

Free Press Seeks to Connect Communities and Fill a Gap

The untimely passing of respected community and business leader, Alfred (Al) Holman left a huge void in the Upton and Mendon communities. Al, along with his wife Marilyn, published the *Upton & Mendon Town Crier* for 29 years. Readers relied on the paper for news, town and school updates, and a sense of community and connectivity.

Chuck Tashjian, a local publisher who worked with both of the Holmans over the past ten years, has offered to bring the community a new monthly publication, the *Upton & Mendon Free Press*.

The goal of the *Free Press* is to be a resource and to continue the tradition of letting residents know what's going on in their community. The new paper will be direct mailed, free of charge, to all households



Free Press staff members: Wendy Watkins, Graphic Design; Shelley Ryan, Editor; and Susanne Odell Farber, Advertising.
Photo by Sarianna Theall

and businesses in Upton and Mendon. This publication is a way for readers to stay abreast of all their towns have to offer.

We look forward to celebrating your special moments, events, town news, school news, sports teams and accomplishments, both big and small. Several members of the *Town Crier*

staff are now part of the *Free Press*: Susanne Odell Farber, Advertising; Wendy Watkins, Graphic Design; and Shelley Ryan, Editor; all are residents of our community. Coming soon is the *Free Press* website uptonmendonfreepress.com.

If you have story ideas, please email them to editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com.

Making New Year's Resolutions Stick



An outdoor yoga session led by The Yoga Exchange at Stoddard Park in Holliston. Contributed photo

By Linda Chuss
Staff Writer

Over 4,000 years ago, as part of an annual planting celebration, some Babylonians made vows to repay debts or return borrowed items. Today, about forty percent of people ritually make New Year's resolutions, with nearly half of them seeking more physical activity. According to Strava, an exercise tracking service, only ten percent will meet their goal and maintain it for two years. Most people quit in the first month, with January weather a contribut-

ing factor in Massachusetts.

Studies have shown how to make it more likely to fulfill a resolution:

- Only commit to one resolution.
- Understand the reasons behind the goal. What improvement will it bring? Why is that important?
- Make the goal challenging but achievable, defining specific results to attain. For an exercise resolution, choose something

RESOLUTIONS

continued on page 10

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Upton Community Center: What is Going on at 9 Milford Street?



Summer Construction, June 15, 2022. Aerial photo by Tom Sleeper, courtesy of Town of Upton



Winter Construction, December 10, 2022. Aerial photo by Tom Sleeper, courtesy of Town of Upton

By Matthew Bachtold,
Upton Town Library

There is a new addition to our town being built at 9 Milford Street. You may have seen the red building, construction trucks, or wondered why the playground was closed.

In May 2021, the Upton voters approved a 15,132 square foot building on the municipal parking lot site near the town common. The groundbreaking was on December 12, 2021, and after a year of construction, the project is nearing its final steps. The grand opening ceremony will be held June 14, 2023, but Town officials hope the building

will be completed and opened to the public earlier in the spring.

The Community Center will be the new home of the Upton Town Library and the Department of Elder and Social Services/Senior Center.

Both departments are looking forward to the accessibility and expanded services that the new space will provide.

Library Director Matthew Bachtold says, "Along with the larger collection size and accessible location, I'm excited about having the social services department in the same building, so we can refer our patrons directly to a wider range of support."

The building will feature public-use study rooms and conference rooms in variety of sizes, public computer resources, a copy center and seating along the windows overlooking Center brook.

In addition to the building, the project includes a shared parking agreement with the Upton VFW that provides over 80 parking spaces, and use of Community Preservation Act funds to rebuild the Veteran's Memorial Playground.

Floorplans and construction updates are available on the Upton Library website at upton-library.org



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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

2 Main Street, Upton • 508-529-6272 • uptonlibrary.org
 HOURS: Tues. - Thurs. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. | Fri. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Sun. & Mon. Closed

By Matthew Bachtold, Library Director
 and Lee Ann Murphy, Children's Librarian

Upton Library Hours

The Upton Town Library is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Town Trash Bags for Sale

Upton Library has yellow and blue town trash bags in stock. Yellow 30-gallon bags are \$20 per roll of 10, and Blue 15-gallon bags are \$13 per roll. Payment can be made in cash or check, anytime the library is open.

eBooks, Audio Books and More

Did you get a new tablet or device this season?

Make the most of it with free digital content from the library. We offer services through Libby and Hoopla apps, accessible with your Upton Library card. Libby has eBooks and audio books from a wide range of authors and genres. Hoopla has a different selection of authors and no waiting lists. Hoopla also has a great selection of graphic novels. Visit the library for help getting started.

Winter Reading Challenge

Pick up a reading log at the Upton Library, complete at least five of the reading challenges and return your log by February 25 to win a reading prize! This is for ages 3-18, but adults can challenge themselves as well.

Library Events – Held in the Upton Town Hall

Music & Movement – Select Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Our Music & Movement program features Deb Hudgins and her Pre-K Sing & Swing. It is an interactive program, geared toward children ages 1-5 and their caregivers, to enjoy together. Deb plays guitar, sings, and incorporates stories, dancing, fingerplays, games and more at each of her themed performances. Partial funding for this program is through a grant from Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. This program is will be held Tuesday, January 10, and January 24, in the Upton Town Hall.

Baby Storytime – Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

Baby Storytime is hosted by our Children's & Young Adult Librarian, Mrs. Murphy. She shares nursery rhymes, short stories, and songs to help develop language and social skills for our youngest patrons. This is for ages 0-3.

Preschool Storytime – Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

Mrs. Murphy shares two theme-based picture books, along with simple songs or chants. A simple craft tutorial follows. Preschool Storytime helps reinforce early literacy skills and builds school readiness for this age group. This is geared toward ages 3-5.

Teen Group – Tuesdays 3 p.m.

Our Teen Group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 3-4 p.m. at the library. Students have the chance to make new friends, discuss books, explore theme-based projects and just have fun. Tweens and teens welcome this opportunity to develop independence skills and give input to our Young Adult collections and programming. This is for ages 10-16.

Kids' Book Club – February 1 at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile and preteen titles on the first Wednesday of each month. Join us February 1 for our Adventure pick, *Wild River* by Rodman Philbrick. This is for ages 8-12.

Upton Reads Book Group – Town Hall

This book group offers an eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction, with meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening of each month. This group will meet in person at Upton Town Hall, with a Zoom remote option on Tuesday, January, 10 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, January 12, at 6:45 p.m.: *The Maid*, by Nita Prose.

For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email mbachtol@cwmar.org

Mendon Senior Center Upcoming News

Mendon History Talk with Jim Buckley

Jim Buckley is returning to the Mendon Senior Center in January with an interesting talk about Mendon's own witch on Tuesday, January 17, at 11 am. You are invited to join us afterwards for the Tri-Valley lunch at noon. There is no fee for the talk. The cost of lunch is three dollars. Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the senior center to register for one or both programs.

Technology Tailored For Seniors

The Mendon Senior Center will host an informative hands-on technology class on Tuesday, January, 17 at 2:30 p.m., where devices are encouraged and reconfigured by you to make them work for you. Under the guidance of Nipmuc student Patrick Scott, we'll look at hotspots, storage, security, how-to's, email and texting frustrations, zoom, the cloud and whatever else you wish to discuss. We'll have some fun practicing new skills! Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by to register for this free program. Attendees are encouraged to bring portable devices (phones, tablets, etc.)

The Mendon Cultural Council Needs New Members!

The council funds cultural activities within the surrounding area of the Mendon community, including previous grants such as Birch Alley Brass, Greater Milford Community Chorus, and various programs for the Mendon school system, Taft Library, and the Mendon Senior Center. If you are interested in becoming a Member, please contact the CulturalCouncil@mendonma.gov to volunteer. The Mendon Cultural Council is a local agency funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Stay fit: The Benefits of Singing

According to Microsoft TakeLessons, the benefits of signing are many. Among them, singing helps to reduce stress, improve memory, increase lung function, and improve posture; it helps with sleep and is a natural anti-depressant. Want to give it a try? The Mendon Minstrels Chorus will resume weekly rehearsals on Mondays, from 1-3:00 p.m. beginning January 23 at the Mendon Senior Center. Marge West, our choral director, has coordinated an uplifting playlist for our spring program. New vocal members and musicians are welcome. Please call Amy Wilson Kent, Director, at 508-478-6175 for more information. There is no fee for this program.

Look for updates from the Mendon Town Library in the next issue

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The Upton Cultural Council

Painting classes; a Multi-cultural Festival at BVT; an outdoor foraging workshop at Stefans Farm; a Mass Audubon Society presentation; a theatrical performance depicting Historical Women at Memorial Elementary School; a science presentation at Miscoe Hill Middle School; Fairy Tale Cultural Book Kits at the Upton Town Library; multiple musical performances in a variety of genres across town; and more! These are all programs that have been funded over the past year by the Upton Cultural Council (UCC), all offered at no charge to participants. The UCC is a town council that awards grants to local performers, schools, and organizations that bring cultural events and programming to our town. Our goal is to promote the appreciation of the arts, humanities, and



Upton Cultural Council Chair Megan Ronzio hosts a booth at the Upton Heritage Day festivities to share information about the Upton Cultural Council and encourage grant applications. Photo by Alice Gentili

interpretive sciences in Upton with a focus on diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

“The Upton Cultural Council is excited to bring these opportunities to our town and to be able elevate the cultural life and experience of local residents. By funding these programs, we are supporting local artists, schools, and organizations, and also promoting a sense of community. We think that no matter what your interests are, there’s sure to be something for everyone!” said UCC

Chair Megan Ronzio.

The UCC is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth, under the umbrella of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the MCC which then allocates funds to each community. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in



Blackstone Valley Tech Shine Your Light Chalk Festival, student artists got creative by sharing personal stories through their artwork to help raise awareness of mental health and support teen suicide prevention. Photo by Alice Gentili

the arts, sciences, and humanities every year.

A complete list of the grants awarded in FY22 is available on the Upton Cultural Council page on the Town of Upton website; visit <https://www.uptonma.gov/cultural-council> and click “Grant Recipients” in the left menu panel. You can also find information on applying for grants there, or at <https://massculturalcouncil.org>. The grant cycle opens every year in early September. The council recently met to evaluate applications for this current grant cycle and will be notifying winning applicants in the upcoming weeks.

Current members include: Megan Ronzio, Chair; Lyn Haggerty, Treasurer; Alice Gentili, Secretary; Jenn Conrad; and Robin Jokela. The council is

currently seeking new members, no experience necessary! Members meet monthly to discuss grant applications, community events, and special projects. The UCC is state funded so there is minimal fundraising involved. This is a great opportunity to serve your community, get involved with local government, and meet new people without an extensive time commitment.

If you are interested in joining the UCC, attending a council meeting, getting more information, or asking a question about submitting a grant proposal, please email culturalcouncil@upton.gov. You can also find us (and information about upcoming events) at <https://www.facebook.com/uptonculturalcouncil>, @UptonCultural (Twitter), or [uptonculturalcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/uptonculturalcouncil) on Instagram.

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New "Votes Act" Eliminates Opt Out for Voter Registration

Opportunity to decline automatic voter registration at the RMV will no longer be available effective January 1, 2023.

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has announced that effective January 1, 2023, the RMV is no longer allowed to offer the option for customers to opt out of automatic voter registration.

The opportunity for driver's license and ID applicants to decline automatic voter registration is no longer possible in accordance with "The VOTES Act," a new election reform law which was passed by the Massachusetts State Legislature on June 22, 2022.

On each business day, the RMV will be required to

transmit to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, specific applicant information on all eligible transactions with the RMV meeting the select criteria of persons attesting to U.S. citizenship and providing proof of lawful presence. Information that is sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth will include the applicant's name, date of birth, address, attestation of citizenship, and an electronic signature.

RMV customers will be allowed to decline voter registration after receiving the acknowledgment notice from their respective municipal elec-

tion officials.

The RMV has revised its driver's license and ID applications and the "Voter Registration Receipt" to reflect the new changes referenced above. To learn more, go online to: Automatic Voter Registration.

The RMV recommends that all customers needing to conduct transactions, go online to see if an online transaction is possible, or to prepare for an in-person visit if necessary: RMV's Online Service Center.

For the latest RMV updates and information, follow the RMV on Twitter @MassRMV.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living and Memory Support Community, 11 Birch Street, Milford, is pleased to announce that they will now host an in-person support group every month at their facility. Hearts, Hugs and Hope is the name of the group which is geared toward families and caregivers dealing with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. There are many challenges related to a dementia diagnosis, so it is helpful to share your concerns and personal experiences with others who completely un-

derstand what you are going through. This group will also help attendees to learn about proven strategies to help better care for your family member. The support group will be held on the second Tuesday of the month, at 6 p.m., at Cornerstone in Milford. Light refreshments will be served.

Call 508-473-0035 to RSVP or please contact Director of Compass Memory Support Programming Jenn Hozempa at jhozempa@cornerstonemilford.com for more information.

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Keeping Watch from High Above



Two bald eagles photographed in central Mass in the fading twilight.
 Photo by local photographer Alice Gentili

Childbirth Education Classes Resume at Milford Regional

Milford Regional Medical Center is pleased to announce that in-person and virtual childbirth education classes will once again be offered to expectant parents beginning in January 2023 and running through the end of the year.

Each session will walk parents through the last weeks of pregnancy discussing discomfort, exercise and nutrition. Sessions will also focus on birth plan options, stages of labor, comfort measures during labor, cesarean births, immediate postpartum, newborn care and much more.

Classes will be given by instructor Laura Laird, a certified and experienced Childbirth Educator (BCCE) whose goal is to help expectant parents feel prepared and supported during their last weeks of pregnancy, labor

and delivery and postpartum.

“We are thrilled to once again be offering these very informative childbirth education classes at Milford Regional,” said MRMC’s Director of Maternal Health Rose Galimi-Hayes. “Laura comes to Milford Regional as a highly recommended childbirth educator whose experience, knowledge and warmth will help parents through the final stages of their pregnancy journeys, as well as the beginning of life with their newborns.”

Milford Regional is offering several childbirth class options including an in-person, four-week session at Milford Regional on Wednesday evenings, from 7 to 9 p.m., a virtual four-week session on Monday evenings, from 7 to 9 p.m., and in-person

weekend sessions at the hospital that cover everything over a two-day period on Saturdays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Sundays, from 12 to 4 p.m. A tour of the Maternity Center will be provided for in-person sessions. Masks are required for all in-person sessions.

Participants do not have to be delivering at Milford Regional to participate in these classes. It is recommended that participants register no later than their 36th week.

The fee is \$200 per session. Space is limited. To register, view milfordregional.org and click on “Classes and Events.” For questions, contact Michelle Sanford, Public Relations and Community Benefits Manager, at 508-422-2827 or msanford@milreg.org.

Cradles to Crayons Donations Being Accepted

Local bins nearby

Cradles to Crayons creates KidPacks that are hand-selected with great care to meet children's specific wants and needs. They accept a wide range of new and like-new items for children from birth through age 12. Their mission strives to provide every child with the essentials they need to feel safe, warm, and valued. According to www.cradlestocrayons.org, their most-needed items include clothing (youth sizes 0-20, and adult sizes small and; medium), winter coats and jackets, shoes (infant/child sizes 5-13 and adult sizes 1-10). They also accept new socks and underwear; new pajamas; books, especially baby board books; new arts and crafts/school supplies, unopened diapers and training pants, and new hygiene items. They do

NOT accept toys or baby gear of any kind (stuffed animals, play structures, strollers, car seats), bathing suits, costumes, bedding, bicycles or ride-on toys, books and clothing with family-related messaging ("I Love Mommy," "Daddy and I"), cribs of any kind, DVDs/CDs/VHS tapes/computer games, electronics, furniture and household goods/items, and more.

For a full list (including what to do with items C2C cannot accept), visit <https://bit.ly/3Ie5aW6>. Area bins can be found in Bellingham, Wrentham Village, Patriot Place, and at the Auburn Mall. Please do not leave donations outside of donation bins even if the bins are full. For more information, including donation guidelines, visit www.cradlestocrayons.org/boston.

Thoreau Foundation Scholarship Applications due February 1

The Henry David Thoreau Foundation is a charitable trust that propels environmental leadership across disciplines. Through scholarships and grants, it strengthens the ability of undergraduate students and professors to pursue collective study of environmental issues and promote more creative action.

Applications are due Feb. 1. Applicants must reside in Massachusetts and be in their final year at a Massachusetts high school; plan to enroll in college in the year the scholarship is awarded; and demonstrate strong academic qualifications and a commitment to an environmental field.

Since 1999, the Thoreau Foundation has provided more than \$7 million to support envi-

ronmental work. Each year we award scholarships to outstanding Massachusetts high school seniors – the next wave of environmental leaders who will pursue interdisciplinary environmental studies in college and beyond. We also fund visionary programs at U.S. colleges and universities, forging alliances with professors, strengthening our environmental network, and extending our impact.

For more information, including the online application, visit www.thoreauscholar.org/

Editor's note: Do you know a Thoreau Scholar who would like to share their story? If so, contact editor@uptonmendonfreepress.com.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Recent Home Sales

Date	Upton	Amount
12/20/2022	111 Glen Avenue	\$489,900
12/15/2022	5 Picadilly Street	\$477,100
12/12/2022	20 Sienna Circle #58	\$794,220
12/09/2022	6 Kiwanis Beach Road	\$1.04 mil
12/08/2022	50 Mendon Street	\$380,000
12/07/2022	18 Sienna Circle #59	\$698,590
12/07/2022	14 Sienna Circle #61	\$690,320
12/01/2022	104 High Street	\$370,000
12/01/2022	207 North Street	\$600,000

Date	Mendon	Amount
12/20/2022	62 Milford Street #A	\$365,000
12/20/2022	57 Washington Street	\$650,000
12/19/2022	101-B Blackstone Street	\$599,900
12/19/2022	29 Providence Street	\$499,900
12/02/2022	41 Neck Hill Road	\$474,000

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



6 Kiwanis Beach Road in Upton recently sold for \$1.04 million. Photo credit www.zillow.com

Hopkinton Center for the Arts Announces Winter Gallery Exhibitions

The Hopkinton Center for the Arts (HCA) located at 98 Hayden Rowe Street, is excited to announce its next two gallery exhibitions.

To kick-off 2023, the HCA will begin with its popular annual members show. This is the one exhibition a year when we invite our over 200 active members to submit an original piece of artwork. The result is always an impressive display of local talent.

The HCA Members Show exhibition will be on display in the Lotvin Family Gallery through January 26.

Following the Members Show in January, the HCA will partner with the Michael Lisnow Respite Center for a special ten-day exhibition dedicated to the artwork created by adult artists with disabilities. Now in its twenty-fifth year, the Respite Center is a place that provides emotional and physical support for individuals with disabilities and their families.

The HCA is pleased to provide visual arts and ceramics classes for the Respite students throughout the year, as well as



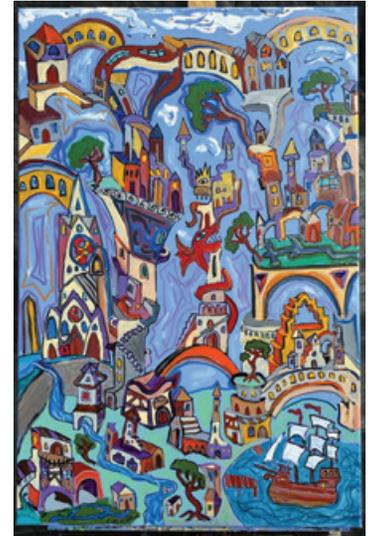
Michael Lisnow Respite Center artist Jeff Cole.

give them the opportunity to display their work in the Lotvin Family gallery. The exhibition will be on display from February 1-10. Don't miss it!

The Lotvin Family Gallery exhibitions are always free for visitors to tour. Complimentary docent talks for community groups, schools or private groups are available upon request.

HCA Lotvin Family Gallery
98 Hayden Rowe Street,
Hopkinton MA 01748

Gallery Hours: Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.



"The Lost City" by HCA Member Carl Ristaino.



"Surveillance" by HCA Member Lissa Banks.

The HCA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization serving the MetroWest region. HCA develops artistic skills, offers outstanding performances and art exhibitions, and enables visitors to experience art in all forms. Under one roof, we celebrate art through classes and events in visual art, theater, music, dance, ceramics, writing, and film.



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Family-run Affordable Junk Removal Takes the Stress out of Cleanups

By *Christie Vogt*
Staff Writer

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible, properly disposes of non-recyclables and resells many items at the Schadlers' secondhand store, Resellables. "We opened that store in Bellingham because we hated to see things thrown away," Schadler says. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the



business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back-end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home

Business spotlight

to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Upton and Mendon in particular, Schadler said they are very involved with these towns as their older son goes to Blackstone Valley Technical High School. They support the police and fire departments. In addition, their Resellables store is located half in Mendon and half in Bellingham.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordable-junkremoval.com.

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Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children and dog, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005. Contributed photo

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Bill Taylor, President of Friends of Upton State Forest, points out a waterhole built nearly a century ago to a hiking group. *Contributed photo*

RESOLUTIONS

continued from page 1

enjoyable.

- Identify near-term steps to take, including how to address foreseeable obstacles.
- Rely on supportive resources.
- Don't give up, even after a slip-up.

Following is an example that anyone who wants to be more physically active can draw from.

Chris wants to get back into running. It will make climbing stairs easier, decrease fatigue, and

set a good example for Chris's children. Completing Milford's Hot to Trot 5K race in July is a realistic target. To make time for the workouts, Chris plans to run while the children are at their own sports programs. Chris will look for other runners to get advice from and sometimes run with. Through the winter, Chris will use a treadmill at the nearby gym, starting with one mile three times a week and increasing the distance every week. From April until the event, Chris will instead run on the paved trail in town. After the race, Chris will set a

new goal.

There are considerable local resources for getting exercise. Trails, for instance, are free, scenic, and serene places for walking, running, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. They can be even more enjoyable with family, friends, or a dog along. In Mendon, the Town Forest offers easy, thirty-minute walks and longer routes that are also good for biking. Milford boasts the Upper Charles paved trail and the renowned New England Mountain Biking Association wooded trails, named Vietnam.

In Upton, the State Forest has many paths, ranging from wide and flat to narrow and hilly, with unique structures as well. As Joyce Sandvik of Sutton says, "The trails at Upton State Forest have historical significance. The park was built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and is the last remaining CCC headquarters in Massachusetts." Remains from structures built in the 1930s are still visible from the trails. Trail maps can be found online or via free apps like Open Street Map.

For using the trails with others, there are groups such as the Hopkinton Trails Club and the Upton Recreation Department, which have Facebook pages listing their events, and the Mendon Senior Walking Group, which follows different area routes three times a week.

Taking classes at a gym can make it easier to keep a commitment, like those at CrossFit in Mendon. While Planet Fitness has a Milford gym, their thousands of other locations can be used with the membership, allowing workouts near home and work, and when traveling. There are some businesses that provide fitness facilities and classes on site.

The Milford Community School Use Program has classes for fitness and yoga, plus a pool for aqua aerobics and lap swimming. Upton's Recreation Department sponsors weekly

volleyball at the Nipmuc gym, and later in the year has an outdoor pickleball program. Ponds can be used for ice skating in winter, and for swimming in summer, like at the town beaches in Mendon and Upton, plus there are two free public pools in Milford.

Yoga, known for improving strength while decreasing tightness and stress, can be done alone at home or in a class. JTB in Uxbridge or The Yoga Exchange in Holliston have introductory rates and provide options for more experienced students. According to Melanie Harrington, who owns and leads classes at The Yoga Exchange, "We help students practice yoga with mindfulness, compassion, and gratitude." Doing yoga at home just requires floor space, but is easier when following a video, like on the "Yoga with Adriene" on the YouTube channel. Benefits from karate also extend beyond fitness. In Milford, American Karate aims to develop discipline and instill confidence through their classes. For something daring, there's paintball at Friendly Fire in Upton or axe throwing at PiNZ in Milford.

With far more resources than the Babylonians had and practical tips to achieve goals, anyone stands a good chance of fulfilling their New Year's resolution to exercise more.



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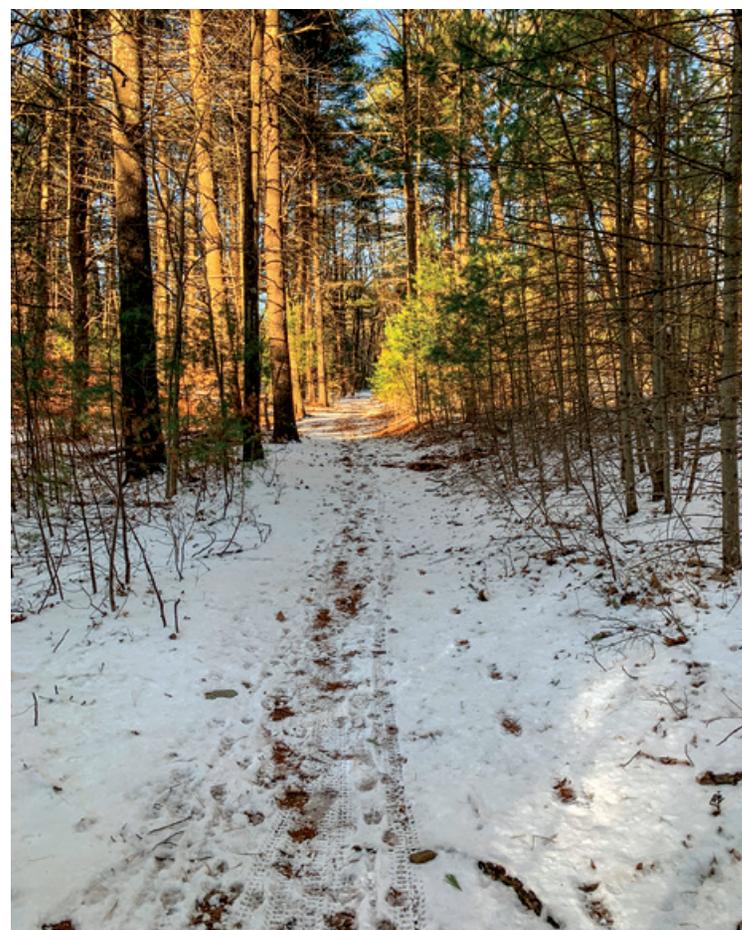


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Bike tracks and footprints in the snow show the trails at the Upton State Forest are well used even in winter. *Photo by Linda Chuss*

Decades of Service to the Community Welcoming 2023

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 our state-of-the-art medical offices in Franklin, Milford and Millis. We are a group of eye physicians/surgeons and optometrists offering the latest in comprehensive and surgical eye care for the entire family. 2023 is here and we would like to welcome the entire community to our offices and surgery center.

With offices located in Milford, Franklin and our new office in Millis, our own award-winning surgery center in Milford 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 centers 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 longer need to travel miles and hours to have cataract surgery! Three experienced eye physicians/surgeons and 5 optometrists are here to provide comprehensive and excellent eye care for the entire family. If your eyecare provider is still asking you to travel faraway to secure eye treatments, call us for a second opinion.

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 over 30,000 procedures and surgeries and was the first surgeon in the area to offer the highly advanced accommodating implants. Dr. Kaldawy was the first 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. John 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. Bryan Hong is our practicing vitreoretinal specialist. Dr. Hong is a graduate of Yale College and Yale School of Medicine. He completed his ophthalmology residency at the University of Southern California Eye Institute and the Doheny Eye Institute in Los Angeles, CA. He then went on to complete an intensive vitreoretinal disease fellowship at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Hong will be providing retina care in our practice starting September 2022, and specializes in eye surgery, laser surgery, and diseases of the retina, including macular degeneration, macular diseases, vitreomacular interface abnormalities, retinal vascular diseases, diabetic retinopathy, trauma, retinal de-

tachments, uveitis, and cataract complications. His research interests include retinal imaging, novel surgical techniques, and medical cost-efficacy analyses.

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 joined Milford-Franklin Eye Center from the New England Carpenters Benefit Fund – Vision Center, where she served as Head of Optometry. She has over 10 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 edging.



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

Dr. Donald L. Conn is a comprehensive optometrist offering the latest in comprehensive eye care for the entire family. Dr. Conn earned his Bachelor of Science from College of the Holy Cross in 2016. He then went on to earn his Doctor of Optometry degree from New England College of Optometry in 2021. He has completed a residency in ocular disease and Primary care at the Bedford VA in June 2022. His clinical experience also includes clinical rotations at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center, Boston

Medical Center and South Boston Community Health Center. Dr. Conn will join our team in August of 2022. He is experienced in providing care to patients of all ages including adults, geriatrics and pediatric populations. Outside of work Dr. Conn enjoys long distance running and spending time with friends and family.

Dr. Purvi Patel, OD originally from the tri-state area, received her bachelor's degree from The College of New Jersey in 1996 and her Doctor of Optometry from the State University of NY College of Optometry in 2000 through a joint accelerated B.S.-O.D. program. She then completed a residency in Ocular Disease and Special Testing. In 2003, Dr. Patel joined the New England College of Optometry as Clinical Assistant Professor. Through her role as Director of Eye Care Services at Whittier Street Health Center and then The Dimock Center,

EYES

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MILFORD - FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

			
Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.	John F. Hatch, M.D.	Bryan Hong, M.D.	Michael R. Adams, O.D.
			
Shalin Zia, O.D.	Donald L. Conn, O.D.	Dr. Mai-Khuyen Nguyen, O.D.	Dr. Purvi Patel, O.D.

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EYES

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one of the largest community health centers in Boston, Dr. Patel brings with her teaching and leadership experience. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, with a history of publishing, presenting and lecturing. During the last 10 years, Dr. Patel has transitioned to direct care and worked in collaboration with ophthalmology. Most recently, Dr. Patel completed a postdoctoral certificate for the treatment & management of glaucoma. Dr. Patel has clinical interests in diabetes, glaucoma, community-based eye and vision care, public health & epidemiology. Dr. Patel currently lives in Dover, MA with her husband and 3 daughters. She enjoys traveling abroad, reading and tennis.

Dr. Shalin Zia, O.D. received her Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University in 2014 and her Doctor of Optometry from Indiana University in 2018. She moved to Massachusetts from the Midwest after getting married. She is a comprehensive optometrist with solid experienced in providing optometric and medical eyecare to patients of all ages. In her free time, she enjoys working out, listening to podcasts, and spending time with family.

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SCHOOLS

Nipmuc Engineering Students Recognized in International Event



Engineering II students (Alex Heather, Derek Cerundolo, Marcelo Filho, Liam O'Connell) are part of Team Nipmuc. Photo Courtesy Mendon Upton Regional School District

By Shelley Ryan
Editor

Recently, Mendon Upton School Superintendent Maureen Cohen shared news that Nipmuc Regional High School Engineering students had been honored in an international competition. Team Nipmuc, Engineering II students Dominic Abisso, Joe Antoun, Derek Cerundolo, Alex Heather, Marcelo Filho, Ronan Joyce, Liam O'Connell, Alysse Stasio, Jacob Snow, and Jackson Theall participated in a month-long MaxIQ Space World Space Week 2022 competition based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The students used CubeSat (cube satellite) sensors to gather data on light and ultraviolet levels for a week. Data analysis determined a solar panel should always face the sun to maximize electricity production. To address this challenge, the students de-

signed a solar panel with a motor to orient the panel to the sun continually. Judges selected Team Nipmuc as runner-up and the students were awarded advanced CubeSat sensors.

The Engineering II team was also selected to participate in MaxIQ Space's Suborbital Launch Challenge. MaxIQ Space has teamed up with bluShift Aerospace, a rocket company startup based in Brunswick, Maine, seeking to launch the CubeSat with rockets using non-toxic, carbon-neutral bio-fuel. "This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to participate in real-world science and engineering," said Engineering II teacher James Gorman.

The students attended a full rocket test fire in Brunswick, Maine. The students designed and built special devices to fit the rocket during the test fire. These devices collected mission-critical

data, which the students have been analyzing to share with bluShift Aerospace to improve future launches and test their hypothesis that they are using carbon-neutral fuel. The students' CubeSat will be part of the company's first suborbital test fire during the first half of 2023.

Students will also present their project in the World Space Week 2023 MaxIQ Space competition. "Congratulations to Team Nipmuc and Mr. Gorman on these great successes. Projects such as these help students learn how to innovate collaborate and communicate," Superintendent Cohen said. "They are honing the skills they need to be successful throughout life, and will have the knowledge to create effective and meaningful change."

In April, the Nipmuc team will be joining a student symposium at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center outside Washington, DC. "We are so excited about this opportunity and, given the travel costs for the kids, we are seeking corporate sponsors for this amazing educational event," said Gorman. "It is truly an opportunity of a lifetime for these kids, so if you or your company is interested in sponsoring the 2023 Epic Challenge Student Symposium, please contact me," at jgorman@mursd.org, for details.



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SPORTS

Nipmuc Boys Basketball Eyes Deep Tourney Run

By Chris Villani
Sports Writer

Nipmuc boys' basketball head coach Paul King does not try to hide his excitement about his 2022-2023 team.

"This is the best team I have had since we went to the districts and won a tournament game a couple of years ago," he said. "They look really good."

There is plenty of evidence to support King's optimism when looking at the Warriors' roster. First and foremost, Nipmuc is huge for a high school basketball team at their level. Sophomore James McKinney returns and is in the neighborhood of 6-foot-6 or 6-foot-7. Alex Vanesse is around 6-foot-4, as is Drew Johnson, a transfer from Blackstone Valley Tech.

"The best part is they can all shoot," King said. "Every kid on the team is a three-point threat. The height is an advantage, we

should control the boards and they are all athletic, they have basketball bodies. But every kid on the team can shoot and my top seven or eight guys are just lights out shooters."

King is particularly excited about McKinney, who stood out during his freshman campaign and became an immediate impact player at the varsity level. He can see McKinney progressing significantly over the course of the winter.

"He is just more confident," the coach said. "You'd forget last year that he had been playing eighth grade basketball the year before and jumped right up to varsity. I am expecting him to continue to get better."

McKinney brings size and a strong outside shot — King said he might be one of the top two or three shooters on the roster — and he has been extremely coachable for King and the rest

of the staff.

Senior point guard Luke Barnes is back running the offense. A starter since his sophomore year, King said at the year's outset that Barnes is in line for a big final campaign.

"He is so tough, so competitive," King said. "He plays awesome defense, but he really ramped up his scoring coming into the year. It's his last year so we've been relying on him to look for his shot more and he is going to get to the rim."

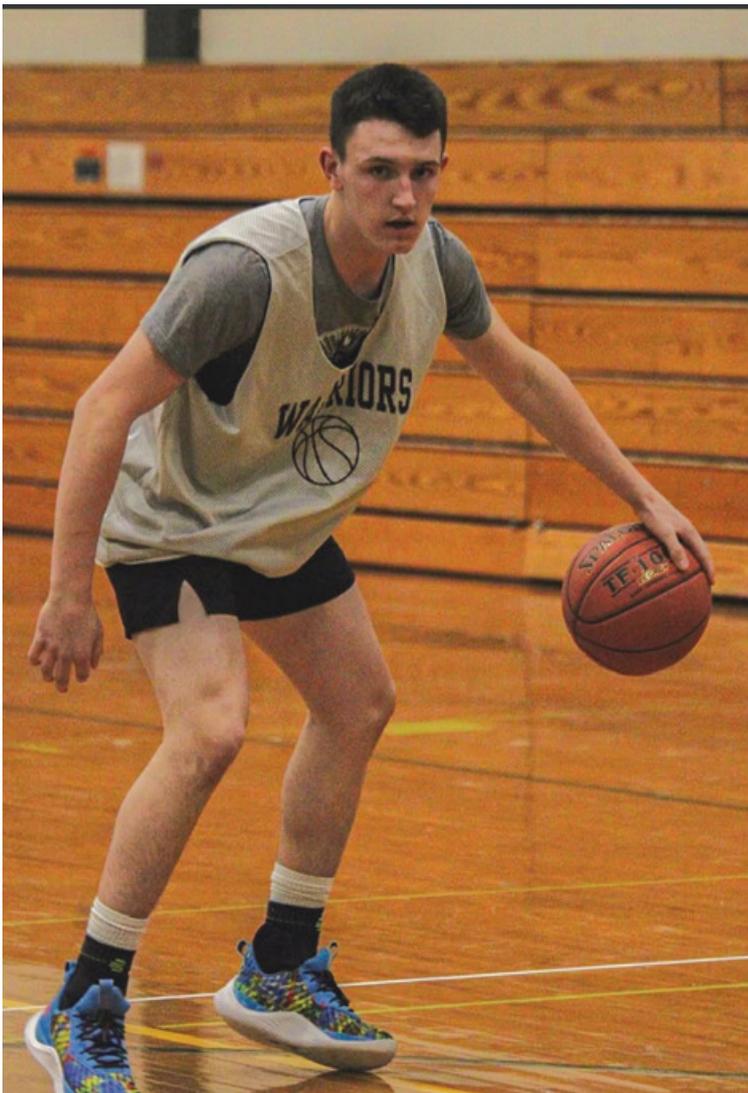
Junior Brayden Kelly and his brother, sophomore Chase Kelly, are also key rotation players for the Warriors. Brayden is a slasher who can get to the rim, while King described Chase as one of the best high school shooters he has been around.

NIPMUC BOYS

continued on page 14



James McKinney. Contributed photo



Luke Barnes. Contributed photo



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Brayden Kelly. Contributed photo

NIPMUC BOYS

continued from page 13

King is excited to see whether his team will meet the high expectations they have set for themselves.

"I don't want to put too much on them, but I do expect to be a district team," he said. "I think we should also be a Clark Tournament team and we should compete in the Dual Valley Conference too. Our league is good, there are so many good teams, but I think we have a shot if we play our game."

Promising Season Underway for Nipmuc Girls Hoops

*By Chris Villani
Sports Writer*

Led by a talented scorer and a strong defensive-first mindset, head coach Missy Rhodes is hoping that her Nipmuc girls' basketball team meets the expectations she has set this winter.

"I think we have a lot of potential," Rhodes said. "We have a really green group; I only have three returners who played a lot of minutes last year, so we have a lot of new players who are looking to make an impact."

She added, "it's promising, we have a lot of talent."

Nipmuc missed out on the state tournament a season ago and graduated five seniors. The Warriors have just a single returning starter in senior Alexa Gibson, but she is one of the

most explosive scorers in the area. "Gibby," as her teammates affectionately call her, burst into the season with 23-and 29-point outings, adding 15 rebounds in the second game.

"She is a go-to player, she knows that, her teammates know that," Rhodes said of the 6-foot-1 forward. "We do well when the ball is in her hands and she is embracing that role. She does everything to put us in a position to win and she is a coach's dream. She works hard and she is very coachable."

Gibson is a threat in large part because she can knock down shots from the perimeter, even though she is often the tallest player on the floor.

"She can score from three-point land, she can score inside,

she can block shots, rebound, she is a game changer," Rhodes said. "If teams don't stop her, she can go off."

Gibson is helped on offense by senior Riley Webster, who is both new to Nipmuc and back on the floor after battling injuries.

"She loves basketball and she is looking to do big things for us this year," Rhodes said.

Junior Meg McCobb is one of three returners who earned significant minutes a season ago. She plays on the wing and is adding some punch to the Nipmuc offense. Sophomore Paige Anderson is a strong post presence who can also step out onto the wing and knock down shots.

Another sophomore, Maddie Grant, is the team's starting point guard.

"She has improved in the off-season and she is ready to have the ball in her hands," Rhodes said.

Nipmuc has its sights set on the Dual Valley Conference title this year and a spot in the state tournament. But Rhodes is adhering to the time honored coaching cliché of taking things one day at a time and being strong on the defensive end.

"I think we are trying to find our identity but we want to be defensively solid and find different ways to score and put pressure on teams," she said.

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SPORTS

New Faces for BVT Boys Basketball

By Chris Villani
Sports Writer

The Blackstone Valley Tech boys' basketball team is filled with new faces this winter after graduating seven seniors and losing another player to a transfer over the winter. But head coach Dan Morin is pleased with the group that he has, and sees the Beavers as a potential playoff team.

"Our first goal is to get ourselves in a position to make the playoffs and we definitely want to give ourselves a chance to get to the state vocational tournament," Morin said.

A goal that is even more important to Morin is the continued growth of the program. He said he feels like he is finally getting the chance to see what the team can do in a more "normal" season.

"This is my third year and my first non-COVID year, no masks and none of the regulations," Morin said. "I have been trying to change the face of BVT basketball and I am seeing my guys gelling and cheering on the younger guys, helping out with the underclassmen at practices and I hope they continue with that community feel."

He added, "I consider the best thing about sports to be the camaraderie and the togetherness and I think they have that this year."

Morin has spent the early part of the season trying to identify his rotation, a task made more difficult by the depth he has on the roster. Senior point guard Andrew Housan has been a constant.

"He isn't the fastest guy, we joke about his speed, but he has a great basketball IQ and he is a great commander and a great leader for these kids," Morin said.

Junior Nathan Slaney was a backup shooting guard for BVT a season ago but moved into the starting lineup at the start of this year.

"He is going to be needed to play a major role if we are going to have success," Morin said. "He has some great speed

and some really good defensive skills."

Valley Tech is also looking to Alex Burgos to provide some physicality following his return from an injury suffered during the end of the football season.

"He is very explosive and a versatile player who can play pretty much any position on the court," Morin said. "His aggression is something the team misses when he is not out there, so we were looking forward to having him back."

Of the 14 guys on the Valley Tech roster, Morin said just about all of them have the ability to be impact players. He called it a good problem to have, even if it has made defining a starting lineup and a rotation more difficult. Morin said the depth can lead to more versatility on the court.

"It allows us to run some different sets out there," Morin said. "We could have a smaller, faster group on the court at times and then substitute a bigger group when the situation calls for it."

BVT Girls Hoops are a Tight Group

By Chris Villani
Sports Writer

It can be more challenging for Blackstone Valley Tech teams to gel than some of their opponents. The Beavers draw from 13 different towns, so they don't always have the advantage of having known one another since elementary school. But the BVT girls' basketball team has come together quickly, head coach Nathalie Christiansen said.

"Our strength has been our togetherness," Christiansen said. "It's hard to gel as a team when you draw from so many different towns, but this team has been together now for three or four years and the bulk of our team is upperclassmen. So we are starting to become a team that works really well together and it's paying off for us."

Valley Tech came into the year off a 17-5 campaign from a season ago that ended with a loss to Joseph Chase High School in the round of 32 in the

state tournament. Top scorer Emma Ballard has graduated, but senior Kasey Reeves is primed to step into a larger role.

"She has always taken on a lot of responsibility for the team and for making sure they are on time to practice and always giving their best," Christiansen said.

Reeves is one of three captains on the roster this winter, joined by junior point guard Skyla Jack and senior forward Katelyn Steele.

"They are known for being quiet but they have really stepped up to make sure everyone knows what is going on," Christiansen said. "They keep us together and they are both playing well."

All three captains are regular starters this year. Joining them in the rotation is sophomore Mara Keane, who also played significant minutes as a freshman.

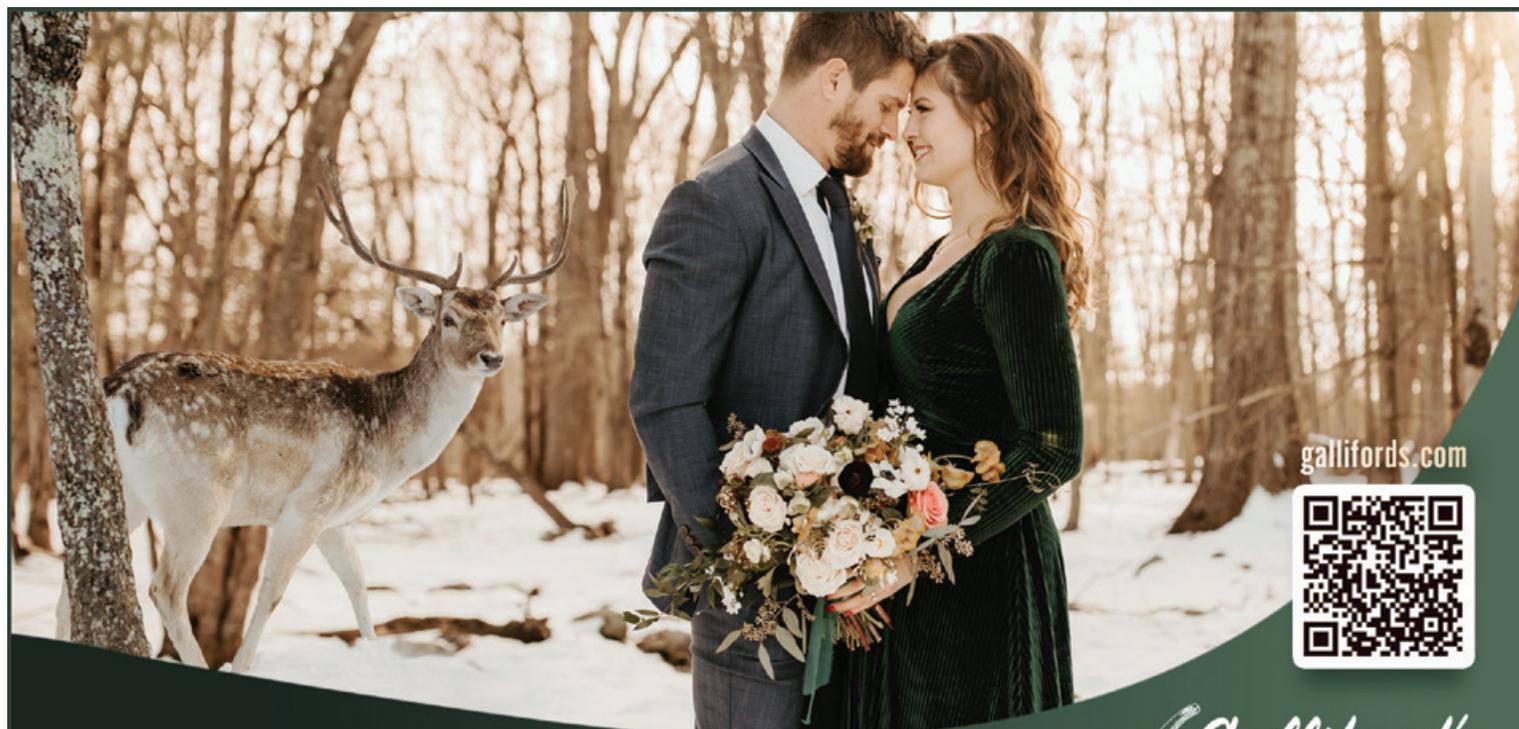
"She is playing some great basketball," Christiansen said.

"I put a lot on her plate last year as a freshman and she handled it, so I am going to put even more on her plate this year."

Junior swing player Danika Kirby was the first player off the bench last season but has earned a starting role this year. A strong shooter, Christiansen said the Beavers will be looking to her for an offensive spark.

In addition to winning 17 games a year ago, BVT earned a state vocational title. Christiansen said the goal is to get back to the states and repeat in the state voke. She also wants to see her team at the top of the Colonial Athletic League standings, where it has typically been in recent seasons.

"We just want to compete," Christiansen said. "Our division is pretty competitive, but we would like to get past the round of 32 this year. If we can give our all every day and we walk out of the gym having given 100 percent, win or lose, that is the best we can do."



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