morris. “That really opens a lot of doors, communication-wise.”

Cruiser participates in training several times a week at Golden Opportunities for Independence and will continue until he’s approximately 18 to 24 months of age, said GOFI spokesperson John Moon.

According to Moon, Cruiser’s current training involves incorporating scent detection to facilitate finding seniors with memory loss or a child on the autism spectrum who may have wandered away from home.

“With the increased populations of elders and autism, a friendly face and demeanor like Cruiser’s will aid the officers in connecting with all parties, whatever their need,” noted Moon, who went on to say Cruiser is a “notable achiever” and “eager to work.”

Sgt. Morris, who also participates in some of Cruiser’s training, including socialization exercises at places like Bass Pro Shops at Patriot Place, agrees the puppy has aced his classes so far.



**Cruiser participating in a Zoom-meeting with other community resource dogs.**



**One of the many birthday gifts received by Cruiser.**

“He’s definitely got an A+ for the year,” said Morris.

At the start of the pandemic, when most of the state was shut down, Cruiser’s training went virtual. Morris and the trainers at GOFI held Zoom calls twice a week to work on the puppy’s lessons. Cruiser also participated in a Zoom meeting with fellow community resource dogs in early April.

“I never thought I’d be Zooming on a computer with dogs,” said Sgt. Morris of the canine social-distancing event.

Cruiser weighed in at 69 pounds on his first birthday. The puppy is receiving free lifetime care, courtesy of Wrentham Animal Hospital. But there are other expenses associated with a dog, and a GoFundMe account

has been set up because so many people have asked how they can help, explained Sgt. Morris.

Cruiser also spends time with Officer Riley McGrath, his secondary handler, and School Resource Officer Todd Schwalbe. The puppy has a Facebook page and an Instagram account so his admirers can keep up with his doings around town.

While the pandemic has impacted Cruiser’s first year on the force, it’s clear he has a great career ahead of him, especially when he can finally interact freely with all segments of the population. Post-COVID, Sgt. Morris says his goal is to have Cruiser out in the community as much as possible, spending more time in the schools, visiting the senior center and the nursing homes, and attending Little League games at Sweatt Field.

“Cruiser gets really excited to see people which makes him awesome at his job,” said Morris. “He also seems to know which people he can play with, and which ones he should let pet him while he lies down. He seems to have a sixth sense about that.”

He added, “I don’t know how you train a dog to love people, but somehow, magically, Cruiser just does.”

Follow Cruiser on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/Officer-Cruiser/](http://www.facebook.com/Officer-Cruiser/)) or Instagram ([officer\\_cruiser](https://www.instagram.com/officer_cruiser)). To make a donation to Cruiser’s GoFundMe account, visit [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and search for “Cruiser Wrentham.”



**Cruiser in front of the police station while townspeople drove by to wish him a happy birthday.**

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# Alumni Music Students Give Back

## Masterclasses Aim to Encourage, Inspire High School Musicians

BY GRACE ALLEN

The pandemic has taken a lot away from high school students. For music students in particular, it's taken away the joy of playing with and for others. While the music has not been silenced, it has definitely been lowered.

How then to find inspiration? At King Philip High School, they turned to the music program's alumni.

Last month, the school held a series of virtual performances and clinics by program graduates. "The Alumni Series" provided a way for current students to learn from and interact with former students.

"I believe the opportunity to engage with young and successful alumni is a possibly transformative experience, even over Zoom," said Michael Keough, the high school's band director.

"The Alumni Series" in December included Ben Webster, a composer and clarinetist, Allison Parramore, a flutist and music lecturer, and Nick Beltramini, a

saxophonist and college student, along with his jazz band Slightly Tooned.

On December 14, Beltramini and Slightly Tooned held their virtual masterclass for students, discussing their experiences, answering questions, and performing their rendition of holiday-themed songs. The Medfield High School music program was also invited to the Zoom class, because one of the Slightly Tooned members is a graduate of that program.

"It's really tough right now for these students to find inspiration to make music because of social distancing issues," said Beltramini, a Wrentham resident. "At one time or another, I've been inspired by others to continue to pursue my craft so I think this is a great way to give back."

After the masterclass on the 14th, Slightly Tooned held a live-stream concert with the proceeds going to the Louis Armstrong Emergency Fund for Jazz Musicians to help jazz musicians affected by the pandemic (see accompanying article for a review of the concert). While at King Philip,

Beltramini was the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Louis Armstrong Award.

"It's a really cool way to come full circle," said Beltramini.

Slightly Tooned was formed while Beltramini was still in high school. When the members are home from college, they play their version of jazz, funk, and rhythm and blues at venues all around the greater Boston area and on the Cape.

Beltramini graduated from King Philip in 2019 and now attends Oberlin Conservatory. At Oberlin, he is a member of the elite Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble, which serves the community through music. Beltramini says his desire to give back was solidified during a phone call with the jazz legend.

"He told me, 'trust that later on in life there's something bigger for you when you give back to others' and I've really been trying to adopt those words. Putting on this masterclass at King Philip is a great way to serve the community."



Nick Beltramini, left, and his band participated in "The Alumni Series" at KPHS.

While there are no concerts in the high school students' immediate future, the masterclass series, which will continue through the winter, should help bring some extra mentorship and musical encouragement during this challenging time, noted Beltramini.

This year has forced students and teachers to adapt to the circumstances and become more grateful for the experiences they can have together, said Keough, the band director, who noted when the weather was warmer, the students practiced their in-

struments outside on the bleachers, socially-distanced.

"I think the students, and certainly I, have come to really value our time together and the opportunity to make music when we can," said Keough. "What really impresses me about our music students this year is how resilient they've become to every obstacle the pandemic has created and how, when they have the opportunity to play, even if it's only for each other, they do so with as much passion as ever."

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Published Monthly  
Mailed FREE  
to the Community of  
Norfolk/Wrentham  
Circulation: 8,373  
households and businesses

**Publisher**  
Chuck Tashjian

**Editor**  
Grace Allen

**Send Editorial to:**  
[editor@norfolkwrenthamnews.com](mailto:editor@norfolkwrenthamnews.com)

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## Jazzing Through the Snow

BY BRENDAN ZIMMERMAN

Though there are no live concerts to be found this holiday season, local jazz group Slightly Tooned managed to bring a little virtual Christmas cheer to an otherwise bleak December.

In an effort to raise money for the Louis Armstrong Emergency Fund for Jazz Musicians, the ensemble held a virtual concert through Facebook Live where viewers could donate money through PayPal or Venmo during the performance.

Slightly Tooned is led by Nick Beltramini, who plays the saxophone. Other members are Ian Banno on bass, Warren Pettey, who plays the piano, and Jack Shurtleff on the drums. Playing from a garage decked out with Christmas decorations, the setting was warm and filled with music instruments mic'd and ready.

Though there were a few technical issues at first, the band was soon in full swing with a smooth rendition of "Let it Snow, Let It Snow." The sound came through

well for a virtual concert, with every instrument cutting through in the mix without sounding muddy.

For the entirety of their set, the band covered a series of classic Christmas songs, ranging from "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." And of course, no Christmas jazz concert would be complete without a cover of the Vince Guaraldi Trio's magnificent work from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Thankfully, Slightly Tooned delivered a great rendition of "O Tannenbaum" early in their set.

But the magic of a jazz concert doesn't just come from the first few bars of that recognizable melody setting the stage – it comes from the jam sessions that eventually build off of it. And Slightly Tooned did an excellent job with their improv. Once the progression was set for a song, the band would take off into a series of skillful solos. Each band

member got a chance to solo in most of the songs, trading off the spotlight methodically and giving each other an equal amount of time to riff. Ultimately, the solos were fun, inventive, and energetic in each song.

There were some particularly interesting moments throughout the set, including a groovy rendition of "Santa Baby" that saw Beltramini switch over to the flute halfway through for a jazzy solo. The band was tight and locked in for the entirety of the performance as the rhythm section, comprised of Shurtleff and Banno, kept the jam sessions moving steady without fail.

For an isolated winter season capping off a year without any local concerts, it was nice to finally experience live music again – even if it was just from the comfort of our couches. And just in time for Christmas, Slightly Tooned put on a great show for a great cause.

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Guest Column

# Proposed Southwood Hospital Development

By PETER SVALBE

Most residents of this area are likely aware of the old decommissioned Caritas Southwood Hospital property in Norfolk (111 Dedham Street on 1A). Southwood is about 88 acres and has for many years remained unsold for redevelopment. The land is currently owned by the Archdiocese. The site has complex issues, including Tier 1 contamination per Mass DEP and protected streams and wetlands. It is also close to residential homes and a Zone 2 protected aquifer for public water.

As a concerned resident, I want to get the word out about a recent development proposal for Southwood. On December 8th, an investment group presented a concept to the Planning Board for a 600,000 square foot distribution warehouse with adjacent 40B apartment buildings. The warehouse estimates are as follows: 77+ trailer bays, 318+ trailer parking spaces, and 600+ vehicle parking spaces. For the apartments, the plan includes 216 units with 456 parking spaces.

During the presentation, we learned that the proposed warehouse could service a variety of distribution business models, including what are known as “last mile delivery” hubs. These 24/7 warehouses are utilized by e-commerce businesses as a center of distribution to the end customer (think Amazon, Wayfair, Target, Walmart, etc.). In short, large trailer trucks arrive at the site with delivery items. These items are processed, prepared, and loaded for customer delivery. A fleet of trucks and vans then deploy out to the surrounding area to deliver goods.

The demand for “last mile delivery” centers has grown over

the last few years, and the pandemic has only exacerbated the appetite for one-day delivery. Coincidentally, the December 6th edition of the Boston Sunday Globe featured an article about the growing number of distribution warehouse projects popping up throughout this region. It outlined some of the issues these projects cause in communities. It is not an exaggeration to say these warehouses have the potential to permanently alter the character of a town, region, and the quality of life for nearby residents. Search articles related to Milford and Dedham, two recent examples that unfortunately have had to deal with intense traffic and noise issues since those warehouses became operational.

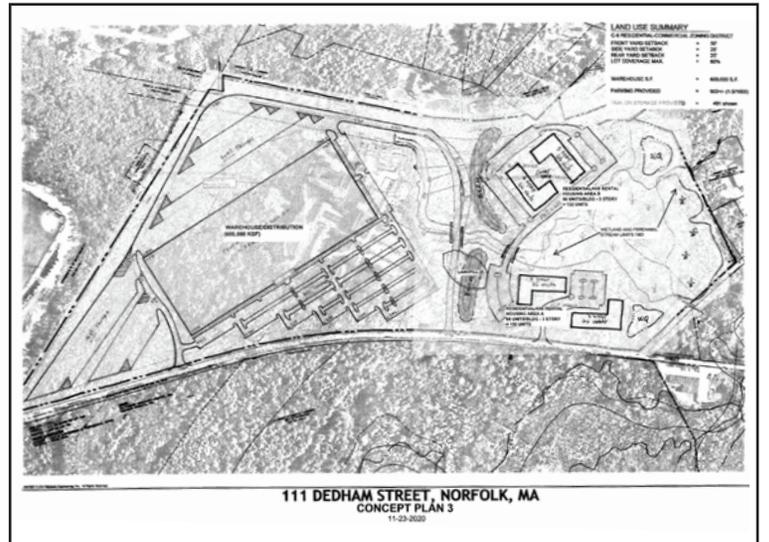
I do support Norfolk’s goals to redevelop Southwood. Future hopes for the property are to establish additional commercial tax base and also add to Norfolk’s target 10% affordable housing inventory (as mandated by MGL Chapter 40B). However, the distribution warehouse concept, whether 600,000 sq. ft. or 300,000 sq. ft. (as in Milford), is deeply troubling. Given the end use will be a trucking and delivery operation, this will inevitably impact the immediate Pondville neighborhoods and also the wider area of Norfolk, Wrentham, and Walpole. Trucks and vans will need a route to and from Route 1, I-95, and I-495. This means heavy utilization of 1A into Wrentham and Walpole and 115 towards Foxborough and Millis. Any smaller cut-through streets will also be subject to these vehicles infiltrating neighborhoods to avoid traffic elsewhere. Residents near the Southwood site will also contend with noise emanating from a 24/7 operation of such a scale

and magnitude we have not seen before. These are documented side effects in other towns that adopted this warehouse model. Additionally, the current proposal depicts a driveway towards the back of the property, on top of the existing railroad right-of-way. This may impact the proposed Metacomet Greenway, a multi-town recreational trail between Walpole, Norfolk, Wrentham and beyond.

Surely Norfolk may be losing patience with Southwood. It has been many years and several failed proposals from prospective buyers. The current proposal will certainly bring tax revenue and site clean-up (if properly overseen). But at what cost to the town, our roads, our neighbors, and our neighboring towns? We should be willing to wait as long as it takes to get the right type of project done here. The town only has one shot at this.

I believe that Norfolk’s first priority should be to revisit the strategy for site contamination cleanup at Southwood. Pondville residents and consumers of the Zone 2 well deserve a complete assessment to see what the impacts are to the surrounding areas and the environment, and for those issues to be remediated sooner rather than later. Until now, the approach has been to wait for a developer willing to pay the cleanup bill. This hasn’t worked because the costs become a limiting factor, discouraging more attractive design and build-out.

Next, I believe Norfolk should be more vocal about the type of plan it wants to see for Southwood. In my opinion, the site should include a mix of affordable units, 55+, healthcare/assisted living, light commercial, and greenspace. The taxes over-



Initial concept plan of the proposed Southwood development.

all would be more valuable and the site would be more attractive compared to the large-scale distribution operation in the current proposal. It’s worth noting that Plainville had one such warehouse project in front of them and succeeded in modifying the plan into a biotech facility.

If news of this project has you concerned as well, please contact the town to ask questions, express concerns, and get involved with the community input sessions starting this month. Key contacts

for communication are Town Planner Rich McCarthy (rmccarthy@norfolk.ma.us), Select Board Chair Kevin Kalkut (kkalkut@norfolk.ma.us), Planning Board Chair Walter Byron (wbyron@norfolk.ma.us), and Town Administrator Blythe Robinson (brobinson@norfolk.ma.us). For the community input session schedule, call 508-528-2961, or check the town’s website for announcements (https://norfolk.ma.us/).

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Overnight parking in Wrentham is banned on all public streets from December 1 through April 1 from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Vehicles that interfere with removal or plowing of snow and ice may be towed to a storage area and the registered owner will be responsible for charges incurred.

# Celebrating 90 Years, COVID-Style

## Long-time Wrentham Resident Reflects and Looks Ahead

BY GRACE ALLEN

Next to health care workers, you could argue the segment of the population most impacted by the pandemic is senior citizens. But for some seniors, especially those blessed by good health, strong family connections and a resilient attitude, the pandemic hasn't really slowed them down very much. Elizabeth "Betty" Loughlin would fall into that group.

"She's an inspiration," said Cathy Pimental, Loughlin's daughter. "She runs circles around the rest of us."

Betty turned 90 years old on December 8, and on Sunday, December 13, local members of her large clan gathered on her front porch and lawn to celebrate and honor the Wrentham mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

Betty was born in Sarasota, Florida, the only daughter in a family of boys. She spent her



Nine of Betty Loughlin's 23 grandchildren and 3 of her 6 great-grandchildren helped celebrate her birthday with a socially-distanced outdoor party held on December 13.

childhood traveling between Florida and Rhode Island because her father was in the hotel business. The family spent the summers in Jamestown, Rhode Island while he ran the Dunes Club in nearby Narragansett. In the winter, the family would move down to Sarasota and live in the John Ringling Hotel, which Betty's father also managed.

The historic hotel, owned by members of the famous circus family, was the destination for circus performers and other well-



Betty Loughlin's 1953 engagement announcement photo.

known people. Circus acts and trapeze artists often performed in the ballroom to the applause of wealthy and well-connected guests.

"You could look down from the mezzanine and watch the performances," recalled Betty.

She was away at college when the Academy-Award winning movie "The Greatest Show on Earth" was filmed nearby. Produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille, the film about trapeze artists starred Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Jimmy Stewart, and Charlton Heston. DeMille, Hutton, and Wilde stayed at the hotel during the filming of the movie, and Loughlin's brother reported to his sister that Hutton regaled hotel guests with her singing each night in the bar.

Betty met her husband Raymond when he took a job at the Dunes Club one summer. They married in 1954 and had eight children. In 1961, the young family moved to Wrentham and put down roots. Raymond passed away when Betty was only 55. She now has 23 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Keeping in touch with her large family is important be-



Family members surprised Betty Loughlin with a sign outside of St. Mary's Catholic Church on December 8, her 90th birthday.

lieves Loughlin, who uses email, Facebook, and according to her daughter, has thought about getting an Instagram account, too. Every three years, the Loughlin clan gathers together for a very large family reunion. There are over 400 people in the database, so that's a lot of folks to keep in touch with.

"You might as well keep up with technology so you know what's going on," said Betty. "If I didn't, I wouldn't see pictures of my grandchildren or my cousins' grandchildren. I don't always understand everything but I can look it up."

Betty is an active member of the community, living independently and still driving. She has been a Eucharistic minister at St. Mary's Church for 34 years and attends Mass daily. She was also a member of the church's Catholic Women's Club for 40 years.

Despite the pandemic, Loughlin is still working two days a week at the Fiske Library, a job she has held for 27 years with no plans to retire.

"It gives me something to think about and a reason to get up and go out," she said.

Library director Mary Tobichuk says Betty works the circulation desk, answers phones, and does pretty much anything else that's asked of her. "I guess she'll be here until we have to carry her out," quipped Tobichuk.

Claudia Schumacher, the reference librarian, says Betty pre-dates her time at the Fiske, and has remained a fixture at the library as others have come and gone.

"She is like a grandmother to me," said Schumacher. "She certainly does not act like a 90-year-old and it is hard to believe that is her age. It doesn't seem like she has any intention of stopping work and has no fear of being out and about with COVID."

When the pandemic is over, Loughlin hopes to return to one of her favorite pastimes, travel. Her last trips included a visit to Amsterdam in 2019 and to Costa Rica when she was 85. She's seen much of Europe already but hopes to visit Scandinavia soon.

In the meantime, you'll likely find her at the Fiske or St. Mary's, or maybe working on a sewing project with a grandchild. And as for the pandemic, it would seem Betty has really good genes on her side. Her mother was infected during the 1917-1918 influenza pandemic, and although coming close to death, survived the virus.

"World War II was bad enough, but I've never seen anything like this before," Betty mused. "I hope the vaccine works and that it goes to the first responders as it should. But in the meantime, just wear your mask."

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## It's More Than Just a Click or A Pop!!!

TMJ is a condition characterized by pain in the jaw joint and surrounding tissues accompanied by a decrease in the range of motion of the joint itself. There may be clicking or popping and a noticeable swing of the lower joint. Currently more than 12% of Americans suffer from TMJ symptoms.

There are many causes of TMJ. These include dental procedures, autoimmune disease, biting into a large sandwich or bagel, injuries to the jaw area and infection. Once the biomechanics of the joint has been altered, the function becomes affected and the pain ensues. Traditional treatments include pain medication, muscle relaxers and dental appliances. These are effective

resources for some, but not for all, especially long term.

Stephanie P. suffered from TMJ pain for over two years since the removal of her braces. Chewing certain foods would aggravate her jaw and intensify her pain. In the beginning, she felt she could handle problem on her own by giving up chewing gum, eating oversized sandwiches, chewy meats and certain fruits. However, she noticed that over time, just yawning and even singing, could cause an exacerbation. She was becoming disillusioned with the idea that she could fix this on her own and decided to call The Holistic Center at Bristol Square and made an appointment with Dr. Goldstein.

Upon exam, Dr. Goldstein noticed the swing shift in Stephanie's jaw as she both opened and closed her mouth, indicating a dysfunction in the biomechanics of her TMJ. After several weeks of treatment, the clicking and popping were gone and the swing in her jaw was stabilized. She no longer suffers from the TMJ pain and also noticed that the headaches she thought were unrelated had gone away as well.

If you are suffering from TMJ pain, do not hesitate to contact The Holistic Center at Bristol Square, located at 1426 Main Street, Walpole. Call (508) 660-2722 and make your appointment today. With the assistance from Dr. Goldstein, everyday tasks can be enjoyable again.



Dr. Rochelle Bien & Dr. Michael Goldstein

## Wrentham Resident Earns "Patriots Difference Maker of the Week" Award

*Patriots Foundation Donating \$5,000 to Support Gilly's House*

Barbara Gillmeister of Wrentham was selected as a "2020 Patriots Difference Maker of the Week" for her commitment

to Gilly's House. As part of this recognition, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation will be making a \$5,000

donation to the nonprofit.

Ten years ago, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation introduced a season-long theme called Celebrate Volunteerism. The main focus of the initiative was to recognize community volunteers and to promote the importance of volunteering. Since its inception, New England Patriots players, coaches, alumni, cheerleaders and fans have donated hundreds of thousands of hours to giving back to their New England communities.

"This has been a challenging year, unlike anything we've experienced in our lifetimes," said Patriots Chairman and CEO Robert Kraft. "Charitable organizations have been called upon to support more children and families than ever before. We admire all of the hardworking volunteers that have stepped up and helped these nonprofits to continue to serve those in need. Through this Celebrate Volunteerism initiative, we will shine a light on some of these outstanding volunteers, make a donation to their respective charity and encourage our fans to get involved."

In October of 2016, Steven "Gilly" Gillmeister lost his long battle with addiction. Within six months of Steven's passing, his parents – Barbara and David – purchased a residential home for young men in recovery. Gilly's House is a sober home for young

men in the early stages of recovery. It offers a stable, structured and supportive environment to achieve personal goals while attaining the transitional life skills

**AWARD**

*continued on page 14*



Barbara Gillmeister from Wrentham (pictured with her late son, Steven) was selected as a 2020 Patriots Difference Maker of the Week for her commitment to Gilly's House. In honor of her volunteer efforts, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation is making a \$5,000 donation in Barbara's honor.

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# Living Healthy

## Milford -Franklin Eye Center Decades of Service to the Community and a New Provider in 2021

BY ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.  
MILFORD-FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

Milford-Franklin Eye Center has been providing excellent eye care to the community for decades. With much excitement, we are happy to announce that we have grown to a dedicated group of 8 physicians and Optometrists. In January of 2021 Dr. Mai-Khuyen Nguyen, OD will join our team in our state-of-the-art medical offices in Franklin and Milford. Dr. Nguyen is a comprehensive optometrist offering the latest in comprehensive eye care for the entire family.

With offices located in Milford and Franklin and a support staff of 50, we are proud to be the leading medical and surgical eye care center in the area and one of the major eye care insti-

tutions in the State. We are also one of the rare ophthalmology practices to own and operate our own surgical center, the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford. No more need to travel miles and hours to have cataract surgery! Five experienced eye physicians/surgeons and 3 optometrists are here to provide comprehensive and excellent eye care for the entire family.

Dr. Roger Kaldawy is an experienced eye physician and surgeon and the area's only full-time specialist in corneal diseases. Having completed his training in Ophthalmology at University of Rochester and his fellowship in Cornea and Refractive Surgery at the prestigious Department of Ophthalmology of the University of Iowa, Dr. Kaldawy served as Assistant Professor of

Ophthalmology at Boston University where he was Director of the Cornea and External Disease program and trained fellows and residents in Ophthalmology. Some of his trainees are now in academic and private practices in Massachusetts and around the world. Dr. Kaldawy published research articles in peer-reviewed academic journals and has been invited as a guest speaker to many prestigious academic programs in the US and around the world including University of New York, Stanford University and University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Kaldawy is proud to be the first surgeon in central Massachusetts and among a handful of surgeons in the State to have performed DSAEK corneal transplantation. With special interest in cataract surgery,

Dr. Kaldawy has performed tens of thousands of procedures and was the first surgeon in the area to offer the highly advanced accommodating implants. Dr. Kaldawy is the first and only surgeon in the area to offer bladeless laser-assisted Femto cataract surgery. This laser procedure is offered locally at the Cataract and Laser Surgery Center of Milford.

Dr. Hatch is the only fellowship trained pediatric ophthalmologist in the area, and is a skilled surgeon with training in the latest techniques for straightening misaligned eyes. Dr. Hatch earned bachelors and master's degrees in engineering from Boston University and Dartmouth College. He completed his medical degree at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1988, followed by residency in Ophthalmology at Yale-New Haven Hospital and fellowship in Pediatric and Neuro-ophthalmology at Duke University. Returning to his home state in 1993, Dr. Hatch joined the Milford-Franklin Eye Center where he focuses on comprehensive pediatric and adult ophthalmology and adult strabismus.

Dr. Lashkari is our practicing vitreoretinal specialist as well as a scientist at the Schepens Eye Research Institute, Harvard Medi-

cal School. He is also a part-time Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at the Harvard Medical School. Dr. Lashkari completed a Medical-Surgical Fellow in Vitreoretinal disease at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Dr. Ahmed graduated Magna cum Laude with Honors from Brown University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She then pursued her medical degree at Medical College of Georgia followed by a medical internship at Mercy Hospital in Baltimore, MD. She completed her residency in Ophthalmology at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, MA followed by a Cornea and Anterior Segment Fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX. Her specific interests include ocular surface disease, complex cataracts and corneal transplantation.

Dr. Perriello Consigli received her Bachelor of Science degree from Clark University in 1987. She went on to earn her Doctor of Optometry degree from New England College of Optometry in 1991. Dr. Consigli has over twenty five years of experience, spending several years in private practice. In February 2019, Dr.

**EYES**

*continued on page 9*



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# Living Healthy

## Healthy KP Substance Use Prevention Coalition Awarded \$625,000 Federal Drug-Free Communities Grant

The Healthy KP Substance Use Prevention Coalition has been awarded a \$625,000 grant from the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program.

The grant is a five-year grant, during which time Healthy KP will receive \$125,000 in funding per year.

The DFC Program provides grants to community coalitions across the country that work to prevent and reduce substance use among youths. The grant aims to provide these coalitions with funds to strengthen relationships with local community partners and implement different strategies and programs that are designed to reduce youth substance use rates.

Healthy KP is one of 107 coalitions across the country who were newly awarded the grant, and one of only seven coalitions to receive the grant in Massachusetts. Approximately \$25 million in funds were allocated to support new coalitions. In all, the grant is part of \$91.5 million awarded to 733 coalitions nationwide.

Healthy KP was founded in 2018 with the goal of empowering students from Wrentham, Norfolk and Plainville to live a healthy, substance-free life through youth leadership, education, training, policy and support.

A 2018 anonymous student survey, called the MetroWest Health Survey, showed startling data among high school students

throughout the region. The responses of King Philip students showed trends that included growing numbers of students who reported using E-cigarettes, tobacco or nicotine products, and marijuana, as well as continued alcohol use among students.

"Healthy KP is incredibly fortunate to have received this grant funding and it would not have been possible without the hard work of the coalition's members and the dedication of Vice Principal Kip Lewis and Director of Wellness Dot Pearl," KP Superintendent Paul Zinni said. "We would also like to thank Amanda Decker of Bright Solutions and KPRMS School Resource Officer Sgt. Michelle Palladini who have both been an active part of and valuable advisers to the coalition. This funding will help the

coalition implement programs and strategies to reduce substance use, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact the coalition will make in our communities in the coming years."

Healthy KP plans to use its first year of funding to hire a program director who will create and supervise coalition programming. Funds will also go toward the planning of community events and training for coalition members, and will help to provide parents with information and resources to talk to their children about substance use.

Additionally, grant funds will be used to help increase community collaboration through partnerships with other local organizations, as well as increase the coalition's membership base.

Long-term, the grant aims

to help the coalition implement evidence-based strategies that can reduce substance use rates among kids and teens in the communities.

"One of our main goals in reducing substance use is to help youth develop the skills to make healthy choices," said Director Pearl. "The grant will enable us to continue to assess the needs and fabric of the three communities and implement evidence-based practices to support our youth in making these healthy choices."

In its first few years, the coalition has completed or begun a number of initiatives, includ-

### GRANT

*continued on page 10*

### EYES

*continued from page 8*

Consigli joined Milford-Franklin Eye Center. She enjoys seeing patients of all ages. She is proficient in routine eye care, contact lens fitting, and diagnosing and treating various eye disease.

Dr. Adams, graduated from John Carroll University, Bachelors of Science, summa cum laude, in 1995. He completed his Masters in Biochemistry from The Ohio State University in 1997. In 2003 he received his Doctorate from the New England College of Optometry. Dr. Adams has advanced training in corneal pathology, specialty contact lenses, ocular disease and laser refractive surgery.

Dr. Mai-Khuyen Nguyen joins Milford-Franklin Eye Center from the New England Carpenters Benefit Fund – Vision Center, where she served as Head of Optometry. She has over 9 years of experience in comprehensive eye exams for adult, geriatric, pediatric, and special needs populations. Her experience includes performing contact lens fitting and managing contact lens complications. Dr. Nguyen is also experienced in glasses fitting and lens edg-

ing. Her charitable activities include participating in Boston Cares program and the Boston Special Olympics.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center realizes you have choices when it comes to eye care. We are different. We focus on excellent and advanced eye care and treat our patients as if each and every one is family. We are from the community, most of us live in the community and our focus is to serve the community. You will see us in the office, at the local supermarket and in the ER at 1 AM if there is a need for our care. Our focus is you, your vision and excellent results. We are available, in your backyard and proud to offer world class cataract surgery closer to home: Here in Milford! Our optical shop has its own dedicated lab and can cut and finish your glasses while you wait. We offer after-hours, same day emergency appointments and Saturday appointments. We have a new management focused on quality customer care. Eight providers dedicated to the best in eye medicine and surgery and now to even serve you better a new provider: Welcome Dr. Nguyen. Please stop by and say Hi... We are here to serve you.

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# Living Healthy

## Reimagined Pan-Mass Challenge Donates \$50 Million to Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund



This year, 9,600 Pan-Mass Challenge participants raised \$50 million for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through the summer-long PMC 2020 Reimagined campaign. Pictured L-R: Meredith Beaton-Starr, PMC Director of Stewardship and Liaison to Dana-Farber with Billy Starr, PMC Founder and Executive Director.

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, a world leader in adult and pediatric cancer treatment and research, received a generous \$50 million gift from the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC) in early December. This impressive gift exceeded fundraising expectations that were impacted when the pandemic hit and brings the organization's total contributions in the fight against cancer to more than three quarters of a billion dollars since 1980. One hundred percent of this meaningful gift will support the lifesaving mission of Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund, including immediate patient care needs, breakthrough discoveries and COVID-19-related cancer research. The PMC is the nation's most successful

single-event athletic fundraiser and Dana-Farber's largest single contributor, accounting for more than 64 percent of its Jimmy Fund's revenue.

Unable to move forward with its traditional ride this year, PMC 2020 Reimagined was designed to encourage riders to move forward with individual activities on or off the bike, emphasizing their commitment to supporting Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund during these unprecedented times. While other peer-to-peer fundraisers struggled to convert in-person events to virtual fundraisers, PMC 2020 Reimagined was incredibly successful, generating the highest event weekend fundraising results the PMC has ever experienced –

\$4 million from July 31 – August 3. This year's \$50 million gift includes \$4 million of funding that was fast-tracked to Dana-Farber in May to kick start its COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund for patients and their families, as well as approximately \$8 million in major gifts from donors who were inspired by the PMC community and recognize the critical need for cancer funding during the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to many aspects of our daily lives this year – but cancer stops for nothing, and the PMC refuses to stop either," said PMC founder and executive di-

**DONATION**  
*continued on page 15*

### GRANT

*continued from page 9*

ing the Sticker Shock Awareness Campaign that sought to curb teen drinking and sub-

stance use before King Philip Regional High School's prom in 2019. The coalition has also aimed to change the perception of substance use as a teen norm through the Social Norms Campaign. The campaign consists of posters featuring current KP student leaders unified against substance use with accurate statistics about the amount of KP students who actually engage in substance use.

"Healthy KP has already completed a number of important and meaningful activities in the community, and these funds will support our continued efforts to help students of all ages in the tri-town area understand the dangers of alcohol, tobacco

and drugs," Vice Principal Lewis said.

Added Healthy KP member Ann Barr, "We are very fortunate that the Healthy KP Coalition was awarded the DFC grant and I am thankful that the coalition can continue working to provide resources, education and services to help our youth live substance-free."

To be eligible for the grant, coalitions needed to have a steering committee made up of representatives and participants from 12 sectors of the community including: youth; parents; law enforcement; schools; businesses; media; youth-serving organizations; religious and fraternal organizations; civic and volunteer

groups; healthcare professionals; state, local, and tribal agencies with expertise in substance abuse; and other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse.

Coalitions also had to demonstrate that their membership base attends regular meetings and that the coalition has completed previous substance use prevention projects or activities.

The coalition is always looking for additional members who are passionate about reducing substance use among youth. Anyone interested in learning more about Healthy KP or becoming a member is encouraged to contact Vice Principal Lewis at lewisk@kingphilip.org or Director Pearl at pearld@kingphilip.org.

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# Norfolk Resident Honored By Lifeworks

Lifeworks, a nonprofit human services provider that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), announced that Jeremy Jordan of Norfolk was the recipient of its Dependable Employee Award, one of several of the organization's Employment Services awards. These awards recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond at their jobs in the community.

In a press release, Lifeworks noted that Jordan has proven to be an extremely reliable worker who enthusiastically does his part for his shifts. "Jeremy possesses every characteristic of a wonderful employee who is a quick learner and willing to do what is needed to get the job done," said the company in a statement.

Because of COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, and in lieu of the traditional June banquet, this year's awards ceremony was a hybrid event held Nov. 6, with some individuals honored in person and others via video conference.

Lifeworks' Employment Services Program provides ongoing job training and placement services to adults living with IDD, such as autism. Lifeworks partners with many Greater Boston employers, along with local and statewide workforce initiatives for the disability community. Over the past 30 years, Lifeworks has placed hundreds of talented, dependable individuals in food, customer service, manufac-



Jeremy Jordan of Norfolk.

turing, fulfillment, warehouse, retail and office support positions.

For more information, visit [www.lifeworksarc.org](http://www.lifeworksarc.org).

# Norfolk and Wrentham Residents Named to Honor Roll at BC High

Boston College High School is proud to announce that the following students from Norfolk and Wrentham have been named to the school's First Quarter Honor Roll:

- Jack Dooley, Norfolk, 1st Quarter Honors
- William Pyne, Wrentham, 1st Quarter High Honors

For High Honors a sophomore, junior, and senior must have at least a 3.80 quality point average and all grades "C+" or higher. Freshmen need a 3.6 quality point average and all grades "C+" or higher. For

Honors a sophomore, junior, and senior must have at least a 3.20 quality point average and all grades "C-" or higher. Freshmen need a 3.165 quality point average and all grades "C-" or higher.

BC High successfully reopened for in-person learning this past September using a hybrid model, with two cohorts of students coming onto campus on alternating weeks. This model provided all BC High students with completely synchronous learning opportunities throughout the fall, regardless of whether the student was at school or at

home. The school also implemented extensive safety protocols to help keep students, faculty, staff, and others safe and healthy during the global pandemic, and plans to continue offering in-person instruction in January.

**About Boston College High School:** Boston College High School is a Jesuit, Catholic, college-preparatory school for young men in grades 7 to 12. Founded in 1863, the school enrolls approximately 1,500 students from more than 140 communities in eastern Massachusetts. For more information please visit [bchigh.edu](http://bchigh.edu).

## Project Mitten Says Thank You

To The Editor:

On behalf of the Project Mitten families in Wrentham, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people and organizations for their tremendous generosity and kindness: the Wrentham Elementary School staff, especially Toni Rando; the Wrentham Police Department; Omega Pizza; Crosby's Coffeeshouse and their customers; the Wrentham Lions Club with help from Marianne O'Brien; Wrentham Holly Club with help from Linda Bertoldi; the Wrentham Cooperative Bank; Whelton/Maccione family; the Munafo and Getchell Families; the Allan family; the Foxx family and friends; and many anonymous donors.

It is because of these magnificent people and organizations that Project Mitten helped 27 families with over 50 children to have a glorious and joyful Christmas! It was a huge success!

There is nothing greater in life than giving to others. You all made a difference in the lives of these families through your generosity and thoughtfulness! We extend to all of you a heartfelt THANK YOU!

We feel so proud to be part of such an amazing community! May your New Year bring you peace, health, and happiness!

Sincerely,

Erin Blake and Chandler Ross

Project Mitten Coordinators



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# Too Late for 2020 Tax Planning? Guess again.

2020 is done, so 2020 tax planning is done too, right? Guess again. Although it's true that most tax planning strategies are limited after December 31st, there is still a lot you can do to make the tax-filing season cheaper and easier.

## Maximize Your Retirement Contributions

If you haven't already funded your retirement account for 2020, you still have time. Contributions to a Traditional IRA (whether deductible or not) and to a Roth IRA are available until April 15th, 2021. If you are self employed and have a Keogh or SEP-IRA, you have until October 15th, 2021 if you submit an extension of time to file your tax return. Not only will making a deductible contribution lower your tax bill, but your investment will compound tax-deferred. There are specific requirements and limits for each type of account so check with a qualified tax advisor on your specific situation.

## Estimated Tax Payments

If you don't pay enough to the IRS during the year, you may be looking at a hefty tax bill come April. It is possible that you might even owe penalties

and interest on top of the tax. You could avoid any 2020 fourth quarter penalties on underpayment of tax if you submit a payment by January 15th 2021. Try not to over pay the tax however, because the IRS does not pay you any interest on the borrowed money called your refund. It is your money so plan accordingly.

## Organization of Your Records

Having your records organized may not save tax dollars, but will make your tax season less stressful. Start by keeping your prior year returns and tax documents in the same place. Collect all of your receipts and documents that may have piled up during the year (hopefully you already have a folder or file called "Taxes" to get you started). When your W2s, 1099s or other tax documents start arriving in the mail, put them all in the same folder and group them together in like categories. When beginning to prepare your return, work off a checklist or worksheet so you don't overlook anything.

## Take Every Deduction You Are Entitled To

Often times, taxpayers overlook deductions or decide not to take certain deductions because

they feel too they are being too aggressive. In order to minimize the amount of tax liability, take every deduction you are entitled to. If your qualified itemized deductions exceed your standard deduction, file with the higher amount. Some well known items that you can itemize are home mortgage interest, real estate taxes and charitable deductions. Other lesser known itemized deductions that you may be entitled to include job hunting expenses, unreimbursed employee expenses, and out of pocket medical expenses. If you are self employed, make sure you write off all of your expenses and be prepared to back these with receipts. One of the items self-employed individuals may be eligible for is the Office-In-Home Deduction. If you conduct business exclusively out of your home office, you may be eligible.

## File & Pay On-Time

If you can't finish your return on time, make sure you file Form 4868 by April 15th, 2021. You will get automatic six-month extension of the filing deadline until October 15th, 2021. On the form, you need to make a reasonable estimate of your tax liability for 2020 and pay any balance due with your request. Requesting an extension in a timely man-



ner is especially important if you end up owing tax to the IRS. If you file and pay late, the IRS can slap you with a late-filing penalty of 4.5 percent per month of the tax owed and a late-payment penalty of 0.5 percent a month of the tax due. The maximum late filing penalty is 22.5 percent and the penalty tops out at 25 percent. By filing Form 4868, you stop the clock running on the costly late-filing penalty.

That doesn't mean you have to wait until April 15 to visit your tax preparer's office, though.

In fact, the earlier you can prepare and file your tax returns, the better off you are. First, a new tax law effective last year requires the IRS to hold refunds for a few weeks for some early filers who claim the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Additional Child Tax Credit. The IRS has to hold

the entire refund, not just the portion associated with those credits, until at least February 15. Second, the rise in identity theft is causing the IRS and state tax authorities to spend additional review time to protect against fraud. Additional safeguards will be set in place for the upcoming 2021 filing season. Knowing these two important things, you should get a head start on the process. Even though the refund may be delayed, you should still file early to get ahead of the possible identity theft.

## Seek Help, If You Need It

Low cost, affordable options to prepare and file your returns exist. If you are comfortable doing your own return, go for it. If you become uncomfortable or get in a jam, call a professional for added confidence and peace of mind.

*Jeffrey Schweitzer can be found at Northeast Financial Strategies Inc (NFS) at Wampum Corner in Wrentham. NFS works with individuals and small businesses providing financial and estate planning, insurance, investments and also offers full service accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, income tax preparation, and notary public services. For more information, stop by the office, call Jeffrey at 800-560-4NFS or visit online - [www.nfsnet.com](http://www.nfsnet.com).*

Call Jen Schofield at  
508-570-6544

[jenschofield@localtownpages.com](mailto:jenschofield@localtownpages.com)

## WEST Receives \$5,000 donation from Enbridge

Wrentham Elementary Schools Trust, Inc. (WEST) has been awarded \$5,000 from Enbridge.

Enbridge's Community Investment Program is active in community-strengthening initiatives across the U.S. and Canada. In 2019 alone they invested more than \$18.1 million dollars into beneficial and long-term interests of the community.

"WEST is grateful to Enbridge for their generosity," said Katlyn Gallo, the president of WEST. "This donation will allow us to continue to support the teachers and

staff with innovative and enriching educational opportunities, both in school and remotely."

"Our employees who live and work in the communities where we operate are committed not only to delivering the energy people need and want, but also to being a positive presence in the community through volunteerism and community giving," said Max Bergeron, Manager of Stakeholder Relations for Enbridge. "We are proud to support organizations such as WEST which support learning and educational activities for local

students."

The award, along with other donations, will be used to fund educational grants at the Wrentham Public Schools.

WEST is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization responsible for raising private capital for curricular-based education projects at the Wrentham Public Schools. For more information on WEST, visit [www.wrentham-west.org](http://www.wrentham-west.org)

For more information on Enbridge, visit [www.enbridge.com](http://www.enbridge.com).



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# Wrentham Lions Wrap up the Holiday Season

The Wrentham Lions helped residents celebrate the holidays last month with creative spins on their usual December activities. Working with the Wrentham Police and Fire Departments, the Lions brought some Christmas cheer to the town despite the pandemic.

On December 12, the Lions held a holiday drive-thru for the town's seniors at the senior center, instead of its annual Christmas party, usually held at the high school with over 200 people attending. This year, seniors drove up to the senior center and were handed a Dunkin' gift card passed through the car window by Santa Claus.

On December 13, Santa once again came to Wrentham, but this time he traveled the streets of town on a fire truck.

Also in December, the Lions, with the help of the King Philip Leo Club, filled 160 gift bags for seniors in the town's nursing homes. The community donated 52 handmade lap blankets to the effort.



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## It's Never Been More Important or Easier to Create or Update Your Estate Plan

Estate Planning is more important now than ever before, and luckily it's never been easier to implement an estate plan.

Do you know who would make healthcare or financial decisions for you if you lost capacity? Who would care for your children? These are some of the important decisions an estate planning attorney can help you navigate. And for the first time in Massachusetts, you can complete your estate plan with an attorney virtually, from home.

Under emergency orders issued this spring, law firms in Massachusetts have the ability to witness and notarize estate planning documents virtually, so you can stay warm, safe and healthy and gain the peace of mind that comes with providing guidance, direction and securing your legacy for your family.

After you've reached the age of 18, no one automatically has the authority to make health or financial decisions for you, not even a spouse. It is essential that

you have the legal documents in place naming a person or people who can make decisions on your behalf. These disability planning documents, the Durable Power of Attorney, the Health Care Proxy/Living Will, the HIPAA Authorization form an essential part of your estate plan.

Almost half of Americans 55+ don't have a will, and data shows that these Americans are at the greatest risk for serious complications and death from COVID-19. Younger Americans are less likely to have a will, but because the pandemic has impacted people of all ages, it's essential for everyone to create or update their estate plan, no matter your age. Estate planning is essential whether or not there is a pandemic, but they are critical to have now.

Having a will and or trust in place allows you to control who manages your assets and cares for your loved ones if you lose capacity or pass away. You're able to designate guardianship

for minor children and provide guidance for their care.

If you have an estate plan in place, it's essential that you review it and update it to reflect your current wishes and the current law. 86% of estate plans don't work when you need them to. Common reasons are that the plans are outdated, failing to keep up with the law, or failing to have the right people in positions of authority. If your will or trust is 15 years old, just think about all the things that have changed in your life in the last 15 years! Add to that changes in the law and you're in need of an update for sure.

Our office is offering virtual webinars to learn more about estate planning and how it can help you meet your goals and objectives, protect your legacy and help your family. We also offer virtual (and limited in-person) consultations to understand more about your goals and objectives and implement or update your estate plan.

*This is a paid advertisement by Dennis Sullivan & Associates*

### AWARD

*continued from page 7*

necessary to reintegrate into community life. With a capacity to serve 22 men, the nonprofit provides a structured environment with 24-hour staffing.

The daily structured schedule reinforces a lifestyle free of alcohol and drug use. Transitional life skills including healthy living, social services, career exploration, personal finance and self-help groups, along with an opportunity for counseling and 12 Step group meetings, is integral to the success of this program. They prepare men to reenter life with a positive step forward and with the personal skills and community connections to continue to meet individual goals and live a successful life of sobriety.

As co-founder and executive director of Gilly's House, Barbara is dedicated to making sure the men receive the proper resources to get their lives back in order. She guides them in the recovery process, helping them to connect with the community through volunteer work, seek out and secure jobs, navigate through the legal process and secure appropriate healthcare services.

Barbara hires all staff members, gathers supplies for the home, organizes fundraisers and

handles administrative work. She also consults with other sober homes, speaks to local community groups and schools and attends community events and seminars to promote sober living. She does this all without receiving any compensation.

Recognizing that addiction is a family illness, Barbara has instituted Supper with Siblings, a support group for individuals who either lost a sibling or currently have a sibling that is struggling with addiction. She also created a parents network to keep all families connected and to further strengthen their support circles. Families seeking more information about the program are encouraged to visit their website [www.gillyshouse.com](http://www.gillyshouse.com).

"Never underestimate the power of what you think is a small deed you could do for someone," said Barbara. "You always have the ability to make a positive impact on someone's life. Be passionate about what you do."

The Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation encourage fans to show their support for local charitable organizations and to nominate a volunteer for the Patriots Difference Maker of the Week Award. To get involved, visit [www.patriots.com/community](http://www.patriots.com/community).



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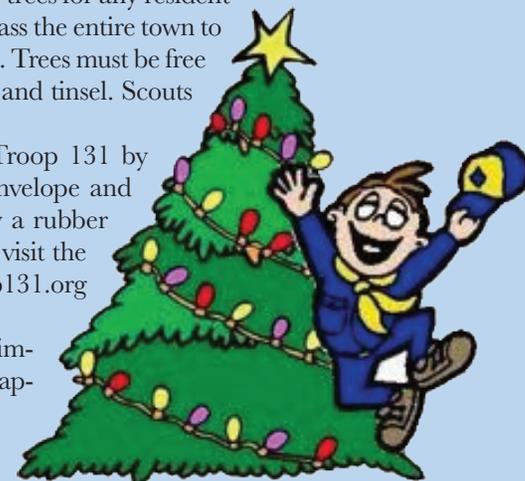


## Wrentham Boy Scouts Offer Christmas Tree Pickup Service

Wrentham Boy Scout Troop 131 will pick up trees for any resident in town on Saturday, January 9. Scouts will canvass the entire town to collect trees left at the end of driveways by 7 a.m. Trees must be free of all decorations, including ornaments, lights, and tinsel. Scouts cannot collect wreaths.

A donation of \$15 is suggested, paid to Troop 131 by check. The check should be enclosed in an envelope and zip lock bag and attached to the tree trunk by a rubber band. Residents should avoid leaving cash. Or, visit the troop's website at <https://www.wrenthamtroop131.org> to donate online.

The tree pickup service is the troop's most important fundraiser of the year. The Boy Scouts appreciate the community's ongoing support.



# Franklin School for the Performing Arts Looks Ahead to 2021

The Franklin School for the Performing Arts (FSPA) closes out 2020 with programs in music, dance, and drama continuing in person at the school's 38 Main Street facilities, as well as virtually, for students who elect to take classes at home. The school is following FSPA's Reopening Plan in accordance with the [Mass.gov/Reopening](https://www.mass.gov/Reopening) Massachusetts guidelines and continues to update procedures and practices as updates become available.

FSPA serves more than 500 students annually from 45 communities in Massachusetts' Metro West region and is committed to quality education in the arts with exceptional curriculum, outstanding professional faculty, and unwavering dedication to every student enrolled. Founded in 1985 by Director Raye Lynn Mercer, FSPA is a unique place where students of all ages and levels of ability participate in an array of music, dance, and drama programs with professional instruction and extraordinary performing opportunities. With broad-based and varied curricula, FSPA guides students in the development of technique, creativity, and artistic expression to last a lifetime. FSPA's faculty boasts outstanding professional artists, performers, and teach-

ers. Their impressive credentials are indicative of the excellent instruction available in all programs. FSPA instructors strive to meet the individual needs of each student, working to develop each student's abilities to his or her own potential.

Performance is an integral part of an FSPA education and the school offers unrivaled performing opportunities for students throughout the year. On the calendar in a typical season, are student recitals, concerts by faculty and guest artists, master classes, student showcases, holiday shows, the school's signature Spring Concert, and summer camps and intensives. In addition, for students whose level of interest is more focused, there are special performing ensemble opportunities available by audition.

FSPA presented outdoor performances throughout the summer and since then has organized ticketed virtual performances, including a showcase of the school's ensembles filmed outside.

Next door to FSPA are the classrooms of FSPA Academy. Combining the flexibility of a virtual education with the practicality of a schoolroom and partnering with the virtual Massachusetts Public School



TECCA, FSPA Academy can accommodate professional opportunities, rehearsal, and performance schedules. FSPA Academy curriculum is taught by licensed, certified teachers through a combination of live Lessons and individual assignments.

THE BLACK BOX, home of the Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC), a 200-seat

flexible theater located behind FSPA, provides a professional venue for FSPA student productions, while FPAC offers opportunities by audition for student performers.

FSPA welcomes new students throughout the year. Prospective students are invited to make an appointment to come in person for a tour and to discuss program options. As an alternative, previ-

ously conducted virtual tours can be viewed on the FSPA Facebook page. For more information about FSPA and its programs, visit [www.FSPAonline.com](http://www.FSPAonline.com), call 508-528-8668, or stop by 38 Main St. in Franklin. Follow FSPA on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

## DONATION

*continued from page 10*

rector Billy Starr. "I am incredibly proud of our community's resiliency and dedication to our mission, which resulted in a very impactful \$50 million gift that will support lifesaving cancer research and treatment as we continue to navigate this public health crisis."

Thanks in large part to PMC funding, Dana-Farber is one of the only cancer centers that was not forced to suspend clinical trials during the pandemic, ensuring the advancement of critical oncology research. PMC funding also helped Dana-Farber efficiently transition to telemedicine and invest heavily in patient and visitor safety protocols as COVID-19 continued.

"This year more than ever, I am extremely grateful for the unwavering commitment from the Pan-Mass Challenge and its riders, volunteers and donors," said Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber. "The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unexpected challenges for the cancer community and this incredibly generous gift will make an unparalleled impact on our work in the fight against cancer."

More than 9,600 participated in the summer-long PMC 2020 Reimagined campaign, creatively reimagining their PMC ride while adhering to local public health recommendations and engaging with more than 13 hours of livestreamed video content. PMC 2020 Reimagined brought to life beloved aspects of a traditional PMC weekend digitally, including a special toast where hundreds of cancer patients

and survivors – considered "Living Proof" of the organization's mission to help fund lifesaving cancer research and treatment – came together via video chat to celebrate life and the progress that had been made in the fight against cancer.

The PMC is presented by the Red Sox Foundation. In addition, more than 200 corporate sponsors support the event by providing more than \$7 million in essential funds, products and services each year. For more information or to make a financial

contribution to a rider, visit [www.pmc.org](http://www.pmc.org), or call (800) WE-CYCLE. Connect with #PMC2020 #PMCREimagined on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.



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## KPHS Announces Students Accepted to Southeastern District Music Festival

Twenty-four King Philip Regional High School students were accepted to attend the Southeastern District Music Festival to be held this month.

Students from across Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod were invited to audition for the festival virtually until Nov. 20.

This year, the Southeastern District Music Festival is virtual and will take place Jan. 8-9. The festival will include workshops, masterclasses, rehearsals and other activities. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a virtual ensemble led by guest conductors.

The following students were invited to attend the Southeastern District Music Festival. Students with an asterisk (\*) after their name also received recommendations to audition for the All-State ensembles:

Seniors: Nick Basile, percussion; Camryn Buckley, alto\*; Ava Cardner, trumpet\*; Declan Derfler-Murphy, trumpet\*; Hayden Holster, alto saxophone\*; Maddie Soares, flute\*

Juniors: Matthew Beatty, bass\*; Madison Blood, baritone saxophone\*; Joe Cannon,

tuba\*; Jonathan Cohen, trumpet; Hannah Crocker, alto\*; Julia DeWitt, alto\*; Abigail Jones, bassoon\*; Diego Nieto, trombone\*; Emily Poggi, soprano\*; Aleeza Rana, soprano; Nick Sekulski, guitar\*

Sophomores: Helena Bekele, soprano; Aedan Derfler-Murphy, alto saxophone\*; Finny Keefe, horn\*

Freshmen: Ella Brown, harp\*; Dean Cardner, trumpet\*; Jack Chisholm, clarinet; Eliot Davis, clarinet\*

"I want to extend my congratulations to all of the students accepted into this competitive music festival," KP Superintendent Paul Zinni said. "I am so proud of all our young musicians, including those recommended to audition for the All-State ensembles. The All-State Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra and Choir are comprised of the most outstanding high school musicians in the state and these students should be extremely honored to be considered."

Auditions for the All-State ensemble will take place this month as well.

## Stony Brook Camera Club Upcoming Programs

The Stony Brook Camera Club has many nationally and internationally-known speaker programs coming up in January and February.

Programs include "Photography Where You Live" by Tony Sweet; "Deep Sky Astrophotography" with Nico Carver; "Storytelling One Image at a Time" with Essdras Suarez; and "Time Lapse and Image Stacking" with Jason Weingart. Competitions and image studies will also be held.

SBCC is a vibrant group of 150 photographers ranging from beginner to expert. The club's mission statement is "To promote enjoyment and proficiency in all aspects of photography through education, fellowship, exchange of knowledge and experience; and a broad appreciation of nature and environment."

SBCC gives back to the community as well by offering scholarships to deserving high school seniors from the area who intend to study photography in college. The recipients are invited to the year-end banquet to meet the membership, share their work, and receive their awards.

Visit [www.StonyBrookCC.com](http://www.StonyBrookCC.com) to find out more and to view the full 2020-2021 calendar of events. See "Be Our Guest" on the home page to fill out the form to be notified of the Zoom connection for the next meeting. This registration entitles visitors to a 30-day free membership and access to meetings.

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# Will KPHS Become the Next High School Quiz Show Champion?

Boston public media producer GBH's "High School Quiz Show" recently announced Season 12 of the popular academic competition series while also introducing new digital features to the fan experience, including an interactive play-along stream of Season 5 on Twitch and an Alexa skill voiced by "High School Quiz Show" host Billy Costa. The broadcast of Season 12 will air on GBH 2 and GBH's YouTube channel, while the innovative experiences on Twitch and Amazon Alexa devices provide opportunities for local, national, and international "High School Quiz Show" fans to engage with the show more interactively than ever before, including the chance to compete with other fans and past contestants.

"High School Quiz Show" is a bracket-style academic competition for teams of Massachusetts high school students, broadcast annually on GBH 2. Aside from "Jeopardy!," "High School Quiz Show" is the most popular academic quiz show on American television. Over eleven previous seasons, more than 700 students from over 70 schools across the state have competed on the broadcast.

"As students across the Commonwealth and across the country have had to adjust to at-home learning this year, we are excited to introduce innovative ways to celebrate knowledge and include new audiences," said Jon Abbott, president and CEO of GBH. "This year, students and families will have the opportunity to test what they know against "High School Quiz Show" veterans in a fast-paced Twitch game week by week."

"High School Quiz Show's" Season 12 will kick off with the annual Super Sunday event, which will be held virtually on January 24. Schools from across the state will field teams of four students, tasked with taking an online quiz that covers a range of subjects, from literature and science to math, history and culture. The top 17 teams will move

forward in Season 12, premiering on Saturday, April 3 at 6 p.m. on GBH 2.

"High School Quiz Show" is now a highly anticipated annual event for Massachusetts schools and communities to celebrate and showcase the academic prowess of their students," said GBH Executive Producer and Director of Youth Media Hillary Wells. "In a year in which the majority of academic and athletic competitions available to students have been compromised, delayed or cancelled, we are committed to rewarding existing and newly formed teams for their passion, dedication and teamwork. As "High School Quiz Show" coaches across the Commonwealth have stated in support of their students, 'the show must go on!'"

In addition to this year's televised tournament, "High School Quiz Show" has adapted the television broadcast of Season 5 for an interactive streaming experience on the GBH Twitch channel, which began on December 10. Viewers everywhere are invited to participate and play along, allowing players to test themselves against peers and the Season 5 contestants as the broadcast streams. The multiple-choice games are streaming Mondays and Thursdays starting at 5 p.m. ET at [twitch.tv/gbhmedia](http://twitch.tv/gbhmedia).

Fans also will be able to play along from Amazon Alexa devices beginning in January by prompting a brand new Alexa skill, which will feature a new five-question category each week of the year, voiced by Costa.

The deadline for Massachusetts high schools to register for Super Sunday is Friday, January 15. Schools interested in participating can register online at <https://www.wgbh.org/quiz-show/register>.

"High School Quiz Show" is endorsed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and the Massachusetts PTA. Questions on the show are aligned with the

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Massachusetts high school curriculum standards in subjects that include literature, history, civics, science and math, as well as current events, and general knowledge. Major funding for "High School Quiz Show" is provided by Safety Insurance. Additional funding is provided by the Museum of Science, Massachusetts Teachers Association, XFINITY from Comcast, Eastern Bank, Emerson College and Subaru of New England.

For more information, visit [highschoolquizshow.org](http://highschoolquizshow.org) and [twitch.tv/gbhmedia](http://twitch.tv/gbhmedia) and follow the show on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



## Old Mother Hubbard, American Icon?

To the Editor:

While Emily Murphy plays her fiddle to the tune of Eleanor Rigby, the cupboards of America grow increasingly bare. But unlike poor Eleanor who exited to another world unnoticed and unloved, Emily fills the national spotlight as an alarmingly increasing number of American families face the prospect of hunger and the menacing COVID.

Not to be outdone, GOP Senate leadership sits in the audience listening, watching, as the funeral pyre for the potential destruction of our democracy is being constructed. Is it mere malfeasance or purposeful calculation? As they play Russian roulette with the future of America, we seem paralyzed by the hypnotic effect of the surreal events playing out on our TV screens. What will it take to break the trance?

Viewed in this setting, the criticality of the runoff election in Georgia is readily apparent. Predictions are that the likelihood of thaw in the Republican-controlled Senate is small as the principals cower in the shadow of the vengeful ogre. They fail to accept that their stubborn inflexibility will relegate their careers to the infamy of a political grave yard that will soon test its boundaries.

In the meantime, Emily plays on, a marionette whose strings vibrate in harmony with the gut of her violin. Will she summon the courage to stop this shameful rejection of reality? The breadlines grow by the hour, the hunger of those impacted by this tragedy rendering them more vulnerable to the ravages the pandemic.

America, please awake before it is too late.

Sincerely,  
G. Gregory Tooker

# Sports

## KP Boys Quintet Delighted to have a Revamped Season

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The King Philip boys basketball team qualified for the Sectional Tournament last year for the first time in the last five years.

The Warriors, unfortunately, won't get the opportunity to make it two tourney appearances in a row because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the Mass. Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) to cancel Sectional and State playoff games for winter sports squads.

But, what KP's players will get is the chance to compete and hopefully complete a schedule that will be limited and confined primarily to teams in the Kelly-Rex Division of the Hockomock League. The Warriors had some momentum after a 12-11 season last year, even though they bowed in their playoff opener to Bishop Feehan. But, coach Dave DeStefano's forces are acutely aware that any games are better than no games. And, they also know there are modifications to their sport that must be adhered to.

"The boys have really worked hard," DeStefano said. "We graduated seven players last year. However, they left a legacy for this year's team. For us to be successful, we'll need to make a big commitment on the defensive end. We want to make our

opponents uncomfortable and focus on working together to get stops. On offense, we're looking to have a balanced attack and create great scoring opportunities as a team."

The 34-year-old DeStefano fully understands that the 2020-21 season will be like no other. He knows that masks must be worn on the court and social-distancing will be required on the bench. Other changes include: no locker-room presence, limits on crowd size, no handshakes after games, hand sanitizing, no jump ball, only four players allowed in the lane for free throws and all in-bound plays must be on the sideline.

"We'll adjust to all the rules," DeStefano emphasized. "We're pleased to be playing but we all know the health and safety of everyone is the No. 1 priority. This season isn't about wins and losses. The last few months have taught us the importance of perspective and patience. The pandemic has made it abundantly clear that we can only control so much in life. Among the things that student-athletes can control is their attitude and their effort. I'm inspired at the way our boys have adapted to these difficult situations."

DeStefano has only four players back with varsity experience but he sees lots of strengths over-



**KP Coach Dave DeStefano says his boys basketball team is ready to adjust to all the modifications for winter sports.**

all. "We do lack experience but this year's team is close-knit, athletic and it has a high basketball IQ," he noted. "The kids have good technical skills and they're very coachable."

Three key players in KP's rotation are its senior captains — guard/forward Cole Breen and guards Joe Cullen and Evan Stephens.

"Cole makes winning plays," DeStefano said. "He showed improvement in his shooting ability last season. Although he can run an offense, Cole doesn't need to have the ball to make an impact. He's a skilled cutter and does a great job of finding open spaces on the floor.

"Joe is very skilled, sees the floor well, and moves well off-the-ball by finding open spaces on the perimeter or cutting lanes for an easy layup. His shooting form makes him a threat spotting up. Evan's smooth shooting form makes him deadly from outside. He uses his ball-handling to create space or runs off screens for catch-and-shoot opportunities. He's got a great touch, and likes to use it to open up other scoring possibilities."

Braeden Sottile, a 6-5 forward, and guard Charlie Grant are juniors with lots of upside.

"Braeden can score at all three levels," DeStefano said. "He can finish over, through, or around defenders at the rim consistently. He can be a factor on the defensive end, with his ability to alter opponents' shots in the paint. The combination of speed and explosiveness makes Charlie a threat at both ends of the floor. Offensively, he has the ability to score in the paint or on the perimeter. His biggest improvement last year was his shooting."

Sophomore guard Will Laplante is regarded by DeStefano as the best pure shooter on the squad. "Will is at his best when spotting up or running off screens," DeStefano said. "Will does a great job of using screens to lose his man and create an open shot. He gained a lot of experience last year on the jayvees and he's ready to take the next step."

Three seniors with a variety of talents are Will Kinney (6-5 forward), Jake Silveria (forward), and Mitch Breen (guard).

"Will is a solid screener and a versatile scorer," DeStefano said.

"He can knock down open shots or finish over defenders. He has a soft touch around the hoop and can be a matchup problem because of his shooting ability. One of the most impactful parts of Jake's game is his rebounding. On both ends of the floor, Jake is incredibly active once the shot goes up. This creates a lot of easy put-back opportunities for him on offense. He also has the skills to initiate transition offense once he secures the defensive rebound. Mitch is a scrappy on-ball defender. He's a smart playmaker who does a great job of finding the open man. He doesn't force the issue and focuses on making the right play."

Because there are no post-season tourneys, DeStefano's goals this season are more general than specific. They focus on effort and reaching potential. "We want our players to be competitive in all games and give a maximum effort," he said. "If that happens, then winning will follow. We want to make their experience memorable in a positive way."

DeStefano isn't sure where his squad will finish in the Kelly-Rex Division but he knows that Taunton, Franklin and Mansfield will be top-notch teams. "Taunton has a lot back and they're athletic and big," he said. "Franklin and Mansfield not only have great tradition, but they're also talented."

Before taking the KP job, DeStefano previously was Foxboro's jayvee coach for three years. He also was a varsity assistant for seven years at Bishop Feehan. He played football and basketball at Feehan and during his four years there, he was on the Shamrocks grid team that won four Super Bowls.

Knowing what winning is like, DeStefano's squad last year ended a losing drought and qualified for the playoffs. This time around, the players will be striving to build tradition and to understand that adjusting to the pandemic is a life lesson that teaches how to overcome adversity.

Dave DeStefano knows the priorities in these difficult days and he's the right coach at the right time for the Warriors.

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# Sports

## Tri-County Vocational Cancels Winter Sports Season

BY KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

A new year often signals that changes are coming but for Tri-County Vocational it's status quo when it comes to interscholastic athletics. For the third consecutive season, the Cougars will not be competing in varsity athletics after the school district canceled all winter sports.

The decision was made on Nov. 30 and on Dec. 1 the Franklin school issued this statement regarding winter sports:

"While we have safely begun to transition our population back into the school building, there are still a myriad of hurdles to overcome. As we look ahead to the winter months, the health, safety and wellness of our student athletes, coaches and others associated with our athletic program remain our top priority. Unfortunately, this factor in conjunction with the decisions of many other fellow Mayflower Athletic Conference schools, have led the District to cancel the winter athletic season."

Tri-County, along with every other public school in Massachusetts, could not compete last spring because the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) canceled all sports because of the coronavirus pandemic. But, when fall rolled around, most schools were back competing, even with autumn teams facing a plethora of modifications. Tri-County and other Mayflower League schools, however, moved their fall sports to the newly-created Fall 2 season that gets underway in late February.

"Cancelling the winter season was not an easy thing to do," said Sara Martin, Tri-County's Athletic Director. "It's the hardest decision an administrator can make because athletics are a part of kids' lives. A decision like this gets everyone upset. It's devastating for student-athletes, coaches and parents. We did not make this decision lightly."

Besides Martin, the re-

gional school committee, the Tri-County Principal (Michael Procaccini) and the Superintendent (Stephen Dockray) all were part of the decision-making process.

"Other Mayflower League schools faced challenges," Martin noted. "Schedules were staggered and their gyms were transformed into classrooms. We were hoping to salvage basketball and hockey and we held out as long as we could. When other league schools decided not to pursue those sports, that left us with what could be only non-league games. "We knew that scheduling games would be extremely difficult because conferences, like the Tri-Valley League, are competing strictly within their league."

Tri-County's gym may have to be converted into part-time classrooms because the school is looking to bring in more students academically. And, with all the safety protocols and transportation limits (no more than 25 people on a bus) Martin said "we just couldn't make the pieces work."

At Local Town Pages deadline, Tri-County was at 100 percent in-person for vocational learning, yet fully remote for academics.

Besides Tri-County, the Mayflower League schools include Norfolk Agricultural, Southeastern Regional, Bristol-Plymouth, Old Colony, Diman Voke, Blue Hills Regional, Upper Cape Regional, Cape Cod Tech and Bristol Agricultural. The communities that Tri-County serves are Franklin, Millis, Medway, Norfolk, Wrentham, Sherborn, North Attleboro, Plainville, Seekonk and Walpole.

Martin is "cautiously optimistic" that the school will participate in the Fall 2 season when its football, soccer, volleyball, golf and cross-country teams will get an opportunity. "We'll be happy to compete with whatever modifications are imposed," she emphasized. "I'd like those sports to



Sara Martin, Tri-County Vocational's athletic director, hopes students can return to varsity competition in the Fall 2 season.

be played and we'll do our best to make it happen."

Martin, meanwhile, has started an intramural program at the school. On Dec. 14, students who signed up and registered could participate in basketball, volleyball and indoor track.

"I pushed for this," she said. "The kids need physical activities and we need to help them unleash their energy by playing sports again. I'm an athlete and I miss competing. We're following protocols such as wearing masks, social distancing, hand sanitizing and crowd limitations. There is a cap for each sport and no more than 25 students can compete at a time. The key is we're addressing social, emotional and physical needs."

Another opportunity arrives this month when open skating will be held at the Pirelli Veterans Arena in Franklin. Ice time was purchased early and now it'll be used during January and half

of February. "We have an hour available three times a week for six weeks," Martin said.

Although vaccines should be offered soon, Martin says they should help and that "it'll be a long process, a part of the puzzle."

It's obvious that no matter how much education an administrator has, dealing with a pandemic has been all about on-the-job training. Martin has both a bachelor's and master's degree in history from Providence College and she also earned a second master's in administration from Framingham State. Not only does she handle all the athletic activities at Tri-County, she teaches history too.

"The pandemic causes changes and uncertainty every day," she said. "It's an exercise in patience and flexibility. I like to plan but the changes and the uncertainty are somewhat prohibitive because you can only plan for several scenarios."

Currently at Tri-County, the focus is on getting varsity athletics back on the menu. Hopefully, the coronavirus will be conquered moving forward, enabling the Cougars' athletic teams to find some enjoyment in the Fall 2 season that begins next month.

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# FPAC Looks Back on an Innovative 2020 Holiday Season

FRANKLIN- Like all of the theatrical community, the Franklin Performing Arts Company (FPAC) and their home venue THE BLACK BOX have had to find creative ways to keep the arts alive throughout the pandemic. The holiday season, the time of year that is typically the most saturated with FPAC performances, was delivered in a whole new way.

The 2020 Holiday Season was kicked off by the film premiere of Christophe Rice's *The Tappy Christmas Special: LIVE!* Filmed in front of a LIVE studio audience at THE BLACK BOX in December 2019, this one-of-a-kind Christmas Special was jam packed with more than 15 holiday favorites and of course, great tap dancing. Audiences rocked out to the live orchestra while being serenaded by Broadway performers Rice, Clay Thomson (Newsies, Matilda, King Kong), Liz Byrne (Baby It's You!), the adorable Tappy kids, and even a visitor from the North Pole. *The Tappy Christmas Special: LIVE!* was filmed and edited by FPAC partner Franklin TV.

The magic continued with Broadway star Michael James Scott performing an album release concert for his new album

"A Fierce Christmas" live-streamed from THE BLACK BOX. The *Aladdin* star gave new life to classic holiday tunes by showing off his gospel and Broadway roots.

FPAC got creative and presented *The Nutcracker- Masked* live streamed from THE BLACK BOX. The classic holiday ballet was presented with a small cast of Ballet Conservatory dancers from the Franklin School for the Performing Arts all in masks and socially-distanced, with narration, live at THE BLACK BOX to a virtual audience at home. Under the direction of Cheryl Madeux, former dancer with American Ballet Theatre, the Franklin Performing Arts Company found a safe way to present this holiday tradition for the region and beyond. The masked production featured Merrie Whitney's stunning costume design accompanied by facial coverings. The production continued FPAC's collaboration with Franklin TV.

FPAC's innovative Holiday Season concluded with *Winter Wonderland*. Patrons were invited to wear a holiday mask, bundle up, and come to THE BLACK BOX Parking Lot Theater for a socially distanced experience



filled with live holiday music, dance, and fun. FPAC's festive *Winter Wonderland* featured delicious treats and a last-minute Stocking Stuffer Boutique. Families enjoyed outdoor performances by favorite FPAC entertainers and special Broadway guest stars.

Throughout the pandemic, FPAC has continued to pro-

vide entertainment in a safe way. From the middle of March through May, FPAC presented a nightly concert series on Facebook Live featuring performances by Broadway stars and FPAC professional performers. As soon as it was allowed, THE BLACK BOX began presenting socially-distanced entertainment outside on their parking lot stage throughout the summer and fall

including viral sensation T.3 and a concert featuring the music of *Wicked* starring Broadway "Elphaba" Emily Koch. In October, FPAC finished the run of their first socially-distanced book musical *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. In November, FPAC hosted a wildly successful Virtual Gala and Telethon featuring 6 Broadway stars.

FPAC Director Raye Lynn Mercer comments, "The arts community, locally and globally, has been significantly impacted, yet artists have been the first to share their talents with the world in any way possible. It is the hope of the FPAC Board of Directors that the Metro-West community will reciprocate when venues open and performers are able to go back to work. Unlike large venues that are supported by endowments and major donors, smaller organizations like FPAC and smaller venues like THE BLACK BOX, will face an enormous financial challenge on the other side of this crisis." Currently, all are invited to join an FPAC Annual Circle in support of the company and THE BLACK BOX. For more information, visit [www.THE-BLACKBOXonline.com](http://www.THE-BLACKBOXonline.com) or [www.FPAConline.com](http://www.FPAConline.com).



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# King Philip Regional High School - Term 1 Academic Honors

## Grade 9

### High Honors

Luke Anderson, Rachel Bailer, Keira Barr, Isabel Becker, Benjamin Berry, Jack Berthiaume, Mara Boldy, Ananya Boominathan, Ella Brown, Sarah Brown, Sydney Burch, Shaylee Cahoon, Dean Cardner, Reagan Carmichael, John Chisholm, Trevor Clyde, Gillian Comeau, Grace Cory, Victoria Cosmo, Edward Crisci, Isabelle Crowley, Eliot Davis, Julia DeVasto, Hannah Doherty, Nolan Eck, Sariah Estime, Anthony Fraone, Ashleigh Rose Guenette, Kyle Henry, Meghan Hessler, David Holland, Charlotte Holmes, Abigail Hoyt, Lakshya Jain, Nicholas Kansab, Trinjan Kaur, Brenny Keefe, Maria Kireyev, Hadley Kozola, Isabel LaFond, Camron Lehan-Allen, Thomas Lomuscio, Ryan Mahoney, Cullen McCarthy, Jack McCreedy, Isabella McFarlane, Kylie Menendez, Noah Minkwitz, Andrew Morrison, Anna Li Quinn, Taylor Regan, Braedon Reilly, Brady Ricci, Amelia Richter, Molly Rogoff, Mason Sanford, Beck Sawtelle, Jared Shapiro, Allison Smith, James Soifer, Samarth Sreenath, Meghan Sullivan, Ryan Taylor, Ian Thompson, Blake Tocci, Jake Vanhoesen, Kylie Watson and Emily Zappala.

### Honors

Thomas Ahern, Madison Almeida, Dermott Amorim, Rebecca Anderson, Olivia Archambault, Evan Barker, Rachel Barros, Skyler Barry, Ethan Bovaird, William Bowen, Evan Brangiforte, Lilianna Brenneis, Peter Cataldo, Kaelyn Clancy, Madelyn Cleasby, Shayna Comeau, Callie Connolly, Margaret Crisafi, Michael Cummings, Margaret Curran, John Curran, Anna Daniele, Meghan Dowling, Kaylee Dugan, Megan Eldred, Lindsey Field, Benjamin Fifolt, Maeve Finn, Olivia Florindi, Liam Foley, Jackson Frye, Rowan Garvey, Jaime Gorman, Wyatt Graham, Brad Guden, Brianna Haigh, Alden Hardy, Samantha Harkins, Lauren Harper, James Hickey, Lilli Hickey, Joshua Hill, Jackson Hoitt, Kelly Holmes, Marisa Hughes, Mason Jacobs, Keanu Johnson, John Johnston, Marly Kananowicz, Ryan Keller,

Ava Kelley, Kyle Kelloway, Ryan King, William Knott, Chloe Kuzmeskas, Heidi Lawrence, Louis LeBlanc, Alyssa Legere, Jamie Levesque, Dillion Lightbody, Gabriella Lombardi, Ava Lutfy, Erin Mahoney, Kristen Makuch, Peter Malagrifa, Elijah Malone, Neelam McGrath, Lily McNulty, Shea Mellman, Warren Mischley, John Molloy, Jack Morgan, Delaney Muldowney, Timothy Mullen, Samuel Nagggar, Liam Nolan, Katharine O'Neil, Ryann O'Sullivan, Madison Paschke, Shawn Pierce, Emily Piverger, Zachary Pontes, Oran Rawson, Julia Rioux, Max Robison, Ryan Saenz, Tessa Sarkar, Madison Schoener, Caitlyn Sencaj, Cecilia Sherry, Arshley Simon, Abigail Stierer, Ethan Sullivan, Zunairah Syeda, Caitlin Thompson, Abigail Thoren, Ryan Vieira, Savannah Vigevani, Brady Wendling, Makenzie Whalen and Marley Whitehead.

## Grade 10

### High Honors

Olivia Andreozzi, William Astorino, Helena Bekele, James Boldy, Benson Bulloch, Kari Calderone, Melissa Canning, Erika Cebrowski, Gavin Croke, Callie Cummings, Aedan Derfler-Murphy, Akachi Ezuma-Ngwu, Luciana Galvez, Charlotte Griffin, Avery Hayes, Liam Hickey, Jackson Hom, Norah Jackson, Richard Jeannetti, Audrey Kelley, Caroline Kenyon, Owen Kiss, Thomas Laight, Grace Lawler, Sydney Marland, Ella McDonnell, Isabel Melanson, Maxwell Miller, Margaret Murphy, Brooke Noonan, Andrew Obara, Shantal Onur, Dilara Onur, Raadhay Patel, Collin Peck, Ella Pisani, Gabrielle Powers, Richard Rand, Charlotte Raymond, Alea Shammass, Kevin Smith, Samantha Sweetman, Molly Tharrett, Ilah Weiblen and Elizabeth White.

### Honors

Kyle Abbott, Jared Ali, Olivia Ali, Ava Allen, Aleksia Andoni, Alexander Antinoro, Emerson Baker, Lauren Barriero, William Birmingham, Grace Berry, Allison Boie, Jaclyn Bonner, Troy Breen, Thomas Brewster, Katelyn Buban, Joseph Burke, Leah Burke, Ella Butler, Emily

Campbell, Lorelei Casper, Lauren Casper, Matthew Crago, Sarah Cullen, Hayden Emery, Camdyn Evans, Ikechi Ezuma-Ngwu, Mairead Foley, Caroline Freese, Miles Gallagher, Ryan Gately, Nathan Gebhard, Alison Gendrolis, Jason Gonatas, Willem Granese, Lainey Grant, Danielle Gresham, Maggie Griffin, Jessica Guidice, Kiera Hagen, Ethan Hancock, Philip Harmon, Aidan Harrington, Kayden Henry, Kelsie Higgins, April Hooper, Noah Ihley, Turag Ikbal, Ava Jobity, Mallory Johnston, Finnuala Keefe, Ryan Kelley, Matthew Kelley, Grant Kinney, Owen Klobucher, William LaPlante, Kristie Leavitt, Amelia Lerner, Elizabeth Lewis, Sean Lucente, John Luskin, Abigail Lyons, Azayla Mack, Owen MacKenzie, Zachary Matta, Jack McKenna, Aidan McLaughlin, Carson Meier, Flannery Miller, Juliet Modena, Abdisalam Mohamed, Michael Murphy, Bridgett Nally, Julia O'Donnell, Olivia O'Neil, Ian O'Neill, Kevin O'Neill, Connor O'Reilly, Spencer Orzell, Kendall Parker, Ava Quinlan, Matthew Rando, Melanie Redlitz, Violet Rizzo, Leah Santoro, Caroline Sawyer, Emily Sawyer, Brendan Sencaj, Christopher Sesay, Samantha Shore, Kayla Simas, Benjamin Simmons, Luke Stehley, Alexander Stock, Danielle Strykowski, Nathan Sylven, Sydney Tardanico, Matthew Thompson, Evan Trujillo, James Vinson,

Alexander Viscusi and Julia Zimmerman.

## Grade 11

### High Honors

Benjamin Abdou, Alexis Andrews, Samantha Asprelli, Kyle Belhumeur, Quinn Belhumeur, Rasya Reddy Bollu, Lily Brown, Gina Brown, Nicholas Canning, Abby Cates, Jonathan Cohen, Andrew Danson, Gianna DeLorenzo, Matthew DiFiore, Alison Donovan, Maya Evans, Arielle Feuer, Daniel Fifolt, Dean Floyd, Laura Gelsomini, Adam Gousie, Lauren Grachuck, Jamie Gudas, Jessica Haehnel, Sarah Harper, Makayla Hickey, Haley Izydorczak, Abigail Jones, Matthew Joy, Hayden Kozola, Olivia LaFond, Shawn Legere, Sarah Lehan-Allen, Colin Lightbody, Andrew Longobardi, Delia Mahoney, Connor Martin, Gavin McCarthy, Kacie McDonald, Finn Meroski, Carson Mitteness, Cassidy Muldowney, Brooke Mullins, Christopher Norgren, Anette Nowakowski, Veronika Nowakowski, Molly O'Brien, Sheela Pandit, Amelia Penny, Katharine Pepper, John Pfeiffer, Molly Piller, Emily Poggi, Abigail Quirke, Evelyn Sanford, Niharika Sen, Margaret Sherwood, Noelle Sitarski, Joel St. Cyr, Mark Tagerman, Gabrielle Tartaglia, Annabelle Thompson, Nathan Vierkant, Samuel Woodward and Taoran Ye.

### Honors

Resha Ajoy, Daniel Alexandre, Asherah Alpert, Rachael Anderson, Ryan Andrews, Kendra Barr, Mia Bennett, Kevin Birenbaum, Kip Bishop, Declan Breen, Remy Burch, Nico Calderone, Joshua Canning, Joseph Cannon, Juliana Caravaggio, Olivia Carey, John Carreiro, Kathleen Carver, Daniel Clancy, Grace Clyde, Cate Collins, Della Conlin, Camden Constantine, Madeleine Cron, Andrew Crowley, Sean Crowther, Colleen Crowther, Morgan Cunningham, Christian Dadasis, Jennifer Daniels, Samantha D'Avignon, Lily Denholm, Julia DeWitt, Emily Dowling, Katherine Dowling, Brian Ducie, Flynn Duffy, Devyn Dugan, Jalal Elbatal, Charlotte Fiske, Jonathan Fornash, Isabella Fraone, Christina Gifun, Brendan Goff, Matthew Gough, Stephen Griffin, Mia Hagerty, Zachary Haigh, Cooper Hancock, Kasey Hart, Timothy Hartwell, Lauren Hooper, Paige Horgan, Ashley Hughes, Noah Hurd, Martina Ibrahim, Samir Ihjul, Nolan Jackson, Elizabeth Jacobsen, Callen Jones, Shannon Kearns, Haley Kellner, Caroline Kizik, Andrew LaBerge, Marissa Lamperti, Christopher Leitao, Caroline Lenox, Julia Lespasio, Cooper Lucas, Olivia MacDonald, Daniel Macomber, Colin Mahoney, Michael Mathe-

## HONORS

*continued on page 22*



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**HONORS***continued from page 21*

son, Sean McCarthy, Daniel McCarty, Spencer McCloskey, Caleb McKearney, Meredith Melanson, Elizabeth Molla, Mia Morganelli, Mikayla Murphy, Emma Murphy, Diego Nieto, Daniel Nineve, Zachary Norton, Sophia O'Connor-Colbert, Meaghan O'Rourke, Sydney O'Shea, Markus Paschke, Alexandra Peterson, Luke Pfeiffer, Lily Quagliozzi, Timothy Raiman, Aleeza Rana, Talia Rand, Reid Rhines, Sofia Riedel, Benjamin Riggs, Margo Riley, Connor Sachleben, Suzanne Sanford, Mia Sarnie, Mia Sawtelle, Zackary Schmitz, Emma Sheehan, Grace Sherry, Braeden Sottile, Emma St. Clair, Brooke Stagg, Alexander Stavris, Samantha Taylor, Daniel Tisdale, Sam Tobar-Fawley, Jade Van Vaerenewcyck, Emma Vezina, Leah Vigevani, Nicholas Viscusi,

Brendan Weddleton, William Weiblen, Anna Wolloff, Palina Yakimovich, Lindsey Young and Darin Zullo.

**Grade 12****High Honors**

Caroline Aaron, Cailey Adamos, Jaclyn Anderson, Erick Anderson, Teodor Andoni, Nicolas Basile, Thomas Beck, Geoffrey Bowes, Anna Bradley, Charles Breen, Cole Breen, Emma Brooks, Harry Brown, Jacob Burns, Julianne Butts, Megan Campbell, Ava Cardner, Abigail Carey, Kristina Conlon, Conor Cooke, Erin Cox, Madeline Crowley, Joseph Cullen, Declan Derfler-Murphy, Nicolas Desprez, Katelyn Devellis, Valerie Dickinson, Harper Doherty, Meiju Edgerly, Samuel Evans, Emma Glaser, Katherine Grabner, Anna Granese, Frederick Hessler, Julianna Hoitt, Emily Hom, Courtney Keswick, Will Kinney, Russell Kitsis, Payton LaPointe, Grayden Lawrence,

Benjamin LeClair, Alexis Leonard, Kiera Lindmark, Brady Lucas, Brooke Lynch, Molly MacDonald, Charlotte Majer, William Martin, Jane Mattaliano, Avari Maxwell, Ben McDonnell, Allison McNamara, Abigail Meader, Casey Megna, Peyton Mellman, Clell Mick, Addison Molloy, Lucas Morreale, Emma Naggar, Andrew Noke, Liam Noke, Ella Ocepek, Ajae Olsen, Connor O'Neill, Riley Outlaw, Olivia Pacheco, Emma Page, Nicholas Panetta, Caroline Pasquantonio, Lauren Peterson, Andrew Pham, Matthew Plumb, Meaghan Powers, Veronica Redlitz, Joshua Saintilus, Katarina Schneider, Lillian Schworer, Madison Soares, Felicia Sobande, Emily Tang, Charles Tiner, Olivia Titus, Mia Valencia, Madison Varvarigos, Colin Wesley, Jeremy White, Emma Williams, Karly Willson, Elise Wimer, Alyson Wood, Justin Yatsuhashi and Anthony Zapala.

**Honors**

Patrick Ahern, Jillian Anderson, Olivia Baccari, Rachel Baker, Dylan Barriero, Julia Bartley, Ashlyn Beattie, Allison Beltrami, Paige Berdos, Zackary Blumer, Aidan Boulger, Emily Boutillier, Nicole Brady, Samuel Brady, Jacob Brawley, Camryn Buckley, Richard Bulloch, Lia Burns, Rubi Butler, Liam Campbell, Lillian Carlow, Lilly Casto, Randy Chicoye, Victoria Claypoole, Maiya Cloutier, Emily Cochran, Tyler Connolly, Nicole Coughlan, Nicole Crivello, Grace Crocker, Isabelle Crocker, Sean Cullagh, Elizabeth Curran, Sofia Delvecchio, Olivia Donovan, Connor Douglas, Summer Dow, Alexia Duffey-Riley, Daniel Dumais, Connor Eaton, Karim El Raheb, Brice Ferraiuolo, Jackson Ferraiuolo, Jackson Fletcher, Susannah Foster, Giovanna Fruci, Lauren Fusco, Matias Galvez, Lucas Gill, Madison Giusti, Taryn Greenberg, Alicia Hannah, Jamie Hayes, Mitchell Hayes, Hayden Holster, Ethan

Hurwitz, Kira Iantosca, Carter Jacobs, Anastasie Jean-Claude, Tyler Johnson, Jovan Joseph, Paige Kannally, Emily Kearns, Jason Keefe, Tadgh Keller, Emily Kelly, Kaylea Kelly, Caroline Laneiro, David Lawler, Cameron Lawrence, Jillian Lemieux, Audrey Leonard, Aidan Leonard, Aidan Lindmark, Nicholas Lutfy, Brenna Maguire, Shayna Mango, Grace Mattaliano, Scott Mattson, Sean McCombs, Riley McGhehey, Celia McSwiney, Kara McWhinnie, Sumayah Mohamed, Jennifer Montville, John Mullen, Clare Murray, Izabella Narvaez, Micah Nelson, Kevin Nix, Abigail Nixon, Sean O'Brien, Ezra Park, Olivia Penny, Kevin Pierro, Ava Pisani, Lily Redfearn, Noah Riedel, Christian Rodriguez, Jacob Ross, Timothy Santoro, John Silveria, Jacob Smith, Evan Stephens, Cameron Stringfellow, Ava Tormey, Gabriela Trujillo, Paige Varvarigos and Derek Whyte.

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With the legislative session winding down, Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reiterated the importance he places on pending legislation to promote mortgage transparency here in Massachusetts.

At the beginning of 2019, Register O'Donnell had two bills filed, H.1413 and S.960, which stated that when banks sold their residential mortgages to a differ-

ent lending institution, that transaction, or assignment, would be required to be recorded with the relevant Massachusetts Registry of Deeds office within 30 days of its execution.

"During the most recent legislative session," noted O'Donnell, "both H.1413 and S.960 wound their way through the legislative process. After both pieces of legislation were filed with the Massachusetts House and Senate

Clerks offices by lead sponsors Rep. William Galvin (D-Canton) and Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy) respectively and given a docket number, dozens of other state representatives and senators signed up as co-sponsors. The clerks' offices then gave each piece of legislation a bill number (H. 1413 and S.960). Then each

**MORTGAGE**  
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# Real Estate Corner

## MORTGAGE

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bill was assigned to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary for further consideration. A public hearing on the legislation was then held where I provided arguments for supporting the legislation. The joint committee on the Judiciary reported the legislation favorably in early 2020. On February 13, 2020, H.1413, accompanied by S. 960, was ordered to a third reading by the Massachusetts House. Unfortunately, no further action has taken place on the legislation. Certainly, the members of the legislature have been dealing with many pressing matters including COVID-19 and the fiscal year 2021 State Budget.”

The Register further stated, “My specific arguments for supporting the mortgage transparency legislation included the fact the legislation would eliminate the possibility that a homeowner may not know who the holder of their mortgage is because an assignment was not recorded. Because some banks have gone out of business in previous years or merged with another lending institution, homeowners are in some instances forced to consult with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation website or the Massachusetts Division of Banks to determine who holds their mortgage. The legislation would make assignments of residential mortgages more transparent to the consumer.”

Another argument for the bill’s passage was that it created a more level playing field between smaller community banks and larger lending institutions. The

smaller community banks tend to hold their mortgages while many larger nationwide banks are not diligent in recording their mortgage assignments.

The need for this legislation hit home recently when the Boston Globe published an article by Sean P. Murphy on December 8, 2020 which highlighted the difficulties that can result when an assignment is not recorded. O’Donnell stated, “The article spoke about a couple who had found a home in Worcester which needed work. To finance the purchase and remodeling costs, the couple wanted to sell their condo in Easton. However, a title problem developed with the Easton condo due to a mortgage assignment not being properly recorded. Because the assignment was not recorded at the Registry of Deeds, the lending institution who was the current holder of the mortgage lacked the legal authority to discharge the mortgage. A process that should have taken a few days took several weeks as two large lending institutions could not get their act together and solve the title problem by filing the assignment. After several weeks of back and forth the problem was resolved and the assignment was recorded, but only after the intervention of the Boston Globe.”

“The assignment legislation that has been filed would have eliminated this problem as an assignment would have been required to be recorded 30 days after the mortgage was transferred, or sold, to another lending institution,” stated O’Donnell.

“With the legislative session winding down, it is unlikely the legislation, H.1413 and S.960 will advance further,” noted

O’Donnell. “However, I am not giving up the fight to help Massachusetts homeowners. I will once again be filing mortgage transparency legislation in the upcoming 2021-2022 legislative session. I am hopeful our arguments will be persuasive and after years of trying, the legislation will wind its way through the legislative process and onto Governor Baker’s desk for his signature.”

**Happy New Year!!**



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\*Based on program data from Aug. 26, 2019-April 1, 2020.

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# Two Norfolk Firefighters graduate from Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) Director David C. Evans announced the graduation of the three classes that completed the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's fifty-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program. Class #287 trained at the Stow campus, Class #S19 trained at the Springfield campus and Class #BW06 trained at the Bridgewater campus. The ceremony took place at the Department of Fire Services in Stow.

The Norfolk firefighters were Luke Barney and Ryan Pittsley of Class #BW06.

"This rigorous professional training provides our newest firefighters with the basic skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely," said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey. The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA), a division of the Department of Fire Services, offers this program tuition-free.

"First responders are on the frontlines protecting their communities and these newest firefighters are needed now more



than ever. We have taken advantage of technology, reduced class size to increase social distancing, implemented daily screening, and required mask-wearing to keep our instructors and students as safe as possible during these uncertain times," said MFA Director Evans.

### Today's Firefighters Do Far More than Fight Fires

Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They are the first ones called to respond

to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to a gas leak. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle crashes. They test and maintain their equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, they learn all these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are also experienced firefighters. Students learn all the basic skills they need to respond to fires, to contain and to control them. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, confined space rescue techniques, and rappelling. The intensive, 10-week program for municipal firefighters involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

### Training Safely During Pandemic

In response to the pandemic, the 10-week curriculum was reorganized to take advantage of online learning technology while ensuring plenty of practical skill experience on-campus with instructors. Students alternated between the virtual classroom for two weeks, on campus for practical training (using special

safeguards and social distancing) for four weeks, back to the virtual classroom for a week, returning to campus for two weeks and finishing the final week in the virtual classroom.

### Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Recruit Program all students have met the national standards of National Fire Protection Association 1001 and are certified to the level of Firefighter I and II, and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operational Level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

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