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Bellingham's Favorite Hometown Newspaper

February 2023

Hutchinson Title a Major Plus for BHS Girls Quintet

New Coach Rebuilding the Program

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

The words coach Bob Pingeton uttered after his Bellingham girls' squad won the 16th annual Barry Hutchinson Memorial Basketball Tournament were telling.

Very telling.

"It's wonderful that a Bellingham team won a Bellingham tourney that honors a Bellingham coach who left us too early," said Pingeton, who's in his first year as a high school varsity coach. "It means the world to our team, and it's important for all the girls, especially our two senior captains. Winning the tourney was one of our goals this season."

Hutchinson coached Bellingham High's boys' team for 17 years and in 2003 he guided his forces to the state championship by defeating Bromfield, 49-40. He died at 47.



The Bellingham High girls' basketball team that won the Hutchinson tourney is a young squad with lots of potential.

The Blackhawks, who entered the tourney with a 1-4 record, defeated Douglas, 52-28 in the opening round, then edged Ursuline Academy, 43-40, in the title game.

The captains — Kylie Walden and Baileigh Murphy — credited their teammates'

work ethic as the prime factor in winning the crown.

"It felt great, because everyone worked so hard," Walden said. "I'm grateful to be one of the captains of this team. And,

QUINTET

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Bellingham Business Association Funds Southwick Zoo Library Pass

By J.D. O'GARA

Patrons of the Bellingham Public Library can thank the Bellingham Business Association (BBA) for a chance to visit the popular Southwick Zoo on a budget. At the January 11th BBA monthly meeting, held last month at Sol de Mexico on Mechanic Street in

Bellingham, the BBA presented the Library with a check for \$1,000 to cover the cost of the Southwick Zoo pass.

"The Southwick Zoo pass is the most expensive passes the library subscribes to," says Berna-

FUNDS

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Bernadette Rivard, Bellingham Public Library Director, Left, and Kerry Pickering, Bellingham Business Association President, presenting a \$1,000 Southwick Zoo pass donation!

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QUINTET

continued from page 1

I'm proud of my younger sister (Luci) for winning the tourney's Most Valuable Player Award."

Murphy emphasized teamwork and a cohesive spirit. "Our teamwork, our team chemistry, and our team spirit were the keys," she said. "We didn't let up for one second in either game."

The Walden sisters played key roles against Douglas. Kylie scored nine points playing both guard positions, and Luci, a scrappy sophomore two-guard, connected for 10 points. Junior Ciara Crayton controlled the boards, grabbing eight rebounds.

"Luci ignited us," Pingeton said. "She hustled all over the court and gave us a great defensive effort. Kylie got six points on two three-pointers. When our center, Maya Jackson, suffered a knee injury, Ciara stepped up and took charge on the boards."

The Ursuline contest, however, was a close-fought, back-and-forth encounter. The three-point triumph was a much-needed boost for the Blackhawks, who earlier in the season scored

only seven points in a 34-7 loss to Dover-Sherborn. The Blackhawks showed true-grit in the game's final minutes. Kylie Walden connected on 3 three-pointers and finished with 11 points. Crayton played all 32 minutes, finishing with 8 points and 9 rebounds, while Luci Walden, who had only 4 points, again was the catalyst who sparked BHS.

"Beating Ursuline was a big win," Pingeton offered. "It showed that we can finish well and overcome a challenge. In the final quarter, I told the girls to have fun, enjoy the game and don't put any pressure on yourselves. They worked hard, trusted each other, and believed in themselves."

Crayton and Luci Walden earned post-tourney awards. Walden was chosen the tournament's MVP, and Crayton was selected to the all-tourney team.

Bellingham's Athletic Director, Michael Connor, was pleased to see the Blackhawks capture their second straight Hutchinson title.

"The coach and the players did all the right things," Connor said. "It's satisfying to see the girls



Bob Pingeton has been a steady force for the Bellingham High girls' basketball team.

play hard, win the tourney title, and keep coach Hutchinson's memory alive. The girls are a young team with a bright future."

When Pingeton took the job last summer, he knew he had a program that needed rebuilding. BHS's fifth coach in 10 years also knew he was inheriting a 5-15 team.

Jackson's injury, however, is a major setback, especially for a team whose prime goal is to qualify for the playoffs. Before the Hutchinson Tournament got underway, Jackson, a 5-foot-10 center, had 18 points and 11 rebounds in a five-point loss to Grafton. Her injury occurred against Douglas in the first round of the tourney.

"Maya suffered a non-contact injury," Pingeton said. "She went up for a pass and came down hard but normal, injuring her right knee."

At the Bulletin deadline, an MRI had not been scheduled, the extent of Jackson's injury had not been determined, and she's missed five games.

"Maya was a huge asset for us in the frontcourt," Pingeton emphasized. "She got rebounds, scored, blocked shots and created deflections. Everyone will have to step up."

Since the Hutchinson tourney, the girls have struggled, going 0-4. In one of the four defeats, a 40-37 overtime loss to Holliston, Jackson's absence was a factor, because the Panthers dominated the Blackhawks on the boards.

"We're going to have to keep improving, because all Tri Valley League teams are tough," Pingeton said. "But, we can still be a playoff team."

Pingeton is acutely aware that his team is heading in the right direction. Winning the Hutchinson tourney in his first year at the Blackhawks' helm is a giant step forward. Bob Pingeton and the Bellingham girls' basketball team look like a solid partnership.

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Jen Schofield
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jenschofield@localtownpages.com

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From the Town Clerk...

By the time you are receiving this copy of the Bellingham Bulletin, everyone should have received your annual municipal census forms in the mail. Please fill out the census form and return it to the Town Clerk's office as soon as possible. If you have not received a census form, please contact my office at (508) 657-2830. Included with the census forms is a dog license application. If you do not have a dog, please recycle the form. If you do have a dog(s), kindly fill out the form and return it to the Town Clerk's office, along with proof of current rabies certification from your veterinarian. Both the census form and the dog application with rabies certificate may be returned via mail, in-person, or by placement in the blue drop box outside the front entrance of the Municipal Center. You may also apply for your dog license online by going to the Town website and clicking "Online Transactions". Once processed, dog licenses will be mailed to you. Please remember that 2022 dog licenses will expire on March 31, 2023. Application and payment for 2023 dog licenses are due by April 1st. In accordance with a new Town Bylaw, there is a one-month grace period before a late fee of \$25 per household will be assessed. Beginning in June, a one-time \$50 fine

will be levied, followed by referral to the magistrate of Milford District Court. So please apply for your dog license when you fill out your census to avoid any late charge or fine!

Nomination papers for our local Town Election will be available beginning February 13, 2023 and are due back on March 16th.

Offices to be elected are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Select Board (2) | Kelly Grant (Incumbent)
Donald Martinis (Incumbent) |
| Library Trustee (2) | Laura Howard (Incumbent)
Macala Lamour (Incumbent) |
| Planning Board (1) | William R. O'Connell (Incumbent) |
| School Committee (1) | Lori Colombo (Incumbent) |
| Housing Authority (TBD) | |

2023 TOWN ELECTION CALENDAR

- Nomination Papers Available at Town Clerk's Office
- Completed Nomination Papers Due Back for Certification
- Last Day to Withdraw
- Last Day to Register to Vote Prior to Town Election
- Town Election at Bellingham High School

- February 13, 2023
- March 16, 2023 – 5 p.m.
- April 1, 2023
- April 24, 2023 – 5 p.m.
- May 2, 2023

2023 TOWN MEETING CALENDAR

- Annual Spring Town Meeting
- Last Day to Register to Vote Prior to Spring Town Meeting
- Annual Fall Town Meeting
- Last Day to Register to Vote Prior to Fall Town Meeting

- May 24, 2023
- May 8, 2023 – 5 p.m.
- November 15, 2023
- November 1, 2023 – 5 p.m.

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2023 Library Museum & Attraction Pass Sponsorship Opportunities

The Friends of the Library purchase passes for the organizations listed below. If you or your company would like to sponsor a pass for one year, please contact Bernadette Rivard, Library Director at brivard@bellinghamma.org or 508-657-2776.

Sponsors will have their name mentioned on the library museum pass brochure, reservation website and 2 social media postings during the year. These sponsorships are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Location	Cost	Location	Cost
Davis Farmland (up to 2 companies at \$199.50 each)	\$399.00	Old Sturbridge Village (up to 2 companies at \$200 each)	400.00
Hall at Patriot Place <i>Sponsored by Mass Renewables</i>	\$100.00	New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill	\$150.00
Massachusetts State Parks <i>Sponsored by Mass Renewables</i>	\$120.00	Ecotarium (up to 2 companies at \$175 each)	350.00
Boston Museum of Science (up to 3 companies at \$200 each)	\$600.00	Southwicks Zoo <i>Sponsored by Bellingham Business Association</i>	\$1000.00
New England Aquarium (up to 3 companies at \$220 each)	\$660.00	Zoo New England	\$250.00

The Friends of the Library is an IRS designated 501(c3) charitable organization.

FUNDS

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dette Rivard, Director of the Bellingham Public Library, who accepted the donation from BBA President Kerry Pickering. “Having this one sponsored takes a huge burden off our Friends of the Lib for their fundraising. It makes it so we know we can provide this most popular pass. Last year, almost 150 people used the pass. It’s a really popular one.”

The Bellingham Public Library offers a number of other passes to patrons as well, including parking at Massachusetts State Parks, the New England Aquarium, the Botanical Gardens at Tower Hill, the Ecotarium in Worcester, Zoo New England, Museum of Science and the Hall at Patriot Place, to name a few.

Passes can be reserved in advance only by Bellingham residents and members of the Friends of the Library, with some passes limited to Bellingham residents only. For Bellingham residents, reservations may be made online, in person or by phone (provided their library cards have no fines over

\$10), and residents of other towns who are members of the Friends of the Library must call or visit in person to reserve passes. Non-residents who are not members of the Friends of the Bellingham Library may borrow passes on the day they wish to visit, provided the desired pass is available. To learn more about using the museum passes, visit <https://www.bellinghamma.org/library/services/pages/museum-passes>.

“We have a dozen or so other passes, and there are other BBA members who have sponsored some of them. That information is on our website,” says Rivard, adding, “It makes it that we can provide something that might have to be curtailed if we didn’t have the funds from the sponsors.”

If you or your company would like to sponsor a pass for one year, please contact Bernadette Rivard, Library Director at brivard@bellinghamma.org, or (508) 657-2776.

For more information about the Bellingham Business Association, email contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org, visit @BellinghamBusinessAssociation on Facebook, or visit

www.BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The warrant for the Annual Town Meeting set for Wednesday May 24, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. is now open. All articles to be placed on the warrant must be submitted to the Selectboard’s office no later than Friday February 24, 2023.

Please contact the Selectboard’s office at (508) 657-2800 with any questions.



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MAY 2, 2023



Dear Bellingham Resident,

My name is Stephen Goyette and I'm running for a seat on the Planning Board. I ask for your support and for your vote on May 2nd!

As a 30-year resident of Bellingham, I've seen many changes within our community. Those changes are often in the form of business and structures our planning board approves and, as a result, become long-term fixtures within our community that last generations.

As an active participant in trying to prevent a third large-scale warehouse from being built on Depot Street, I quickly became aware of how little weight our voices carry. Despite an abundance of verifiable information demonstrating how this warehouse would create unreasonable conditions and safety hazards, even beyond the unacceptable conditions that already exist, the current board approved the project. Equally disappointing was that one board member was absent during the vote after eight months of meetings surrounding this proposal.

While generating tax revenue is essential to every town's ability to function, it is not limited to turning a small town into a warehouse hub. Boston Magazine published a disappointing statistic; out of 153 surrounding communities, Bellingham was ranked last in home values. Such a result does not happen by accident, and it indicates how this town is managing its growth, a report card, so to speak, and we got an F.

After observing this concerning trend and after careful consideration, I have decided to run for a seat on the planning board. Although I don't have any political aspirations, I'm not one to back down from what I believe is right. My intent is not to infringe on the rights of landowners or developers but to consider the concerns of the forgotten residents who have already paid an unreasonable price in the name of development. The people of this town deserve nothing less than to have their voices heard.

If elected, the concerns of our town residents will matter. Safety, traffic, pollution, noise, community character, and home values will hold considerable weight when reviewing projects. No project should unreasonably burden town residents.

Your vote is needed on May 2nd if there is any hope of changing the status quo.

Your Neighbor,
Steve



Paid for by Candidate Stephen Goyette

Municipal Spotlight:

Active Year Ahead for Bellingham Historical Commission

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

The Bellingham Historical Commission is gearing up for a busy year.

The six-member group, which deserves lots of credit for the recent upgrades and revitalization of the Ernest A. Taft Jr. Historical Museum, has a variety of projects on its to-do list.

Always working to ensure that the town's history is preserved, the commission teamed up with the Bellingham Public Library and participated in the Mass. Memories Road Show. Residents were encouraged to provide community photos that had historical value.

"We received 167 photos, and they've been digitized," said Bernadette Rivard, Bellingham's Library Director who also serves as secretary of the historical commission. "The photos will soon be available for viewing on the Mass. Memories Road Show website (openarchives.umb.edu).

Another project involves the planned restoration of a 1930 Ford vehicle, Bellingham's first firetruck.

"Thanks to Matt and Tom Clark, the truck is in a heated warehouse at the Bellingham Industrial Park on William Way," said Rick Marcoux, chairman of the commission. "The goal is to restore the truck for display at town events, pa-



Bellingham's history comes alive inside the Ernest A. Taft Jr. Museum.

ing a sleigh from the Goldwaithe Brothers Grocery Store that was used to deliver groceries from its Pearl Street location from 1900 to 1920; and a display case of intriguing memorabilia of Bellingham history.

"Town Administrator Denis Fraine encouraged the commission to take advantage of the down time during the pandemic to renovate the building and reorganize the collection," Rivard said. "I'm delighted the museum's visibility has dramatically increased since the demolition of the Domino's pizza building. This will enable us to install signs to better inform the community of our hours and events."

Marcoux noted that the last time the interior of the building was painted most likely was in the 1950s. "I'm also pleased that we were able to install new lighting, air conditioning and ceiling fans," he said.

The museum, which is staffed by volunteers and tax-workoff employees, is open every Wednesday (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), the second and fourth Saturdays of the month (9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), the third Monday of the month (6-7 p.m.) and also by appointment. If there's inclement weather, residents can call the museum at (508) 966-5838 or check its Facebook page for possible closures.

Other commission members include vice chairman Steve Joanis, Franco Tocchi, Majorie Turner-Hollman, and Pam Johnson.

Marcoux put the commission's efforts in clear focus, saying: "My goal is to make Bellingham's history come to life and be available to all our residents."

rades, etc." Rivard noted that the commission currently is exploring options on how to fund restoration of the vehicle.

Two other activities already underway are quarterly meetings and the publication of *Crimpsville Comments*. "We've begun a quarterly Bellingham History Discussion Group that meets to discuss town history," Rivard said. "And we're continuing to publish *Crimpsville Comments*, a newsletter that offers a variety of topics focusing on Bellingham's history. "The next discussion group meeting will be in April and we're planning to print 2-4 issues of *Crimpsville Comments* this year."

Two future projects involve an event during the Memorial Day Parade weekend and participation in Bellingham Days, a fair that's held in August. "Stay tuned," Rivard and Marcoux said.

The museum, located opposite the Municipal Center, is now

must-see viewing since its renovation. The brick building is 93 years old, built in 1930 at a cost of \$10,000. The structure was Bellingham's Public Library from 1930 to 1989 before it became a museum. On May 22, 2011, it was dedicated and named for the late Ernest Taft, who served as chairman of the historical commission for 25 years.

The contents in the museum are grouped into six classifications. They include historical records (annual reports, yearbooks, *Crimpsville Comments*); military, civil defense and public safety history, including mannequins wearing the uniforms of Bellingham veterans; sports and recreation history (Silver Lake and Bellingham High sports); school and municipal history, including an 1891 bell from the Center School and an 1802 bench from Upper Town Hall; home and farm history, includ-



The Ernest A. Taft Jr. Museum was built in 1930 and was Bellingham's Public Library for 59 years.

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Jennifer DeLuca - Meet Our Agent from Bellingham

Jennifer DeLuca recently joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty in Medway & Medfield. Jennifer grew up in Massachusetts and has been a resident of Bellingham for nearly 20 years. She is an expert in knowing this area. Traveling the world and having had many different career paths, she welcomes adventures and challenges.

With integrity and a dedication to exceptional customer service, her commitment is to be a great agent who communicates and understands the changing market, pricing strategies



and new technologies. The announcement was made by Ellen Rao, Broker/Owner, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty's focus on the customer and its goal to provide the best products and services for its sales professionals are what make Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty the best fit for our clients.

About Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Page Realty is a full-service real estate company specializing in residential sales since 1963. The company has two offices in Medway and Medfield, and dominant market share in the MetroWest area. For more information, please visit www.bhhsPagerealty.com.

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BVT Announces First Trimester Commendation List

UPTON – Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) has released the Superintendent-Director's Commendation List for the first trimester of the 2022–2023 school year. To be named to the Commendation List, students must meet rigorous standards, such as maintaining a grade point average of 88 percent or above in each technical, related, and academic course for the trimester. To view the complete list, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/1tcommendationlist.

The following students from Bellingham, grouped by grade level and hometown, were named to the first trimester Commendation List:

SENIORS (Class of 2023)

Nicholas Cummings, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Hailey Davis, Construction Technology; Tyler Morin, HVAC&R; and Kaitlyn Mullen, Health Services.

JUNIORS (Class of 2024)

Ellen Franco, Information Technology; Sara Lewis, Engineering & Robotics; and Aiden Simpson, Information Technology.

SOPHOMORES (Class of 2025)

Isabella Brancato, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Abigail Noyes, Plumbing; and Kiele Sarnie, Construction Technology.

FRESHMEN (Class of 2026)

Madyson, Voss, Biotechnology; and Justin Walsh, Biotechnology

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Musicians Wanted!

Southeastern Massachusetts Community Concert Band Starts New Season

By JANE LEBAK

A fixture of the local music scene is reaching out to potential new members as it launches the 2023 season.

John Crowley says, “We are the Southeastern Massachusetts Community Concert Band. Since 1976, we’ve been very active, performing eight to ten concerts a year.”

In 2022, the SMCCB performed in Ashland, Medway, Franklin, Wrentham, Hopkinton, Bellingham, Millis, and Attleboro.



The band consists of woodwinds, reeds, brass, and percussion instruments.

“We’re all local musicians from the surrounding towns,” says Crowley, a percussionist. “Our members range in age from people in their twenties to people in their eighties. We have people who played in high school or college and then put the instrument away, and we have people on the other end who have been professional music educators for their career.”



Miss making music? Dust off that old trumpet or flute and come make music and friendships with the Southern Massachusetts Community Concert Band, now seeking new members.

Laura Logan plays tenor sax, and her husband Mitchell Schwartz plays trombone. She joined the band in 1990. Logan says, “This band is a wonderful, comfortable, safe, and welcoming place for musicians to come

together to create music. I’ll play there until I can’t play anymore.”

The band plays a wide variety of music. “Big band music, show tunes, patriotic music, a lot of popular music, even soundtracks from movies,” says Crowley. “Every concert in the summer starts with *The Star Spangled Banner* and ends with *The Stars and Stripes*.”

As a testimony to how much fun and community the band members have with one another, some of the band’s founding members are still participating. “It’s an enthusiastic group,” Crowley says. “We have members who’ve been in it from day one.”

Their conductor for the past ten years is Bruce Houston, who has directed bands in the Massachusetts public schools for the past thirty-five years. He plays trombone professionally himself and holds degrees from Syracuse University, Harvard University, and Southern Oregon University.

Crowley says of Houston’s conducting, “Every rehearsal, it’s like two hours of instruction. He’s familiar with everything.”

The band members are all volunteers. Crowley says, “We do it for the love of music.” Moreover, all the concerts are free to the public. “We’re hired a lot by the towns to play in their summer concert series. We play in the gazebos and town squares, and we also do a fair amount of playing in senior centers.” This past December, the band gave three holiday concerts.

Band member Julie Samia has been playing flute and piccolo with the SMCCB since 1988. Samia says, “The SMCCB is special to me, because it is a place where every musician is accepted regardless of musical ability. There is no anxiety-inducing audition process, and we don’t deny anyone based on full sections.

Members have a commitment to provide live, free, good-quality, wholesome entertainment at a time when so little of that exists anymore.”

Crowley encourages anyone who has a clarinet (or a trumpet, or a saxophone, or a flute...) aging in the closet to consider dusting it off and reviving their musical skills. “I don’t want anyone to shy away from it just because they haven’t played in twenty years. The bulk of us are people who played long ago and then decided they want to get back to it.”

Anyone on the fence about joining can call ahead and attend a rehearsal as a test run.

Crowley says, “I love music. I think our audiences appreciate hearing a large repertoire of familiar tunes. They’re out there, stomping their feet, and everybody knows the tunes. It’s a shared experience for us performing it and for the people listening to it.”

Logan adds, “You can tell that people really enjoy live music. At one concert last summer, I noticed a lot of chair dancing. I’m also the announcer, so when I got up to announce the next piece, I said—clearly and dramatically—‘The dance floor is open.’ And that’s all it took. Two women came up to dance. They didn’t even know each other. They started dancing, which encouraged other people to let loose and come up and dance. At the end of the concert, they’d made new friends. Music does wonderful things.”

Rehearsals take place on Monday nights at the Medway Community Church. For more information about performances or joining the band, call (508) 877-0635 or visit their website at <https://smcws.org>.



The Southern Massachusetts Community Concert Band meets on Monday nights at Medway Community Church.



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Secure Act 2: Electric Boogaloo?



Glenn Brown

Sometimes it's best to not have a sequel.

Still, Congress delivered us one with "Secure Act 2.0" in December.

The original Secure Act was released three years ago. It began with 417-3 House vote in May 2019, advanced by the Senate cramming into the 2020 budget and concluded with Congress cheerleading the delay of Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) by 18 months to age 72 and providing greater access to 401(k) for part-time employees.

Those are good things, but hidden in plain sight was the dismal plot - the death of 'stretch' IRA and creation of the 10-Year Rule, which included liquidating inherited non-spousal (children) Roth IRAs.

See Congress had wanted to speed up tax revenues. What better way than forcing a 25 year old, regardless of financial situation, to liquidate mom or dad's inherited IRA or Roth IRA by age 35 instead of during their retirement years.

How does this help secure retirement for future generations? Or benefit hardworking Americans who sacrificed, saved, planned and proactively paid taxes years, in some cases, decades sooner than needed?

So, with this precedent, how does their latest Secure Act 2.0 look?

In a word: better.

Here are some early awards:

Most Widespread Impact - RMDs from retirement accounts increase to age 73 from 72 beginning January 1, 2023. It will increase to age 75 in 2033. That said, just because you can delay doesn't mean you avoid

being required to take greater amounts later. In fact, it can accelerate and put some into higher tax brackets without planning.

Most Significant Benefit - Roth, Roth, and more Roth. These changes all appear to be good news for those seeking planning opportunities.

Creation of SEP Roth IRAs and SIMPLE Roth IRAs as well as employer contributions (aka 401(k) match) will be permitted to deposit matching and/or nonelective contributions to employees' designated Roth accounts. There is a caveat, the match would be included in the employee's income in the year of the contribution. Ditto for amounts deposited into SEP Roth IRAs and SIMPLE Roth IRAs. Still, great to have choice.

Surprising 2024 Newcomer - In 2024, "high wage earners" will be required to use Roth option for catch-up contributions to 401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) plans, but not for IRAs.

What's Congress's definition of a high wage earner here?

\$1,000,000?

\$400,000?

Nope, here it's \$145,000.

A caveat if you're self-employed individual (sole proprietors and partners) it is specific language of wages (which you don't earn), thus it appears can still make pre-tax catch-up contributions if income from self-employment is over \$145,000.

Future Star - After 15 years of a 529 plan being opened, unused assets can be rolled over to a Roth IRA for the beneficiary (child). Now, it is subject to annual Roth contribution limits and an aggregate lifetime limit of \$35,000. Still, this is a great idea, as you can help a young adult grow a Roth IRA, while they use funds for other savings or pay off liabilities.

Closing Credits - Secure Act 2.0 has dozens for nuances and benefits for student loans, emergency savings in DC plans, automatic enrollment, annuity options, qualified charitable distributions, solo 401Ks, surviving spouse benefits and more. Best to consult your Certified Financial Planner to learn more.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of

their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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Need for Fuel Assistance on the Rise

By DAVID DUNBAR

As the colder weather arrives, folks with low income – particularly seniors – are having trouble paying the oil, gas, and electric costs of heating their homes and apartments.

Sometimes, it comes down to a choice between heating and eating. There are government programs and local organizations that can help.

One of the most popular is the fuel assistance program offered by SMOC, the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, which is available in local communities including Bellingham, Hopedale, Medway, and Millis. Senior Centers in these and other area towns are intake sites where people can get help signing up. SMOC reports that in the fiscal year 2021, 195 clients were served in Bellingham at an average of about \$1,500 each; in Hopedale there were 68, Medway had 67, and Millis had 59.

Through SMOC's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), individuals and families

who qualify from 37 communities across the MetroWest can receive assistance with a portion of their home heating bill paid directly to their heating vendor. The heating season runs from November through April.

To be eligible, annual household income cannot exceed 60% of the Massachusetts estimated state median income. For example, a household of one person would have a maximum income of \$42,411. For two people, \$55,461; for three people, \$68,511; for four people, \$81,561. Benefits, which increased in December, range from \$800 to \$2,200. More information is available about fuel assistance at www.mass.gov

"The Millis Council on Aging (like many COAs) is an intake site for SMOC," explains Patty Kayo, Millis COA Director. "We gather the necessary documentation for the application and send it to SMOC. We ensure that the proper paperwork is submitted so there are no unnecessary delays in procedure. So far this fis-

cal year, we assisted 73 residents with recertifications or new applications for assistance."

"Each town deals with different area agencies," says Carole Mullen, the director of the Hopedale Senior Center. "SMOC is the agency for Hopedale. We have very robust activity regarding fuel assistance applications and re-certifications. Yes, SMOC is about three months behind from clients' date of applications. However, we can expedite 'emergency' situations."

"SMOC is extremely backed up this year," confirms Kayo. "There is a long wait for approval. SMOC's website is a great source of information and outlines their services clearly. I would suggest if someone needs help to go directly to their website, www.smoc.org."

Kim Cookson has been working at the Medway Senior Center for seven years and is seeing "greater demand now than ever before" for fuel assistance. She points out that

all prices are way up for "heat, rent, groceries and more."

"My office is aware of the backup in cases," reports State Representative Mike Soter. "We have been receiving many calls and emails regarding fuel assistance applications that have been in the queue. We are doing everything that we can to expedite applications for everyone that reaches out to our office. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the office at Michael.soter@mahouse.gov, Curtis.boucher@mahouse.gov, or at (508) 657-4688. We would be more than happy to help in any way we can."

"So far this year," explains SMOC's Amanda Foster, Division Director of Financial Assistance Programs, "we have processed about 5,000 applications and found about 2,000 eligible." Last year, SMOC processed about 3,700 applications.

"The high prices of fuel are driving demand," says Foster, "and we're working our hardest to meet the demand." If your

situation is an "emergency," then your application will be processed sooner. "Emergency" is defined by having less than 1/8 tank of oil, a "shut off notice," or an inoperable heating system according to Foster.

Across Massachusetts, SMOC reports serving 134,000 individuals and families in fiscal year 2022. Fifty-four percent were elderly (60 years of age or more).

Here are some other sources of fuel assistance:

- Good Neighbor Energy Fund by the Salvation Army. (508) 473-0786
- Financial Assistance by the Edith Stewart Chase Foundation. (508) 422-0109
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families. 800-482-2565
- Also check out local churches and Catholic Charities.
- You might also visit www.findhelp.org to explore additional sources.



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Community Together to Help a Local Family

By JENNIFER RUSSO

New Year's Eve is a usually time when we look forward to new beginnings with an optimistic view of the coming year. We assess our goals and think about what we may try to accomplish and bring more focus to what is important to us. For a local Bellingham family though, the evening resulted in a horrific house fire.

Rachael Barrasso and her two children were not home when the fire occurred just before midnight, but it resulted in a total loss of their home, all of their belongings, and their family pet. The fire was believed to have started through an electrical malfunction. Several local units were called to the scene and were able to contain the fire before it spread to other condo units.

It was important to Rachael to keep her children in the local area at their current school and near their friends, so the family is currently residing in a small apartment owned by her mother. Though it is cramped for the family, it is a better option than uprooting her family at such a sensitive time when they most need community support.

Speaking of which, learning the news of this event, our small town has united with an outpouring of support to help them in a number of ways, including donations and organizing fundraisers through Go Fund Me and the Greg Hill Foundation. Local businesses have been running fundraisers where proceeds go to the Barrasso family and there is an event planned this month to help raise additional money.

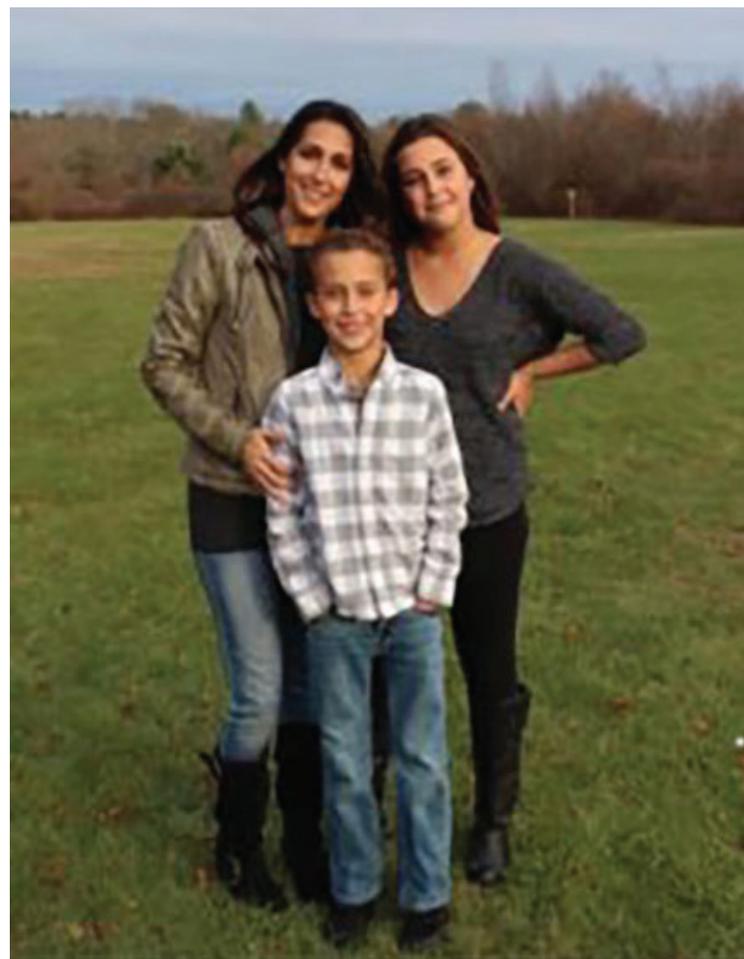
The Bellingham Bash for the Barrassos will be held on Saturday, February 11th beginning at 3 p.m. at the Bellingham Sportsman Club on Lake Street. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door and the event includes a DJ, live music with local band Bellinghammered, karaoke, food, raffles, and activities for children like giant Jenga and Yardzee. The community is urged to attend to make the event successful and help the family as much as possible.

Ways to help:

Attend the **Bellingham Bash for the Barrassos** on February 11th – Tickets can be purchased in advance using the QR code.

Donate on the Go Fund Me page at gofundme.com/f/barrasso-family-home-destroyed-in-fire

Donate on the Greg Hill Foundation fundraiser (which will be matched up to \$5,000) at thegreghillfoundation.org/donations/barrasso-family



Bellingham has rallied to support the Barrasso family after they lost their home, belongings and beloved pet in a New Year's Eve fire.

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Home Remedies for Simple Eye Problems

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

Many eye problems need an ophthalmologist's medical knowledge. But there are eye problems that you can treat safely at home, as long as they are simple. Here are a few problems that can respond to home treatment, with tried-and-true remedies.

Black eye

You can usually treat a black eye at home. But if there are more serious symptoms of black eye, see an ophthalmologist. These signs include: blurred/double vision; blood in the eye; or an inability to move the eye.

To reduce swelling and ease pain the first day, apply an ice pack to the eye for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, once every hour. If you don't have an ice pack, use a bag of frozen vegetables or ice cubes wrapped in cloth. The cloth protects your skin from freezing. Don't put a raw steak or other raw meat on your eye. Despite what you've seen on television and in the movies, there's no scientific basis for this. In fact,

the bacteria in raw meat poses a high risk of infection.

Pink eye (also known as conjunctivitis)

A virus causes most cases of pink eye. These cases don't respond to antibiotics. Viral conjunctivitis will disappear on its own. Have your ophthalmologist diagnose your particular case. Reduce the discomfort of conjunctivitis by applying cool compresses to the eye.

If your conjunctivitis is bacterial, follow your treatment plan. This usually involves antibiotic eye drops. In either case, you should take steps to reduce the chance of passing the problem on to someone else. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious. Follow these tips to prevent the spread: Don't share towels, handkerchiefs or cosmetics. Change pillowcases frequently. Wash your hands often.

Eye allergy and seasonal allergy

Just as you can get nasal allergies, you can get eye allergies



that leave your eye red, itchy and teary. Limiting your exposure to the source of your allergy — whether it's pollen, pets or mold — can help relieve symptoms. If you can't remove the source entirely, there are ways to reduce its effect with eye allergy treatments.

If pollen bothers you: Don't use a window fan, which can draw pollen into your house. Wear sunglasses when you go outside.

If dust is the problem: Use allergen-reducing covers for your

bed. Use artificial tears, which temporarily wash allergens from your eyes. Use over-the-counter anti-allergy eye drops to lessen the symptoms.

Stye (also called hordeolum)

While a stye may look nasty, it's usually harmless and goes away within a week. You can treat it at home by running a washcloth under warm water, wringing it out and placing it over your closed eye. When the washcloth cools, repeat the process several times, up to four times a day for at least a week. The heat will help unblock the pores in your eyelash area. Don't wear eye makeup or your contact lenses while you have a stye. And don't pop or squeeze the stye. Doing so can spread infection to surrounding areas of your eye. Shampooing with tea tree shampoo can also help.

Eye strain

Many people have symptoms of eye strain, because of long hours of computer use, reading and driving every day. In most cases, there are simple things you can do at home, work, and while driving to ease eye strain symptoms. These include: resting your eyes, using artificial tears, wearing computer glasses, and wearing sunglasses.

Bags under the Eyes

What we often call "bags under our eyes" is actually sagging skin under the eyes. It is a common complaint, and one that often accompanies the aging process. As we grow older, tissues around the eye gradually weaken and sag. This loss of skin tone allows fat to shift forward into the

lower eyelids, making them look puffy and swollen. Fluid can also pool in this area and contribute to the puffy appearance.

Certain home remedies can help lessen or eliminate the puffiness of under-eye bags and the appearance of shadows. Wet a clean washcloth with cool water. Place the damp washcloth around your eyes for a few minutes, applying very gentle pressure. Do this while sitting upright. Make sure you get enough sleep. Sleep with your head raised slightly. Try to avoid drinking fluids before bed, and limit salt in your diet. That can help reduce fluid retention overnight that can lead to bags under your eyes. Quit smoking. Try using makeup concealer to cover shadows under your eyes.

Use Common Sense for Your Eye Health

With any of these conditions, see your ophthalmologist right away if the symptoms worsen or don't go away, or if your vision is affected.

Some eye problems you should never treat on your own.

If you experience any of these, you should seek medical attention right away: Blurriness. Double vision. Pain in your eye. Serious eye injuries.

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B.H.S. Athletic Hall of Fame Update

The Bellingham Athletic Booster Club “B.A.B.C.,” the driving force behind the Athletic Hall of Fame, is accepting nominations for the 4th class of inductees to join a Who’s Who list of Blackhawk success stories that dates back more than eight decades.

The B.A.B.C. was formed in 2016 and quickly began planning for the 1st induction class in 2018, followed by inductions in 2019 and 2021 and are currently on a planned every two-year cycle. This Class of 2023 induction will occur on Saturday, November 18 at the Bellingham Coachmen’s Lodge.

Since the 2019 induction, the Committee has continued to accept nominations, gather press clippings, and research yearbooks dating back to the early 1940’s. A growing list of potential inductees has been started but we are in need of more nominations so that we can “have the story” that sets the individual, team, coach, or contributor apart from all other Blackhawks.

Included in this month’s Bulletin is the most important piece of information; a nomination form and opportunity to support and/or sponsor the Hall of Fame and the Bellingham Athletic Booster Club.

This year’s Hall of Fame timetable includes the acceptance of nominations thru March 31 with voting planned for May and announcement of inductees in the June/July edition of the Bellingham Bulletin. Tickets for the event will be available beginning in June.

Notes from the Athletic Director’s desk ...

It’s been an eventful year-to-date for the Blackhawks. The Fall Season resulted in MIAA tournament appearances for our

cheer, football, boys’ soccer, and girls’ volleyball programs.

If you are interested in catching some Winter action, game schedules are available at arbitratorlive.com. Basketball games are regularly played on Tuesdays and Fridays, wrestling and hockey competes on most Wednesdays and Fridays, while cheer and indoor track have variable schedules.

Registration for spring sports (baseball, B/G lacrosse, softball, Middle & High School B/G Track & Field, and boys’ volleyball) is open now on familyid.com. The high school season begins March 20th and middle school March 27th. An instructional golf program will be held beginning in late April with 8 slots available on a first-come basis.

Finally, because we are often asked, here are the current websites for most of our youth sports programs:

- **Baseball**
bellinghamyouthbaseball.com
- **Basketball**
bellinghamhoops.org
- **Cheer**
bellinghamayfc.com
- **Field Hky**
ladyhawkfieldhockey.com
- **Football**
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If you still have questions, please reach out to the athletic department by emailing mconnor@bpsdk12.org.

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Bellingham Cultural Council Seeks Members

The Bellingham Cultural Council is seeking members to serve on a voluntary basis. Interested individuals should fill out the attached application and send it to hallie@bellinghamma.org. For more information on the council please visit: <https://www.bellinghamma.org/cultural-council>



Good Deeds: History Comes Alive

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O’Donnell, in collaboration with QATV, announced the debut of the “History Comes Alive” project.

This project will feature historic area landmarks, with the aim of showcasing historic buildings and places from each town in Norfolk County.

The Mark Crosby-directed, succinct informative videos will provide viewers with an immersive experience by utilizing a wide range of historical knowledge, including some provided by the registry of deeds.

The first historic building to be featured as part of the project is Norwood Town Hall. Norwood, one of the 28 communities in Norfolk County, has been celebrating its 150th anniversary as a town. You can watch the video here: <https://www.qatv.org/?modal=345,episode,220270>.

To learn more about these and other Registry of Deeds events and initiatives, “like” us on Facebook at facebook.com/norfolkdeeds. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at [@norfolkdeeds](https://twitter.com/norfolkdeeds).

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, located at 649 High St., Dedham, is the principal office for real property in Norfolk County. All land record research information can be found on the Registry’s website, www.norfolkdeeds.org. Residents in need of assistance can contact the Registry of Deeds Customer Service Center at (781) 461-6101 or email us at registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

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Coming Up at the Bellingham Senior Center

The Bellingham Senior Center is located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Reach them at (508) 966-0398 or visit www.bellinghamma.org

SENIOR DRIVE-BY LUNCH PROGRAM has been discontinued until March/April depending on the weather.

VALENTINE PARTY: Tuesday, February 14 the COA & BESG will host a joint Valentine party for seniors at 12 p.m. and all will enjoy delicious soup, sandwiches, dessert, and beverages. \$7 per person. Please call the Center and reserve your seat!

WE NEED HELP: We have many seniors calling the Center asking for help with shoveling/plowing. This is a definite need, and we don't know how to help except to ask you to check on your neighbors. If they aren't cleared out after a snowfall perhaps you or someone you know could help them and clear a path so they can get out of the house and at least get the mail as many seniors get medications via mail. Thank you in advance for any help you can give!

ACCEPTING DONATIONS: If you are doing any winter reorganizing and cleaning out of basements we are accepting donations at the Senior Center! We DO NOT accept shoes, clothing, furniture and electrical appliances!

COA BOARD MEETING will be Tuesday, February 14 at 11 a.m.

FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH: First of four quarterly presentations on Friday, February 24 at 1 p.m. Topics will include basic genealogical forms, where to re-search, tracking your research, and questions to ask living relatives. Presenter is Seema-Jayne Kenney who started exploring family history while in high school.

NEW COVID-19 TREATMENT HOT-LINE: Tested positive for COVID-19? Telehealth is a quick and free way to see if you're eligible for COVID-19 treatment. You can access telehealth services by calling (833) 273-6330 or by completing an online assessment at mass.gov/CovidTelehealth. Clinicians are available every day

from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST. This service is not for medical emergencies or those who have severe chest pain or shortness of breath.

KINKY BOOTS: Broadway's Huge-Hearted, Tony Award-Winning Best Musical! Join us Friday, February 10, at noon and please call ahead.

ARM CHAIR TRAVEL: The Mexico City tour will be on Wednesday, February 15, at 10 a.m. Watch it on a big screen TV at the Senior Center or join the tour from home via Zoom. And thanks to a generous grant from the Mass. Council on Aging, it's free.

And then, on Friday, February 17, at 11 a.m., you can participate in a workshop about Mexican cooking with guidance from a professional chef.

Sign up by contacting the Senior Center at (508) 966-0398. Or check out <https://joinpro.live/bellingham>

LiveARTS Presents ...

*A Young Artist Showcase,
March 12, 3 p.m.*

LiveARTS presents a *Young Artist Showcase*, featuring students of Victor Rosenbaum, and members of the Schubert Club and the Chaminade Clubs of Attleboro and Providence, RI. The performance takes place at First Universalist Society of Franklin, 262 Chestnut St. Visit www.liveartsma.org for information.

Rep. Soter Files Legislation to Protect Gov't Devices from Foreign Hackers

On January 11th, Rep. Michael Soter (R), filed HD260 - An Act relative to protecting the residents of the Commonwealth.

This legislation closely mirrors bipartisan Federal legislation that was recently passed by the U.S. Congress banning government employees from using Tik Tok on government devices. The Federal legislation, included in the recent spending bill, was passed in the Senate and the House in a bipartisan vote. HD260 mirrors language from Executive Orders from the States of New Hampshire, Utah, Virginia, and North

Dakota. This legislation includes an emergency preamble for the purpose of making sure the Commonwealth is in line with the Federal Government.

HD260 bans the use of Tik Tok and other social media apps controlled by foreign adversaries on all commonwealth, county, and municipal devices. Rep. Soter feels this is common sense, bipartisan legislation that will ensure that our government is taking every step to ensure the privacy and safety of the residents of the Commonwealth.

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BWOT Celebrates Its 35th Year of Service to Bellingham

The Bellingham Women of Today had a great 2022 with many activities for the community.

In spring, we made 70 gift bags of goodies for the elderly housebound served by the Meals-on-Wheels program, 41 letters from the Easter bunny were mailed and members were secret Easter bunnies, hiding gift-filled eggs for local families' children to find. The Easter Bunny made an appearance with muffins, photos and activities.

During the Winter months, 40 letters from Santa were sent and 70 candy treats delivered to housebound seniors. A holiday fundraiser with businesses in town provided a large donation to the St Blaise Adopt-A-Family program for local families in need, and excited children visited Santa and enjoyed muffins, photos and craft activities.

Every year, the BWOT awards two scholarships and furthers the education of Bellingham High School seniors who show they are active in community service, the

Joanne Eisner scholarship and the BWOT scholarship.

Proceeds from BWOT fundraisers and activities are returned to the community in the way of donations to local groups and those suffering loss due to damaging fires.

The group has fun activities for members during the year such as Girl's Night Out, Holiday party, Bowling, Ice Cream Social, Craft Nights, Shop Till you Drop at Christmas Tree Store, Year End Banquet and more.

We would like you to join us as we continue to serve our community! We are open to men and women 18 years or older. We meet September through June on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Police Department conference room on Blackstone Street.

The BWOT is a nonprofit civic organization and has served Bellingham and surrounding communities for over 35 years. We support Domestic Violence Awareness and Well-



ness and Personal Development programming areas. The group is one of six Massachusetts chapters of the United States Women of Today. This organization was founded in 1985 by former members of United States Jaycees Women.

The United States Women of Today has more than 2,000 members in 13 states in America and Limassol, Cypress is our international chapter. See our Facebook page for more details or email bwotmaevents@hotmail.com.

Bellingham Business Association 2023 Calendar

Plan your upcoming year of participation in the Bellingham Business Association! Following is a tentative schedule of the organization's events this year.

- February 8 – Business Meeting
- March 8 – Membership Drive Lunch

- April 12 – State of the Town
- May 10 – State of the State
- June 7 – Awards
- August – TBA
- September 11 – Golf Tournament

For more information, email contact@BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org, visit [@BellinghamBusinessAssociation](https://www.BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org) on Facebook, or visit www.BellinghamBusinessAssociation.org.

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DCR to Commence Blackstone Section of Southern New England Trunkline Trail in Spring 2023

The Baker-Polito administration announced in early January that the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will break ground on the Blackstone section of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) in Spring 2023, which is estimated to take approximately three years to complete. The \$11.3 million project runs from the Saint Paul Street Bridge in the Town of Blackstone to the Massachusetts-Rhode Island state border and is the final half-mile of an approximately 4.2-mile

section of DCR's Blackstone River Greenway. Additionally, this section of the greenway is critical for the connection to Rhode Island's Blackstone River Bikeway and also provides a regional connection to Douglas, Mass., and the State of Connecticut through the SNETT.

"Since taking office, the Baker-Polito Administration has worked diligently to greatly expand the Commonwealth's vast network of trails, which offer incredible economic, health, and transportation benefits, and access to the natural world that

surrounds us," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Beth Card. "This Blackstone section is a vital part of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail that will not only connect communities, but two states together, enabling stronger bonds and better opportunities to explore nature."

The SNETT is a recreational trail, owned and managed by DCR, along a former railroad corridor that runs approximately 22 miles from the Franklin State Forest in the Town of Franklin to the Douglas State Forest in the Town of Douglas. The SNETT passes through the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Millville, and Uxbridge and is one of the longest rail-trails in southern Massachusetts. Currently, most of the trail is gravel surface and is used for various recreational and transportation purposes. Additionally, a portion of the SNETT, including the section to be built in the Town of Blackstone, is part of the Blackstone River Greenway, an envisioned 50-mile greenway with a paved shared-use path connect-

ing Providence, Rhode Island, and Worcester, Massachusetts.

"The Department of Conservation and Recreation is excited to commence work on the Blackstone section of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail this spring," said DCR Commissioner Doug Rice. "The commitment by the Baker-Polito Administration to complete this section provides many benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors for years to come."

The Blackstone project includes a single-span railroad viaduct and a seven-span railroad viaduct on which the trail will be constructed. Both of these viaducts that will be rehabilitated as part of the project are important historic structures and cultural resources. Additionally, funding for the project is through the DCR Major Trails Capital Program.

"I am grateful for the Baker-Polito administration and DCR's investment in the Blackstone Valley," said State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). "This trail is a focal point for tourism in our area for those that love the out-

doors, and this improvement will build upon that experience. By finalizing the connection between Blackstone and the MA-RI border, we will be opening the door for many outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy these trails in the Blackstone Valley."

"I am excited to see work commence on the Blackstone section of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail," said State Representative Michael J. Soter (R-Worcester). "I applaud DCR and the Baker Polito Administration for their work and commitment to bring towns of Southern New England."

In 2018, DCR completed the 3.7-mile section from 146A in the Town of Uxbridge through the Town of Millville to the Saint Paul Street Bridge in Blackstone, MA, and in 2019, DCR completed the Canal Street Bridge. Rhode Island has also completed the bridge across the Blackstone River that connects to the Massachusetts border. Significantly, this project will complete the final link to the Massachusetts/Rhode Island border within a 23-mile intrastate greenway.



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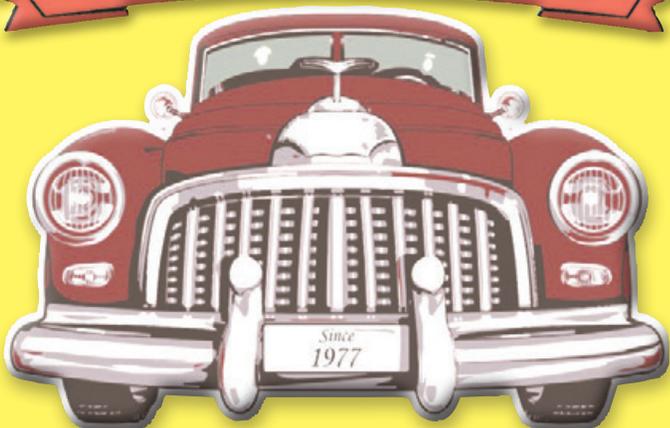
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Bellingham Public Library News & Events for February

For updates to library programs and services, please see www.bellinghamlibrary.org.

Winter Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday & Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Closed February 20th for Presidents' Day

Welcome Miss Laura!

The Library Board of Trustees, Library Director and Staff are pleased to introduce to the Bellingham Community our new Youth Services Librarian, Laura Brillant-Giangrande. Laura was the Children's Librarian at the Plainville Public Library for the past 6 years. She has also taught preschool at various locations. She has an AS in Early Childhood Education from Quincy College, and a BA in History and Elementary Education from Bridgewater State University. She is a DESE licensed teacher and an ECE certified preschool teacher.

The library will be hosting a "Meet Miss Laura" event on Saturday, February 4th from 10-11 a.m. in the Children's Room at the library. Stop by and introduce yourself!

Special Programs

Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group - February Topics:

- Create a Marketing Plan & Marketing Brief, Wednesday, February 1st, from 9:30 am to 11:30 am or Wednesday, February 8th from 6-8 p.m.
- Applications, Cover Letters & Negotiation - Wednesday, February 15th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or Wednesday, February 22nd from 6-8 p.m.

This program will continue through June with two new topics each month.

The Massachusetts Library Collaborative 50+ Job Seekers Group meets on the above days/times, via Zoom. If you are unemployed and actively looking, underemployed, seeking a new career director, re-entering the job market after a long employment gap, or recently retired and looking for your "Encore Career", this networking group program is perfect for you! Remember, 85% of jobs are found through networking!

Join us in a professional forum for networking with peers in a safe and comfortable environment conducive to developing new relationships and developing skills and strategies to help in your career transition.

Meetings are facilitated by Deborah Hope, MBA, PCIC, an experienced executive career coach. Deborah is a former Fortune 500 executive, investment banker and entrepreneur. She transitioned to executive coaching over 12 years ago.

To register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom. This group is sponsored by more than 60 Massachusetts public libraries.

Open for Business - Finding the Right Partners for Your New or Growing Business

Monday, February 13th at 6:30 p.m.

The Bellingham Library has been awarded a grant to assist Bellingham area businesses with meeting the challenges of the 21st century by offering resources, courses, and business counseling from experts on the topics the business community identifies as important to their success.

Join our panel of experts! We will have an accountant/tax professional, business attorney, insurance agent and banker to discuss why businesses of all sizes need these professionals and what these professionals can do to help your business.

Snow date February 27th.

This program is made possible by a federal Institute of Museum and Library Services grant through the Library Services & Technology Act. The grant is administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Bellingham Skein Artists Resume Meeting at the Library!

This group of knitters, crocheters and other skein artists met at the library before the pandemic. They will resume meeting in 2023 in the Teen Room of the library on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and all levels, beginners included, are welcome to join. Don't have knitting or crochet needles? Did you know the library has a set in our library of things? You can borrow them to try before investing in your own!

Yoga - The library is hosting Tuesday morning and Thursday

evening yoga classes. Check the library calendar for details and to register. Space is limited so registration is required.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Saturday, February 4th from 9 am to 2 p.m. Register at redcross-blood.org

Friends of the Library Book Sale - Wednesday, February 22nd through Saturday, February 25th

Wednesdays sale is from 4-7 p.m. and for Members of the Friends of the Library Only. Join at the door for only \$10! Thursday & Friday 1-6 p.m., Saturday 9-2 p.m.

Updated Ongoing Children's Program Schedule

Next month Miss Laura's programs will be integrated into the library schedule. In the meantime, the library will offer the following programs for children up to age 12.

Sensory Story Time with Miss Melissa - Mondays & Wednesdays at 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.

Similar to a traditional story time, with movement breaks and supports built in. For children ages 2-5 of all abilities. The program will be structured through 11:15, but remain open until 11:45 for those needing extra time or wishing for open play time. Registration is limited, so register early!

Magic: The Gathering Club - Mondays at 2:30 p.m.

For grades 4-8 each Monday after school from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Discover the original collectible card game in this free program. Please sign up for each meeting you plan on attending!

Ring a Ding - Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.

For ages 0-5. Songs, a story, music, instruments, and beach balls = a lot of noisy fun! Join us! No registration required. PLEASE NOTE: The Ring a Ding schedule will change in March! There is no Ring a Ding during school vacation week.

Baby Time - Fridays at 11:15 a.m.

For children under 2, older siblings welcome. Songs, stories, and play/discussion time for you and your baby/toddler. Drop in! There is no program during school vacation week.

After School Programs

Our After School Programs are ongoing! We have two programs for kids in grades 4 and up. Both programs are Monday through Friday. Even though the library closes at 3 p.m. on Fridays, the Community Room will be open on Fridays after school for Fun Fridays!! Miss Amanda and Miss Diane will stay until 5 p.m. at the latest.

- After School Kids (ASK) - for grades 4-6. When school is in session, ASK meets Monday-Thursday from 2:30-4:45 p.m. Registration is required for this program, so pick up a registration form during library hours or after school. Questions? Contact Diane Nelson, dnelson@cw-mars.org. Parents/caregivers

of all registrants are signed up for our Constant Contact Newsletter.

- Teen Room Activities - for grades 7-12. When school is in session, Teen Room Activities are available Monday-Thursday from 2 -4:45 p.m. There is no registration needed to attend this program. Questions? Contact Amanda Maclure, amaclure@cw-mars.org.

Other Adult Programs

Additional details of these programs are available on the library calendar (<https://bit.ly/3xMECCt>)

- Book Club generally meets on the first Monday of the month. Email Reference Librarian Cecily Christensen at cchrister@cw-mars.org for details.
- Friends of the Library generally meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Email library@bellinghamlibrary.org for details.
- The Library Board of Trustees generally meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Email library@bellinghamlibrary.org for details.
- Adult Writing Group will now meet at the Bellingham Historical Museum on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Email marjorie@marjorieturner.com for details.

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BFCCPS Students Participate in Adaptive "Volt Hockey"

Students in Grades six through eight at the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School had the chance to participate in an adaptive sport called Volt Hockey in December.

"Volt Hockey, played in power wheelchairs in Europe and Canada, came for the first time to the United States with chairs to Boston on November 8, 2021. There are very few sports that allow individuals with disabilities with both upper and lower body mobility impairments to compete. Volt Hockey, being brought by the nonprofit Boston Self Help Center, is expected to excite and encourage individuals with disabilities to play this indoor, 4 on 4, street hockey like game. Expectations are high that this will then spread across New England and the United States as did a similar sport that the nonprofit sponsors, power wheelchair soccer." (source: <https://bostonselfhelpcenter.org/adaptive-sports>)

The opportunity was coordinated by Helena and Helge Liedtke, parents of two BFCCPS students and founders of SPace2Thrive, (www.space2thrive.org) well as Christopher Heater the Director of Co-Curricular Education and the Physical Education Coaches Patrick Anderson, Julie Bradley and Marjorie Burke. Equipment was donated for the event courtesy of the Boston Self Help Center ([https://boston-](https://bostonselfhelpcenter.org)

[selfhelpcenter.org](https://bostonselfhelpcenter.org)) and Boston Whiplash (<https://linktree/bostonvolthockey>) team.

This activity was arranged to help all students feel included, most especially BFCCPS' own Vivienne Liedtke, a member of the BFCCPS Grade 8 class who shares, "I love Volt Hockey because I am free to be myself and I feel like I can actually do something good as an equal team member."



The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School is an inclusive, vibrant learning community where integrity, knowledge and resourcefulness define our students and empower them to serve the greater community with confidence. As part of our school's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) and in line with our school's pillar of character education, we were thrilled to offer this opportunity to our students as a demonstration of the virtues of both justice and fortitude.

You can learn more about SPace2Thrive and their mission

to create spaces where children with and without disabilities and their families can connect and engage in a way that creates an environment of compassion and equality for everyone to thrive, learn from each other and grow beyond limitations.

(source: <http://www.space2thrive.org/mission>)

About the Benjamin Franklin Charter School

For more information about the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, visit www.bfccps.org.

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Circle of Friends Welcomes Tracy Grammer February 25th

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is continuing its 33rd season in Franklin with three concerts this winter/spring.

February 25 Tracy Grammer with special guest Hana Zara

April 1 SheGrooves - Boston's premiere female contemporary band featuring Franklin's own Kaye Kelly.

April 29 John Gorka

Tracy Grammer returns to the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse stage on Saturday, Feb 25th at 8 p.m. She is a nationally touring multi-instrumentalist and singer who has accompanied and opened for Joan Baez and recorded with Mary Chapin Carpenter. Grammer has become one of folk music's most beloved artists. Renowned for her springwater-clear alto, perfectly intoned violin, and guitar playing that is by turns percussive and delicate, Grammer is also a masterful storyteller with an ease



and charisma on stage as well as a riotous sense of humor. <http://tracygrammer.com/>

"One of the finest singers and musicians anywhere in folkdom." - *Boston Globe*

"A brilliant artist" - Joan Baez

The Circle of Friends Coffeehouse is a non-profit organization affiliated with Franklin's First Universalist Society. Concerts are held in the Society's Meetinghouse located at 262 Chestnut St. Please visit <http://www.circlefolk.org/> for tickets and more information.

US Department of Labor 'Star' Designation Recognizes Bellingham and Blackstone Power Generation LLC

Participant:

Blackstone Power Generation LLC, Blackstone, Massachusetts

Bellingham Power Generation LLC, Bellingham, Massachusetts

Description:

Blackstone Power Generation LLC and Bellingham Power Generation LLC, are operated by Luminant, a subsidiary of Vistra Corp., a Texas-based retail electricity and power generation company. Each natural gas power plant employs about 20 workers and generates up to 550 mega-watts of electricity which is supplied to the New England power grid.

Duration:

OSHA announced these new Star designations following on site evaluations in May 2022 by a team of OSHA safety and health experts. Star site designation is the highest level of recognition the agency's Voluntary Protection Program offers.

Background:

OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs recognize and promote effective worksite-based safety and health management systems. In VPP, management, labor and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented comprehensive safety and health management systems. VPP approval is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have created exemplary worksite safety and health management systems.

Quote:

"The safety and health management systems at these two plants meet the high standards expected of VPP Star participants," said OSHA Regional Administrator Galen Blanton in Boston. "Leadership at each site supports active and meaningful employee involvement. Each site focuses on hazard recognition and protection of workers from routine operations and tasks, especially those related to electrical hazards."

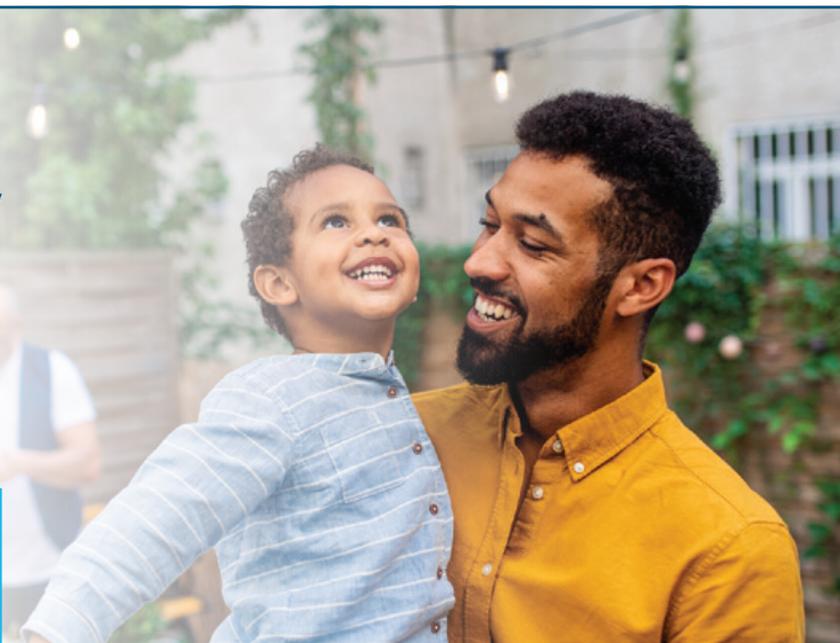
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Join Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School for *The Lightning Thief*, *The Percy Jackson Musical* March 3&4

The Fine and Performing Arts Department at the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School is pleased to announce upcoming performances of *"The Lightning Thief, The Percy Jackson Musical"* to be held in the school's Learning Commons at 500 Financial Park in Franklin.

Performances will be held on Friday, March 3rd from 7–9:30 p.m. and Saturday, March 4th from 2–4:30 p.m. and March 4th from 7-9:30 p.m. The public is invited and welcomed to attend the show! Tickets are priced at \$17 for adults and \$13 senior citizens and students. Tickets are available online at www.bfccps.org.

"As the half-blood son of a Greek god, Percy Jackson has newly-discovered powers he can't control, a destiny he doesn't want, and a mythology textbook's worth of monsters on his trail. When Zeus's master lightning bolt is stolen and Percy becomes the prime suspect, he has to find and return the bolt to prove his innocence and prevent a war between the gods. But to succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the thief. He must travel to the Underworld and back; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and come to terms with the father who aban-

doned him. Adapted from the best-selling book *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan and featuring a thrilling original rock score, *'The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical'* is an action-packed mythical adventure "worthy of the gods" (Time Out New York).

The production is under the direction of BFCPS's Fine and Performing Arts Director Mr. Christopher Heater with a cast comprised of 32 students in grades Six through Eight. The cast is supported by a live orchestra and a dedicated 23-member backstage student crew.

The Benjamin Franklin Clas-



sical Charter Public School has been in operation since 1995 and provides a well-rounded, rigorous academic program designed to

educate the whole child. BFC-CPS's educational philosophy, which is centered around strong core academic subjects, as well as yearlong courses in art, music, languages, technology, and physical education, integrated character education and community service, and strong parent partnerships, has led to local, state and national recognition.

If you'd like to learn more about the educational mission of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School please contact the school's Marketing Coordinator, Joanne Basile, at jbasile@bfccps.org or (508) 541-3434 x140.

Record Number of S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE Fire Safety Grants Awarded in FY 2023

The Baker-Polito Administration announced last month that 266 municipal fire departments will receive \$1.9 million in grants to fund fire and life safety education for children and older adults, setting a new record for the Student Awareness of Fire

Education (S.A.F.E.) and Senior SAFE programs. The previous record of 253 communities was set in FY 2018. Bellingham Fire Department, for example, will receive S.A.F.E. grant of \$4381 and a Senior SAFE grant of \$2,277. Franklin Fire Department will re-

ceive a \$5,481 S.A.F.E. grant and a Senior SAFE grant of \$2,477.

"For more than 25 years, the S.A.F.E. grant program has provided hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts students with fire and life safety lessons that last a lifetime," said former Governor

Charlie Baker. "We are glad that this year's awards will support consistent, statewide, professional safety education in a record number of communities."

The average number of children who die in fires annually has dropped by nearly 80% since the S.A.F.E. program began in FY 1996, and Massachusetts recently went nearly three years without losing a child to fire. The Senior SAFE program was launched in FY 2014, funding fire safety education for another vulnerable population – seniors, who face a disproportionate risk of dying in a fire at home.

"The Senior SAFE grants support home visits, smoke and CO alarm installations, and fire safety presentations delivered by firefighters in partnership with service providers," said former Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. "This valuable program gives older adults the tools, knowledge, and strategies to stay safe and independent at home."

This year's awards will provide \$1,103,488 in S.A.F.E. funding for 262 fire departments; \$562,194 in Senior SAFE funding for 265 fire departments; and \$252,783 for regional trailer props used by multiple fire departments to teach and demonstrate fire safety skills. Every department that applied for a grant received

funding.

"The S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE grants represent a smart investment in fire safety," said Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrence M. Reidy. "Youngsters and older adults are historically at greater risk in house fires, but that risk can be reduced through the targeted outreach, education, and awareness programs like these."

"The S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE programs bring trained firefighter-educators together with children and older adults to deliver age-appropriate fire and life safety lessons," said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey. "Fire service programs like these are part of the reason Massachusetts is one of the most fire-safe states in the nation, and I'm very glad that more communities than ever applied for this year's grants."

The S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE grant programs are funded through legislative earmarks to the Executive Office of the Public Safety & Security, and they are administered by the Department of Fire Services. A full list of recipient departments and their awards is attached. For more fire service grant opportunities, visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-for-fire-departments>.

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December 2022 Real Estate Activity in Norfolk County

Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell reported that Norfolk County recordings for the month of December 2022 indicate a continued decrease in overall real estate activity, with significant drops in mortgage activity and the average property sale price as compared to the December 2021 numbers.

In December, there were 9,429 documents recorded at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, a 37% decrease from December 2021 and a slight increase of 5% from November 2022.

"The real estate market is feeling the effects of inflation and steadily rising interest rates, which is limiting how much money customers can save," said O'Donnell. "The total number of documents is much lower in December 2022 than it was in December 2021, but the change from last month is less pronounced. The number of recorded deeds, which is one measure of document volume, shows a drop in real estate sales from the previous year."

The number of deeds for December 2022, which reflect real estate sales and transfers, both commercial and residential was 1,273, a decrease of 31% from December 2021 and an increase of 5% from the previous month of November 2022.

Sale prices for December appear to have dropped significantly compared to December 2021. The average sale price in December was 936,804, a 38% decrease from December 2021 and a 4% decrease from November 2022. The total dollar volume of commercial and residential sales is down, decreasing 59% from one year ago and decreasing 2% from last month.

"With interest rates approaching and exceeding 7%, consumers appear to be less inclined to borrow, and the decline in average sales prices suggests sellers are lowering pricing to compensate," noted O'Donnell. "According to the data we have at the Registry, we are recording significantly fewer mortgages than in December 2021."

Overall lending activity showed a continued downward trend for the month of December. A total of 1,383 mortgages were recorded this month, 53% less than a year ago at the same time, but up 2% from last month.

"The increasing cost of living and rising interest rates that the country is currently experiencing have an effect on the local real estate market," noted O'Donnell. "The number of pending foreclosures in Norfolk County is a continuing source of concern."

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has been closely monitoring the foreclosure market. In December 2022, there were 4 foreclosure deeds recorded as a result of mortgage foreclosures taking place in Norfolk County, whereas in December of 2021 there were 7 recorded. However, in December of 2022, there were 40 notices to foreclose, the first step in the foreclosure process, significantly more than the 19 recorded in December of 2021.

"The substantial increase in the number of these notices is troubling. It suggests that more of our neighbors may have financial difficulties in the future," said O'Donnell. "We will continue to monitor these figures."

For the past several years, the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds has partnered with Quincy Community Action Programs (617-479-8181 x376) and NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (508-587-0950) to help anyone facing challenges paying their mortgage. Another option for homeowners is to contact the Massachusetts Attorney General's Consumer Advocacy and Response Division (CARD) at (617) 727-8400.

To learn more about these and other Registry of Deeds events and initiatives, "like" us on Facebook at facebook.com/norfolkdeeds. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @norfolkdeeds.

The Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, located at 649 High St., Dedham, is the principal office for real property in Norfolk County. Residents in need of assistance can contact the Registry of Deeds Customer Service Center at (781) 461-6101 or email us at registerodonnell@norfolkdeeds.org.

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Auchincloss Sworn Into 118th Congress

Washington, D.C. — On January 7th, Jake Auchincloss was sworn into the 118th Congress to represent the 4th District of Massachusetts for a second term. The following quotation can be attributed to the congressman:

“This morning, I have been sworn into Congress after days of dysfunction. Two years on from the insurrection of January 6th, and the House GOP is still groveling to the extreme right, rather than governing for the exhausted majority. It is unacceptable.

“It is the honor of a lifetime to represent the people of the Massachusetts 4th, where I grew up and where I’m now raising my children. The 117th Congress, in which Democrats had the same margin that so confounded Republicans this week, saw generational bipartisan accomplishments: we achieved my day-one priority of getting kids back into the classroom; invested in infrastructure and science; and lowered healthcare costs for millions while simultaneously making the

largest clean energy investment in history. There is much work ahead to deliver results for working families at a time when costs are too high. There are also epochal challenges to the free world from Russia and the Chinese Communist Party that must call my generation to action.

“Unlike last Congress, Republicans now hold the gavel in the House. With that gavel comes the initiative. If they decide to build on the bipartisan progress of the last Congress in lowering

costs and achieving clean energy independence, then I am ready to be a good-faith partner in legislating. If they choose, instead, to continue the ineptitude of this past week and spend the next two years engaged in extremist theatrics, then I am prepared to fight back. We will not yield in our commitment to democracy, women’s rights, gun-safety measures, and clean energy.”

Committee assignments for the 118th Congress are pending and will be announced soon.

Congressman Auchincloss will continue maintaining district offices at their current locations in Newton and Attleboro in addition to keeping office hours in Fall River. His Capitol Hill office will remain located in 1524 Longworth House Office Building.

Auchincloss invites constituents to visit <https://auchincloss.house.gov> or connect with him on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube.

HCA to Present Respite Center Students’ Work Feb 1-10

Following the Members Show in January, the HCA will partner with the Michael Lisnow Respite Center for a special ten-day exhibition February 1-10th.

The HCA is pleased to provide visual arts and ceramics classes for the Respite students throughout the year, as well as give them the opportunity to display their work in the Lotvin Family gallery.

Respite Center coordinator Sheila Quinn noted that, “Entering our 26th year, the Michael Lisnow Respite Center provides emotional and physical support to individuals with disabilities and their families. The Respite Center has an important relationship with HCA. We enjoy our many classes and collaborations with this Hopkinton gem.”

HCA Instructor Marion Buricatu is very excited about showcasing the student’s artwork. “I love teaching art to Respite Students and I feel very lucky to spend my Monday mornings with them”, said Buricatu, “We always start the class by discussing a painting which empowers them to express their feelings and jumpstart their imagination to create their own artwork”

Respite student Emily Bill noted, “I love the feeling of community, and the ability to express myself. We get to show that people with disabilities can do anything”.

You can meet the artists, hear more about the Respite Center and enjoy some refreshments at a public reception on Thursday February 2nd at 5 p.m.

The Hopkinton Center for the Arts Lotvin Family Gallery is

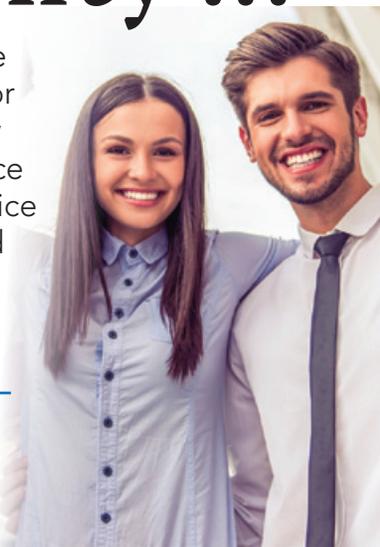
located at 98 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, Mass.

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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Library Resource of the Month – IndieFlix

IndieFlix is an online streaming service which includes thousands of full-length feature films, shorts, documentaries and series from around the world. All you need is your Bellingham Public Library card for 24/7 access to this free content with no waiting! There are classic and contemporary features, award-winning shorts, and film festival favorites. Content includes diverse voices, pop culture favorites and box office hits. There are thousands of hours of commercial-free programming and Academy Award winning animation. With IndieFlix you can explore insightful, well-known and undiscovered films and documentaries.

Founded by filmmakers, IndieFlix’s mission is to guide their audience to unusual, thought-provoking content. It can be watched on Internet-connected devices such as smartphones, smart TVs, tablets and desktops. Some of the categories to choose from include: Women’s Voices,

Black Voices, Kids in the Spotlight, Drama, Social Impact, Art Films, Featured Staff Picks, Popular Series, National Film Board of Canada, Generation Impact, Action Sports Films, Short Films Under 30 Minutes, Wellness Channel, Comedy Films, LGBTQ Films, Action and Adventure Movies, Thrillers, Horror, Classic Films, Animated Movies, Classic Animated Movies, and Cult Films.

A 7-day pass gives you full access to content from IndieFlix. When your pass expires, you can get another one. Note: some content may include mature themes and language.

To access IndieFlix, go to the Bellingham Library’s website at www.bellinghamlibrary.org. Click on the Online Resources tab, and then click Digital Music, Movies & TV. Scroll down to IndieFlix and click on Libby Extras. It is also available through Overdrive’s Libby app and Libby website.

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Sports

Bellingham's MacGowan Head Coach of Millis Softball Team

Well-known in Youth League Roles

By KEN HAMWEY,
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

Brett MacGowan is Millis High's new varsity softball coach, but he's no stranger to the program or the girls he'll be directing. And he's no stranger to softball fans in Bellingham.

The 55-year-old MacGowan was the Mohawks' junior-varsity coach for the last eight years, and all 11 of Millis' returning players competed for him during his reign at the jayvee level. The East Longmeadow native, who's lived in Bellingham for the last 30 years, has plenty of softball experience, especially at the grassroots level.

"When my daughters were old enough to compete, I coached in the Bellingham Youth League for 12 years and also served on the softball association's board of directors," MacGowan said. "I was secretary, vice president, and for seven years I served as the umpire scheduling director. I also coached club softball for 16 years and umpired for USA Softball for five seasons."

MacGowan's three daughters (Taylor, Kaleigh and Kasey) all played for Bellingham High's varsity, and Taylor was a starting outfielder for the Blackhawks' state title team in 2014.

"I know the fields on High Street (in Bellingham), and I spent lots of hours there when I coached in the youth league," MacGowan said. "It's sacred ground for me because of my years coaching youths there and because my three daughters all played there."

MacGowan said that when he and his team face Bellingham and their coach (Dennis Baker) at High Street, "It'll be different because I'm a visitor now." Unfortunately, a Millis-Bellingham varsity game will not occur in 2023 because the Blackhawks' program is on hold for a year. A lack of players has forced the administration to go into a reset mode at the varsity level.

BHS, however, will compete as a junior-varsity squad this spring.

When softball is re-instated, MacGowan said "It'll be fun to coach against Bellingham and Dennis, and it'll also be fun because there'll be lots of people I know."

Acutely aware that the role of a sub-varsity coach is to teach and prepare players for varsity duty, MacGowan still managed to produce winning records in seven of his eight seasons as Millis' jayvee coach. He inherits a team that former coach RJ Maturo guided to a 12-10 record last year before Millis lost to Turners Falls in the Division 5 state tourney quarterfinals.

MacGowan's primary goal for the 2023 campaign is "to be successful."

"Success includes growing as players, building team chemistry and qualifying for the playoffs," said MacGowan, who's worked for the last nine years at Millis High in the special education department. "In terms of enrollment, we're the smallest school in the Tri Valley League, but we'll strive to be the smartest. We're always limited in numbers. We want to get to the tourney and once there we'll let the chips fall where they may."

A firm believer that pitching and defense come first, MacGowan's coaching style will also emphasize that being aggressive on offense matters.

MacGowan's returnees have a variety of strengths. He likes their softball IQs and their technique, experience, and versatility. "Our softball IQs are good, but they can improve," he said. "We've got players who can compete at different positions, and we've got veteran experience. With only 11 players back, we need to build depth."

The Mohawks' captains — senior catcher Frankie Pizzarella and juniors Abby Powers (outfield) and Izzy Jewett (infielder) — are top-notch leaders and very capable in their roles.

"They're quality leaders who will be role models, especially for the girls at the youth level," MacGowan offered. "Frankie is a field general who's very intelligent, can hit for power, has a cannon for an arm and is aggressive on the bases. Abby is fast, covers lots of ground, has a high softball IQ and is a great bunter. Izzy is physically and mentally tough, can play all four infield positions and also catch."

The pitching chores will primarily be left to Riley Caulfield, a junior right-hander, and sophomore Ashley Aten, a dependable back-up.

Other key components include junior outfielders Kyra Rice and Liv Mathews, and four sophomores — Isabella Briones (utility), Lindsay Gratton (infielder), Michaela Vasta (utility) and Emelia Leach (catcher/third base).

Relying on an athletic philosophy that includes winning, reaching one's potential and having fun, MacGowan says that if his players give 100 percent, "then winning will occur and winning creates fun."

Life lessons can be learned in sports, and MacGowan lists four that he hopes his players will embrace.

"Sports can help players build confidence and develop team-first attitudes," he emphasized. "Athletics also help kids to realize the value of giving back and being good citizens. Players also learn how to overcome adversity that arise from injuries and mistakes, and they can learn how to be quality leaders."

After MacGowan graduated from East Longmeadow High, he earned a bachelor's degree in education from Fitchburg State. Before joining the Millis High faculty, he worked for the YMCA, the Whitin Community Center in Whitinsville and was recreation director in Sharon. He and his wife Kristen have called Bellingham home for three decades.

MacGowan is optimistic his transition to a head-coaching position will go smoothly. "The



Brett MacGowan, who coached in Bellingham's youth softball program, has been named varsity softball coach at Millis High.

girls know me well," he said. "They've played for me as jayvees, they know my style and what I emphasize."

Millis will open its season on March 31 at home against Norfolk Agricultural School.

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Sports

Bellingham Boys' Basketball Looking to Improve

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Playing in a strong Tri-Valley League, Bellingham was only able to secure four wins last season, and from that team, they lost quiet a bit of talent, including their top player in Richard Laroche, who led the team in both scoring and rebounding. However, Coach TJ Chiappone believes his team can still play with the best of them.

“This is a program where we are looking to get better each and every game. We only have three seniors on the team and want to win now, but we do have our eye on the future a bit,” Chiappone said. “Thus far, our defense has been very solid, but we have been struggling to score and rebound. I knew coming in rebounding was going to

be problematic, as we are not a big team. I'm hoping to overcome that with a team mentality, where everyone rebounds.”

According to the Bellingham coach, not a lot of his athletes work during the off-season to improve upon their basketball skills as they take part in two or three sports, and there are not a lot of basketball-first athletes as they lack skill and size.

Junior captains Ross Priscella and Tyler Ladouceur will be looked upon heavily to help guide the team throughout the season with their leadership skills. Ladouceur will be looked upon to rebound, but Bellingham will rely on his defensive play. Priscella, the team's point guard, leads the Blackhawks in scoring (14 per game) and is second in rebounds (6.5) though the first five games of the season. Priscella has



Bellingham Hoops Coach TJ Chiappone has high hopes that his boys' team, which lost a lot of seniors this year, will boost offense and strengthen to become contenders for the State tourney.

been on the team since his freshman campaign and is a second-year starter.

Another junior, Dasha Dommertant, has played well in the early part of the season where he is averaging 9.5 points per contest and hauling down 5 rebounds.

Having only won one game in their first five outings, Chiappone is hoping that his team eventual finds the offense. Bellingham defeated Millis 49-42 and fell to Nipmuc 53-51, while the other three games were not even close.

“As a team, we are averaging in the 40's per game, and that makes it tough to win games, when you don't score a lot,” the Blackhawks coach said. “When you don't score, that puts a lot of pressure on your defense, and eventually it takes its toll.”

Chiappone will also look to three seniors, Troy Simpson, Dylan Haggerty, and Marcus Hanson to get the team moving in the right direction this winter. The coach is hoping that Simpson, who will be playing forward,

will provide the team with some scoring as well as rebounding. Haggerty, the team's 6'2" center, currently leads the team in rebounding with seven a game and Hanson, although only a first-year varsity athlete, looks to have a nice outside shot.

“Marcus was on the JV team last year and is only playing in his first varsity season, but we will be relying on his three-point shooting,” the Coach said. “He is a good shooter when he is available to shoot, but he needs to develop other parts of his game to be successful overall.”

Juniors Haroun Mafhoum and CJ Fama will also be looked upon to get this team over the hump and into the winning column. Mafhoum has shown that he has what it takes to play defense, and the Hawks will rely on him coming off the bench to be a defensive stopper and give the team a spark.

Fama is just coming back from an injury, but when fully healthy, the junior, Chiappone hopes, will be able to help boost the team

and its totals.

“He's a hustler and plays hard all over the floor and should definitely give the team a shot in the arm once he returns to full form,” Chiappone said.

Although the season hasn't gotten off to the best of starts, Chiappone is still hoping that Bellingham can still make the tournament.

“That goal is obtainable, but as a team we need to make more shots. We hang around for a while, but eventually the defense wears down and can't continue to make as many stops as they have been,” he said. “We're missing a lot of open layups, which shouldn't be happening on the varsity level. If we can fix our mistakes and start hitting some shots, it will change the complexion of our games.”

If the Bellingham players can make the adjustments that the coach is looking for they will have an opportunity to make the State Tournament and once there, who knows what can happen.

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Sports

Bellingham Falcons 12u Cheerleaders Place 4th Nationally

Congratulations to the Bellingham Falcons 12u Cheerleaders, who placed fourth Nationally after moving on from Saturday to super Sunday at the American Youth Cheer (AYC) Nationals in Orlando, Florida on December 10th and 11th, 2022. The team's competitions for the year began in October, when they placed first at the October 2nd Emass Invitational in Bellingham, second place at Framingham State University on October 16th, and then first again in Norton on October 23rd at Emass Local. On November 5th, they took the State competition in Lowell, followed by a second place performance at the Regionals in Providence on November 19th.

The girls had made it to the extremely competitive National AYC event last year, placing 5th, so this year, they can be proud of their better showing. Kudos, girls!



Varsity Softball in Reset Mode at BHS

BY KEN HAMWEY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Lack of numbers is usually the prime reason why a high school varsity team is either dissolved or temporarily suspended. That's exactly what's occurred at Bellingham High, and that's why a varsity softball team will not be competing this spring.

Athletic Director Michael Connor and coach Dennis Baker conferred on the numbers issue last year and decided "a reset" was in order.

"Due to a limited number of returning upper-classmen, it seemed prudent to reset the program with a junior-varsity-only season this spring, then move forward with jayvee and varsity

teams competing in the spring of 2024," Connor said.

Connor recapped the numbers that existed last year and how many of those candidates would be available this spring. "The 2022 season consisted of 27 girls," Connor noted. "The breakdown was: six seniors, two juniors, one sophomore two freshmen, 10 eighth graders and six seventh graders. Only 18 girls were projected to be available for the 2023 season."

Connor revealed that a middle school waiver from the Mass. Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) was requested last year so the high school could field a junior-varsity program.

"Dennis and I discussed the situation last May, and I brought it up to the Tri Valley League Athletic Directors in September when schedules were being finalized," Connor said. "Collectively, it was agreed that a reset was in the best interest of the Bellingham softball program and the TVL as a whole. The timing gave our league partners time to find non-league opponents."

Connor recalled that a similar decision was made with girls' lacrosse, and he noted that "the program has grown since."

Courtney Parker, a former TVL all-star who pitched for Bellingham, joined the Blackhawks' staff as Baker's jayvee coach in 2021 and will continue in that role this spring.

Bellingham's softball program has had a history of success. The 2014 team won the school's only State championship when it defeated Grafton, 3-1, at Worcester State University. That team finished its season with a record of 25-1. During its playoff run, BHS de-

feated Norton, Fairhaven, Dighton-Rehoboth, Case, Tewksbury and Grafton.

During Baker's 25-year coaching tenure, the Blackhawks qualified for the playoffs 17 times. There was no tournament, however, in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Calendar

February 1

Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, create a Marketing Plan and Marketing Brief, 9:30-11:30 a.m., To register for each workshop, go to Bellingham library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom.

February 4

Red Cross Blood Drive, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Register at redcrossblood.org

"Meet Miss Laura," 10-11 a.m., Children's Room, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, meet the new children's librarian

February 8

Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Create a Marketing Plan and Marketing Brief, 6-8 p.m., To register for each workshop, go to Bellingham library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom.

February 11

Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Bake Sale, benefits Scholarship fund, before and after the 4 o'clock Mass,

February 12

Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Bake Sale, benefits Scholarship fund, before and after the 8:30 and 10 o'clock Masses

February 13

Bellingham Women of Today meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bellingham Police Department conference room, 30 Blackstone St., Bellingham, open to men and women 18+

Open for Business - Finding the Right Partners for Your New or Growing Business, 6:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, snow date Feb. 27

February 15

Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Applications, Cover Letters & Negotiation, 9-11:30 a.m., To register for each workshop, go to Bellingham library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom.

February 16

Ladies of St. Anne February meeting will be a Movie Night on February 16 at 6 p.m. in the St. Blaise parish hall. Pizza will be served before the meeting, popcorn during the movie and ice cream sundaes during intermission.

February 22

Friends of the Library Book Sale, 4-7 p.m. members only sale (join at the door for \$10), Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Applications, Cover Letters & Negotiation, 6-8 p.m., To register for each workshop, go to Bellingham library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom.

February 23

Friends of the Library Book Sale, 1-6 p.m. members only sale, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

February 24

Friends of the Library Book Sale, 1-6 p.m. members only sale, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

February 25

Friends of the Library Book Sale, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. members only sale, Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

Circle of Friends presents Tracy Grammer, with Hana Zara, 8 p.m., First Universalist Society of Franklin meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, <http://www.circlefolk.org/>

Ladies Plan February Events

On February 11 and 12th, the Ladies of St. Anne will host a bake sale to benefit their Scholarship fund. Cakes, brownies, pies, and cookies will be available for purchase before and after the 4 o'clock Mass on Saturday and before and after the 8:30 and 10 o'clock Masses on Sunday.

New this year, the Scholarship applications will be available in February. Graduating high school seniors, as well as students already attending college or technical school on a full time basis, are eligible to apply for this scholarship. The awarding of this scholarship will be based, in part, on active participation in St. Blaise parish,

service to the community, and an essay.

This is not a strictly "financial need" scholarship. Past recipients of this scholarship are not eligible to apply. Look for the applications on the St. Blaise website and at the entrances to the church. If you have questions you may contact Denyse Lyden, (508) 883-4484, or Paula Nieva, St. Blaise Office Manager (508) 966-1258.

The LoSA February meeting will be a Movie Night on February 16 at 6 p.m. in the St. Blaise parish hall. Pizza will be served before the start of the meeting. We'll have popcorn during the movie and ice cream sundaes during intermission!



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