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February 2023

Financial summit planned to address predicted “significant gap” in town budget

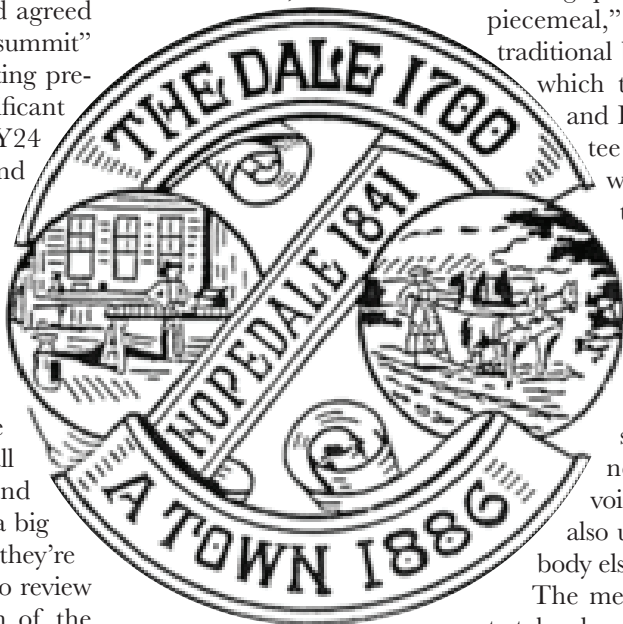
BY THERESA KNAPP

At the request of Interim Town Manager Jeffrey Nutting, the Select Board agreed to hold a “financial summit” to address what Nutting predicts will be a “significant gap between the FY24 projected expenses and revenues.”

At the board’s Jan. 9 meeting, Nutting said, “I’d like to ask the Board to have a financial summit with the Board, Finance Committee, the School Committee, all department heads and their committees, in a big room - and citizens, they’re certainly welcome - to review the financial position of the town.”

Nutting hopes the gathering will help stakeholders “understand what our constraints

are, what the potentials are, and then that helps the Select Board hear everybody’s issues and concerns, and then...



when you’re doing a final policy on what the critical components are, you have

at least listened to everybody.”

He said the meeting is necessary “so everybody gets the big picture instead of piecemeal,” referring to the traditional budget process in which the Select Board and Finance Committee meet separately with departments to gather information.

“In the end, it’s a team effort, everybody has to work together,” Nutting said. “Everybody needs to have a voice at the table but also understand everybody else’s voice.”

The meeting is expected to take place sometime in February and will be posted on the town website www.hopedale-ma.gov.



“Grandfriend” Paula Cerulli with her friends at Bright Beginnings Center.

“Grandfriends” continue to bring joy to preschoolers

BY THERESA KNAPP

Bright Beginnings Center adjustment counselor Kelly Alley started the “Grandfriend” program last school year.

In the program, Hopedale volunteer “grandparent figures” are matched with a BBC classroom.

During biweekly one-hour visits, elders and youth share a story and an activity as a way to learn more about each other.

Alley said, “The Grandfriend

GRANDFRIENDS

continued on page 2

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GRANDFRIENDS

continued from page 1

program was created last year out of my interest in the many benefits of the elders in the community interacting on a regular basis with the youngest members of our community."

"Due to the [coronavirus] pandemic, it wasn't possible for us to visit local assisted living residences so I reached out to Carole Mullen at the Council on Aging to see if we could partner with them to identify some members of the Council who would be interested in volunteering to visit our preschool and Pre-K classrooms. We had a few volunteers last year and they were fantastic."

This year the program grew and now all BBC classrooms have a Grandfriend.

Alley said, "Our hope for our Grandfriends is that the joy that our youngest learners have for being at school and interacting with the adults in the building, including Grandfriends, brings joy to their lives."

One of those Grandfriends is Paula Cerulli whom Alley said is "one of our most loved Grandfriends" and is "truly what I envisioned when I created the Grandfriends program."

Cerulli loves the program and is thrilled to be back for a second year.

"It is an honor to be in a classroom and read to the children,



their welcoming smiles and joy warm my heart. I hope the children look forward to my visit as much as I look forward to being with them."

And they do.

When student Leighton Schloski (age 3) was asked about "Miss Paula," a huge smile came over her face and she said, "She's our Grandfriend!"

Leighton said she likes visits from Miss Paula because "She's funny...She brings me toys. She sings and dances...and reads to us."

To potential Grandfriends, Cerulli says, "If you have the joy of children and the love of learning in your heart it is a wonderful collaboration. I cannot say enough wonderful compliments regarding the faculty and staff at the school. They, too, always make me feel welcome. The program brightens both of our days!"

Town Administrator search underway

New person could be selected by end of March

BY THERESA KNAPP

The talent search firm selected by the Hopedale Select Board has set forth a timeline to select a new Town Administrator by the end of March.

At the board's Dec. 27 meeting, John Petrin, senior associate at Community Paradigm Associates, said the firm expects to receive between 20 and 25 resumes which will likely produce "seven people that can be chosen for an initial interview."

He explained the process.

"We'll work with the board members and key department heads to understand the needs of the community once again as we did last time and create a position statement that will go out for advertising several weeks from now to search for probable candidates for the position."

From January to March, the firm will consult with the Select Board (together and individually), gather supporting information, create a position profile and recruitment brochure, advertise and recruit for the position, receive and review the first round

of applications, assist a 'professional panel' to select semi-finalists, interview semi-finalists and select three or four finalists, conduct reference and background reviews, then provide a list of finalists to the Select Board to be interviewed mid-March.

Selectperson Brian Keyes asked Petrin if the final candidates could be ranked when presented to the Select Board.

Keyes, who was part of the process that ultimately hired the most recent Town Administrator, said he wished he had known who the search committee had chosen as its top applicants before he made his selection.

"If I had some data points and representation from that screening committee as to who they thought the number one candidate was of the talented [final] three, that probably would have influenced - based on my respect for the people who were on that committee - my selection," said Keyes.

Keyes then asked, "Maybe when we get to final interviews, and let's just say three finalists come before the board, the board interviews them and then in the

midst our deliberation, a representative of that screening committee is allowed to speak to the board, maybe in the deliberation in private, as to who they would have selected?...That's helpful information for me."

Petrin said Paradigm does not stack the candidates or rank them in any order.

"When we do this what we're trying to do is provide the board with three or four candidates who may be different in style coming in and that's for you to make that decision based on the information you have," said Petrin, noting the importance of the position statement which outlines what the town is looking for in the position.

Petrin said the Board is able to speak to members of the search committee on their own, if they wish to do so.

Petrin said the average size of the town's search committee is typically five to seven people, preferably five. The makeup can vary and can include members of the public at large. It is a voting committee that was planned to be formed in January.

Members sought for Community Preservation Committee

BY THERESA KNAPP

In 2020, Hopedale Town Meeting adopted the Community Preservation Act (and the bylaw passed in 2021), and now the committee to allocate those funds is being established.

The CPC will consist of nine members, including four community members at large, and will make recommendations to the town on where to spend the

money in areas of historical preservation, open space and recreation, and affordable housing.

Interim Town Administrator Jeffrey Nutting said, "We really need four residents. It's not a heavy lift but it's critically important to take care of the issues that the community is facing in those areas."

Nutting said the town's CPA account currently has approxi-

mately \$180,000 in the account and could grow another \$40,000 to \$50,000 by the end of the fiscal year.

To express interest in serving on the committee, complete a town Talent Bank Form on the town's website www.hopedale-ma.gov.

For more information on the bylaw, visit www.communitypreservation.org

Irish Song And Dance Come To Library

Start the month of St. Patrick's Day off on Wednesday, March 1, at 6:30 PM, at the Bancroft Memorial library, as musicians Mary King, Cathy Casper-Torch, and Dan Lenair will share songs, stories, and Celtic music.

The music was influenced by Irish immigrants' travels through

New England, the Midwest, Appalachia and the West.

Immigrants' traditions were infused with new styles and instruments, creating a new voice to their culture in a new country.

Mary King often teaches a beginning Irish jig before the start of each program.

Families and all ages are welcome. Stop by the library or call 508-634-2209 to register!

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Hopedale Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

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Visiting cousin witnesses her first snow

Searches internet for 'How to build a snowman'

By THERESA KNAPP

When thinking about her next visit to family in Massachusetts, ElizNoelis ("Eli") Domenech Rivera of Puerto Rico specifically

she said it appears like a tropical shaved ice drink."

Rivera said, "When I woke up and saw snow I said, 'I want to make a snowman.' There was



ElizNoelis ("Eli") Domenech Rivera of Puerto Rico witnesses her first-ever snow while visiting family in December. Courtesy photo.

chose December in the hopes of seeing snow.

And she did. "I saw snow toward the end of my vacation," said Rivera. "It was at my aunt's house in the morning. It was wonderful seeing snow first thing in the morning."

Cousin Melissa Nieves said it was "magical" to witness Eli experiencing the December snow.

"Her smile and energy of seeing snow for the first time was pure joy. This was the first time she has ever seen and experienced snow and a New England winter," said Nieves. "She just kept saying, 'Looks like it's snowing' and 'It looks like a slushy' -

not a lot of snow so my aunt and cousin shoveled the snow to accumulate a pile to make the snowman."

She had the snow but did not know what to do next.

"I had my aunt [Mildred] search on her phone for 'How to build a snowman,'" said Eli. "I made a small snowman and we named her Tuti, which is my cousin's childhood nickname. Then I decorated it with some Christmas ornaments from my aunt's basement."

Editor's note: Do you have photos to share of your snow creations? If so, add them to this post on Facebook @ HopedaleTownNews.

Cultural Council funds 11 projects for \$5,275

As part of its 2023 grant cycle, the Hopedale Cultural Council has awarded the following grants for a total of \$5,275 in funding. The recipients, and their projects, include:

- Sarah Alexander, HCA Curator Fellowship
- Bancroft Memorial Library, Ortha Day: Drum to the Beat
- Bancroft Memorial Library, Lindsay & Her Puppet Pals
- Blackstone Valley Community Chorus Inc., BVCC Concerts: Spring and Fall 2023
- Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, BT Multicultural Festival
- Claflin Hill Music Performance Foundation Inc., Community Culture Night at Symphony 2023
- Friends of the Hopedale Public Library, The Irish in America



- Friends of the Hopedale Public Library, King Philip's Indian War
- Greater Milford Community Chorus, GMCC Spring 2023 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee Concert
- William Moffett, Birch Alley Brass Christmas Concert
- Janet Parnes, Farm Girl on the Front Lines: Deborah Sampson's Secret!

According to www.mass-culturalcouncil.org, in Massachusetts, public funding for the arts, humanities, and sciences

is provided through a central state agency, the Mass Cultural Council, and through a network of Local Cultural Councils that serve every city and town in the state. LCCs also receive support for programs from donations, fundraising events, and their local municipality. The Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program was established in 1982 and was overseen by the Massachusetts Arts Lottery Council until 1990 when it merged with the Massachusetts Council on Arts and Humanities to form the Mass Cultural Council.

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The New Mental Health Hotline is 988

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You or a loved one can dial 988 from anywhere at anytime, you or a loved one is in emotional distress or having suicidal thoughts. Trained, qualified call takers, (not licensed clinicians),

are available to provide free, confidential emotional support to all callers. You do not need to be suicidal to call 988. Text is also available through 988. When someone texts to 988, they will

complete a brief survey before connecting to a group of life-line crisis centers that respond to chats or texts.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Of Central Mass & Metrowest Celebrating 60th Anniversary

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Mass & Metrowest (BBBS) is turning to the community for help in matching 60 boys (Littles) who are currently on the waitlist for a mentor (Big). BBBS hopes to match those 60 Littles with their Big by April 1, to coincide with their 60th Anniversary Big Celebration Gala.

The 60 boys on the waitlist reside in Worcester and will benefit from a mentor. The reasons for why these young kids, ages ranging from 8-16, are in need of a mentor varies. Some are coming

from single-parent households and are lacking a male role model. Others have experienced difficulties in life and need that extra connection that a Big provides. After being matched with a mentor, it has been found that children gain confidence, do better in school, and are overall happier.

BBBS has garnered the support for the 60 Men to Mentors initiative from Worcester Mayor, Joe Petty, and Worcester City Manager, Eric Batista. Mr. Petty and Mr. Batista have been important advocates in connecting BBBS with people throughout the Worcester community who will play a role in making the initiative a success.

BBBS CEO, Connie Askin, explained, "with 100 children on the waitlist, Mayor Petty is helping us put out the call: Big Brothers Big Sisters needs caring adult volunteers to sign up as volunteers! The commitment is just 1 hour a week- if you sleep 8 or 9 hours a night, 1 hour is less than 1% of the time you're awake.

Worcester, you can change a child's life for the better with 1% of your time!"

Once a match is made between a Big and a Little, they are supported by one of BBBS' professionally trained, Match Support Specialists. The Match Support Specialists conduct monthly check-ins with both the Big, the Little, and the parent/guardian to make sure the relationship is a healthy and productive one.

BBBS Board Chair, Jack Hoehlein, further emphasized, "Boys tend to sit on the wait-list longer than girls, especially boys of color. They are looking for someone who looks like them to be their special Big. A coach, a mentor, a friend. We are calling this campaign 60 Men to Mentors, because we need 60 men to sign up as volunteers, to spend just 1 hour a week with children who need a Big Brother."

To learn more about the initiative visit: bbbscm.org/60-men-to-mentors or call 508-752-7868.

Don't Forget About The Circuit Breaker Credit When Filing Your Taxes

Who is eligible for the MA Circuit Breaker Tax Credit:

- You must be a Massachusetts resident or part-year resident.
- You must be 65 or older by December 31 of the tax year.
- You must file a Schedule CB with your Massachusetts personal income tax return.
- You must own or rent residential property in Massachusetts and occupy it as your primary residence.
- For tax year 2022, your total Massachusetts income doesn't exceed:
 - \$64,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household.
 - \$80,000 for a head of household.
 - \$96,000 for married couples filing a joint return.

- If you are a homeowner, your Massachusetts property tax payments, together with half of your water and sewer expense, must exceed 10% of your total Massachusetts income for the tax year.
- If you are a renter, 25% of your annual Massachusetts rent must exceed 10% of your total Massachusetts income for the tax year.
- The assessed valuation of the homeowner's personal residence as of January 1, 2022, before residential exemptions but after abatements, cannot exceed \$912,000.
- The Schedule CB must be completed within 3 years from the last day for filing the return, without regard to any extension of time to file.

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AARP Tax Assistance

The Hopedale Sr. Center will hold free tax preparation clinics for Seniors and low to moderate income individuals on the following Thursdays:

- Thursdays (9 am—1 pm)
- February 9, 16, 23, 2023
- March 2, and 9, 2023

The procedure for the program is as follows:

1. Schedule an appointment.
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3. A Tax-Aide volunteers will complete your Tax Return.
4. You and Tax-Aide volunteer will go over the Tax Return.

5. After you approve and sign the Tax Return, the document will be filed electronically.

Sign-up is required. Call (508)634-2208. You must speak to a Staff member to schedule an appointment. Please try to complete forms prior to your appointment.

Please bring the following documents if applicable:

Prior years' tax returns, Social Security Benefit statement, W-2s, All income documents, Retirement Plan, IRA, and Brokerage statements. If you are filing for Circuit Breaker Credit a copy of your last three (3) years of Real Estate Tax bills and your Water and Sewer bills for the prior filing years.

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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 ac-

cess 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, emer-

gency 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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Select Board makes appointments, accepts donations, and acknowledges grant

By THERESA KNAPP

At its meetings on Dec. 27, 2022, and Jan. 9, 2023, the Hopedale Select Board made the following appointments:

- Provisional Career Firefighter/EMT David Shearns, effective 01/02/2023
- Career Firefighter/

EMT Alex Cappella, effective 12/27/2022

The board also accepted the following donations:

- \$200 from Frederick G. Oldfield III to the Bancroft Memorial Library

• Unnamed sum donated to the Council on Aging from the Hopedale Friends of Elders, Inc.

• It also acknowledged receipt of a \$10,000 "Sustainable and Resilient New England Libraries Grant" to the Bancroft Memorial Library.

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Bancroft Memorial Library News

50 Hopedale Street, Hopedale
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 508-634-2209
 tperry@cwmars.org

Presidents' Day

The Bancroft Memorial Library will be closed on Monday, February 20 in observance of Presidents' Day.

Planning for Medicare - Countdown to 65

Need help understanding your Medicare health insurance options? Join us for a no-cost seminar led by Susan Flanagan, a representative of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, on Wednesday, February 8 at 6:30pm (Snow Date: February 15 at 6:30pm). This seminar will help you understand your Medicare health insurance options outside of your employer-sponsored coverage, whether or not you're planning to retire. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Registration is encouraged, but not required. For questions, please contact the Library Staff at 508-634-2209.

Massachusetts Library Collaborative 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group

The free, biweekly skillbuilding and networking group meetings for people 50 years and older looking for a new job, a new career direction, or a Second Act career continue this month on Zoom. We offer morning and evening classes: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays 9:30-11:30am, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 6-8pm. Topics this month: February 1/8 Marketing Plans and Marketing Briefs and February 15/22 Applications and Cover Letters. Please check our website for more information. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Hopedale Library.

Helen Symonds Book Group

The Helen Symonds Book Group will meet February 1 at 1:00 pm in the Bancroft Memorial Library meeting room to discuss Deacon King Kong by James McBride. Books are available at the library.

The book group is open to everyone, but if you are new, please sign up at the library circulation

desk.

"In September 1969, a fumbling, cranky old church deacon known as Sportcoat shuffles into the courtyard of the Cause Houses housing project in south Brooklyn, pulls a .45 from his pocket, and in front of everybody shoots the project's drug dealer at point-blank range. The reasons for this desperate burst of violence and the consequences that spring from it lie at the heart of Deacon King Kong, James McBride's funny, moving novel and his first since his National Book Award-winning *The Good Lord Bird*." – adapted from CW-MARS catalog

Save the Date 3/1! - Poet Lynne Viti

Join the Helen Symonds Book Group on Wednesday, March 1 at 1:00 pm, as we host local poet Lynne Viti. Lynne Viti is the author of *The Walk to Cefalù* (2022), *Dancing at Lake Montebello: Poems* (2020), *Going Too Fast* (2020), and two poetry chapbooks, *Baltimore Girls* (2017) and *The Glamorganshire Bible* (2018), as well as *Punting* (2018), *Dreaming Must Be Done in the Daytime* (2018) and *In Louisburgh, County Mayo* (2019). Copies of books will be available for purchase and book signing. Please sign up at the Library's circulation desk for this special event or call us at 508-634-2209.

Wednesday Needlework Group

Join us for an evening of needlework every Wednesday night from 6:00pm until 7:45pm. Bring your latest project. No commit-



ment required – come when you can!

The Friends of the Hopedale Library

The Friends of the Hopedale Library are pleased to present "Irish in America" on Wednesday, March 1st at 6:30 pm. Come join us as Mary King, Kathy Clasper-Torch, and Dan Lenair share an Irish immigrant's musical journey. Irish immigrants captured the heart of the nation with their mix of Irish jigs, ballads, folk songs, storytelling, and humor. Their music was influenced by their travels throughout New England, the Midwest, Appalachia, and the West. Celtic traditions were infused with new styles and instruments creating a new voice to their culture, along with the old. Get your green on, warm up your voice and enjoy the warmth, spirit, and hilarity. Mary King often teaches a beginner's Irish gig before the start of the program.

All ages are welcome. There is no charge to attend this program but registration is requested. To

register please call the library at 508-634-2209 or stop by the upstairs circulation desk. You do not have to be a Friend of the Library to attend. The Friends of the Library hold their meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. New Friends are always welcome!

Flower Power Fundraising
 Purchase great quality plants and bulbs for the spring while supporting the Library! The Friends of the Hopedale Library earns 50% of each sale through Flower Power Fundraising. Orders are due by May 15th. The Friends of the Hopedale Library is a volunteer, non-profit organization which works with the library staff and the trustees to support the Library to provide funds for equipment, materials and programs not covered by the Library's regular operating budget. Click on the link to order and support the Library today: <http://HopedaleLibrary.fpfundraising.com>.

News from the Marjorie Hattersley Children's Room

Registration is encouraged but not required for all events. Please call Mrs. Kraimer at (508)634-2209 to register!

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

In partnership with the 1000 Books Foundation, the Bancroft Memorial Library, Bright Beginnings Center, Friends of the Hopedale Library, and the Middlesex Savings Bank, we are pleased to introduce the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" lit-

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Bancroft Memorial Library Receives \$10,000 Grant

The Bancroft Memorial Library is pleased to share the news that our application for the Association for Rural & Small Libraries Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant has been awarded full funding in the amount of \$10,000. The grant is administered by the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) through the generosity of a regional partner foundation. Grant funds will be used to develop new and innovative programming; facilitating access to dynamic learning tools and library resources that encourage sensory exploration, as well as cognitive, social, and creative development. We will be focusing on our community's young English-language learners and our older residents living with memory loss in a manner that

promotes social connectivity. The grant will be a first step in becoming a more multi-cultural, dementia-friendly library that will actively engage both of these underserved populations. Proposed actions include creating a comfortable space (updated furnishings for the community program room); sensory programming tables and supplies, and updated technology. We are grateful to the Association for Rural and Small Libraries for this grant funding which will allow us to develop and nurture social, recreational, and cultural opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all ages and incomes in Hopedale.

The Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) builds strong communities through

professional development and elevating the impact of rural and small libraries. ARSL recognizes the uniqueness of small and rural libraries and is committed to providing an environment that encourages excellence within this community of practice, supporting their goals of service and speaking on behalf of this important constituency. Since 1 in 3 public libraries in the U.S. serve a population of fewer than 2,500 people, there is a great opportunity to support these library professionals that are often overlooked. We believe in the value of rural and small libraries and strive to create resources and services that address national, state, and local priorities for libraries situated in rural communities.



LIBRARY

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eracy initiative for children ages Birth-5 years. The goal of the program is to encourage parents and caregivers to read 1000 books with their child before Kindergarten. This program is available to all families with children between the ages of birth and five years. Registration is open and the program is free to all. For more information, call the Library at 508-634-2209 or visit our website.

Storytimes with Mrs. Kraimer
Enjoy books and crafts with Mrs. Kraimer during Storytime! All books read in storytimes can count towards the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program.

Storytimes begin the first week of February and will run for 10 weeks.

Storytime - Tuesdays at 10:30am (Ages 2-5)

Mother Goose Rhyme Time - Thursdays at 10:30am (Birth-3 years)

After School Storytime - Wednesdays at 3:15pm (Ages 5-7)

Homeschool Hangout!

Get together with other homeschool families from the Hopedale area to learn, engage, and socialize on Tuesday mornings 11am-12pm. All ages invited!

Take Your Child to the Library Day

Celebrate "Take Your Child to the Library Day" on Saturday, February 4 at 11am. For all ages!

Owl Moon

Monday, February 6 will be a full moon, and time for the Children's Room to host its annual celebration of Owl Moon. Children, ages 3 through 7, are invited to join us at 6pm to read Jane Yolen's classic story. Then help us search, through the quiet darkness, for the elusive Snowy Owl in the Children's room. Each child is asked to bring a flashlight.

Valentine's Day Crafts

Create a valentine for your

special person on February 13 at 3:30pm. Ages 5+

1pm for Legos! Ages 5+

Miniatures - Bedroom

Back by popular demand! Join us in the fascinating world of Miniatures on Saturday, February 18 at 11am! Create a dollhouse-size bedroom. All materials are provided. Ages 9+

February Vacation

Looking for something to do during February Vacation? Visit the Library on Tuesday, February 21 at 1pm for Craft Time and Thursday, February 23 at

Pre-Teen Advisory Board

The Pre-Teen Advisory Board will meet on Monday, February 27 at 5pm. Open to anyone in grades 5-8 and/or ages 10-14. No registration required.

For updates throughout the month, Friend us on Facebook and sign up at www.wowbrary.org to discover the Library's newest books, movies and music. Our webpage is <https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/bancroft-memorial-library>.

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BVT Announces First Trimester Commendation List

Acknowledging Academic and Vocational Achievements

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, grouped by grade level and hometown, were named to the first trimester Commendation List:

BELLINGHAM

Class of 2023: Nicholas Cummings, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Hailey Davis, Construction Technology; Tyler Morin, HVAC&R; and Kaitlyn Mullen, Health Services.

Class of 2024: Ellen Franco, Information Technology; Sara Lewis, Engineering & Robotics; and Aiden Simpson, Information Technology.

Class of 2025: Isabella Brancato, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Abigail Noyes, Plumbing; and Kiele Sarnie, Construction

Technology.
Class of 2026: Madyson Voss, Biotechnology; and Justin Walsh, Biotechnology.

BLACKSTONE

2023: Evan Bouvier, Multimedia Communications; Daniel Cardone, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Brock Chapman, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; and Sophia Mazzuchelli, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication.

2024: Darshannie Francis Drackett, Dental Assisting; Brandon Labonte, HVAC&R; Julia Matson, Plumbing; and Luke Tellier, HVA&R.

2025: Nathaniel Cook, Biotechnology; Braedon Ando, Culinary Arts; Paige Connolly, Culinary Arts; Mia DelVecchio, Culinary Arts; Keira Kelliher, Health Services; and Matheus De Carvalho, Plumbing.

2026: Jack Marino, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication.

DOUGLAS

2023: Griffin Beaulieu, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Kyle Forget, Engineering & Robotics; Murphy Potter, Painting & Design Technology; Megan Roe, Multimedia Communications; Brett Staples, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Julia White,

Cosmetology.

2024: Laney Beahn, Engineering & Robotics; Zachary Beaudry, Culinary Arts; Jack Dooner, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Jonah Rosenkrantz, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Baron Sherry, Engineering & Robotics; Sorcha Twohig-Mann, Health Services; and Chloe Vescio, Engineering & Robotics.

2025: Haley Chamberlain, Cosmetology; Kaylie Ciccone, Health Services; Justin Dooner, Engineering & Robotics; Tyler Grybowski, Information Technology; Cassidy Hackett, Cosmetology; Braydin Levesque, HVAC&R; Emily Muniz, Engineering & Robotics; Om Patel, Engineering & Robotics; Samantha Pinto, Health Services; Evan Pupka, Culinary Arts; Jaden Roddick, Multimedia Communications; Addison Taylor, Health Services; and Willow Windoloski, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2026: Jayce Boyko, Automotive Technology; Maddison Dos Santos, HVAC&R; Caitlin Kelly, Health Services; Zachary Mitchell, HVAC&R; Sophie Rivard, Engineering & Robotics; and Bryce Sheldon, Engineering & Robotics.

GRAFTON

2023: Juliana Errara, Health Services; Noah

Mariano, Engineering & Robotics; Owen Mathieu, HVAC&R; and Henry Warfield, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2024: Caitlin Brown, Dental Assisting; Danica Fiore, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Skyla Jack, Construction Technology; Carlie Jensen, Painting & Design Technology; Soumith Madadi, Information Technology; Grant Purcell, Engineering & Robotics; Haleigh Reynolds, Dental Assisting; Ryan St. Angelo, Culinary Arts; Lily Turcotte, Construction Technology; and John Wingate, Engineering & Robotics.

2025: Steven Caya, Engineering & Robotics; Raghav Dave, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Rowan Hackett, Multimedia Communications; Nora Iadarola, Multimedia Communications; Christopher Joiner, Biotechnology; Ella McCann, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Brodie Remillard, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Carly Simpson, Health Services; and Daniel Warfield, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2026: Logan Black, Electrical; Douglas Kennedy, Engineering & Robotics; Kevin Magill, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Benjamin Miller, Engineering & Robotics; Cooper Often, Engineering & Robotics; and Delaney Waldo, Biotechnology.

HOPEDALE

2023: Hayle Orta, Health Services; Jay

Patel, Information Technology; and Jackson Staheli, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2024: Ashlyn Leonard, Health Services; John McShane, Construction Technology; Eleanor Poitras, Health Services; Avery Sanosi, Culinary Arts; and Mikayla Sanosi, Multimedia Communications.

2025: Kallie Allen, Biotechnology; Nathaniel Allen, Information Technology; Anthony Bucchino, Engineering & Robotics; Benjamin Catalogna, Information Technology; Eric Deppe, Engineering & Robotics; Connor Griffin, Electrical; Gabriella Griffin, Health Services; Declan Reilly, Information Technology; and Christopher Russell, Biotechnology.

2026: Jason Abbruzzese, Engineering & Robotics; Isabella-Marie Adriko, Engineering & Robotics; Ella Foster, Engineering & Robotics; Evan Griffin, Information Technology; Ethan Novelli, Multimedia Communications; and Shiv Patel, Engineering & Robotics.

MENDON

2023: Amanda Pajak, Multimedia Communications; Naomi Tsuda, Culinary Arts; and Natalia Vazquez, Engineering & Robotics.
2024: Tyler Clare, Information Technology; Noah LeFave, Electronics & Engineering

BVT

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BVT*continued from page 8*

Technology; Ava Lozeau, Construction Technology; and Arthur Tusoni, Multimedia Communications.

2025: Kalyne Bellefontaine, Health Services; Samantha Fairhurst, Health Services; Leila Leyvas, Health Services; Kyle Miller, Electrical; and Abigail Scharnagle, Health Services.

2026: Matthew Brennan, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Phoebe Burke, Engineering & Robotics; Yasmin Freitas, Health Services; Charles Lozeau, Engineering & Robotics; and Jacob MacDonald, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

MILFORD

2023: Jack Abbiuso, Information Technology; Jaclyn Bader, Engineering & Robotics; Zachary Barnes, Information Technology; Kaitlyn Beaudrot, Culinary Arts; Jason Cardente, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Colin Chambless, Engineering & Robotics; Dillon Costa, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Thays De Assis, Drafting & Design Technology; Lauren Gobbi, Dental Assisting; Ana Guaman, Construction Technology; Allison Kee, Health Services; Alya Lainez, Automotive Technology; Lyanna Pimentel, Multimedia Communications; Morgan Pitts, Health Services; and Joshua Schorn, Culinary Arts.

2024: Igor Freeman, Engineering & Robotics; Ashly Guaman, Dental Assisting; Benjamin Kinsella, Multimedia Communications; Joseph Manzi, Electrical; Hannah Murphy, Multimedia Communications; Leah Neves, Construction Technology; Anthony Persico, Information Technology; Thamyres Salviano, Health Services; Emma Sanborn, Painting & Design Technology, and Lizmary Vidal-Sanchez, Dental Assisting.

2025: Lacey Coffman, Multimedia Communications; Adriana Hawkins, Culinary Arts; Matthew Hunter, Biotechnology; Charbel Jebara, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Joel Puri, Engineering & Robotics.

2026: Ethan Dahmer, Biotechnology; Cecelia Dualu, Dental Assisting; Arieta Flanagan, Biotechnology; and Myles Guikema, Engineering & Robotics.

MILLBURY

2023: Samuel Bazydlo, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Brianna Laudani, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Brooke Maguire, Health Services; and Natalie Rutkiewicz, Cosmetology.

2024: Ava Lawton, Engineering & Robotics; James Richert, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Isabella Rose, Health Services; and Emma Shum, Dental Assisting.

2025: Mason Diosomito, Engineering & Robotics; Ethan Ikeda, Construction Technology; Gianna Konisky, Engineering & Robotics; Maya Lorion, Automotive Technology; Maeghan Plourde, Health Services; and Jayden Quang, Engineering & Robotics.

2026: Allison Garden, Engineering & Robotics; Lily Kelley, Multimedia Com-

munications; Giana Piscitelli, Construction Technology; and Isabella Raymond, Health Services.

MILLVILLE

2023: Joshua Platt, Information Technology.

2024: Violette Durand, Culinary Arts; and Trey Kovolyan, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2025: Julia Trujillo, Health Services.

2026: Genevieve Kovolyan, Health Services; and Ayden Mendes, Painting & Design Technology.

NORTHBRIDGE

2023: Riley Driver, Electrical; Sam Grilli, Drafting & Design Technology; Emily Hourihan, Culinary Arts; Maya Laydon, Construction Technology; Noah Malkasian, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Gradie Sanford, Drafting & Design Technology; and Emily Wildfeuer, Drafting & Design Technology.

2024: Logan Feehan, Painting & Design Technology; Izamar Laboy Villegas, Information Technology; Lily Marshall, Dental Assisting; Ella Rogozenski, Engineering & Robotics; Bridget Roy, Culinary Arts; Brandon Spiller, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Jonathon Spiller, Painting & Design Technology.

2025: Perry Derkosrofian, Construction Technology; Sosie Derkosrofian, Health Services; Zabel Derkosrofian, Information Technology; Abigail Dineen, Dental Assisting; Faith Ellis, Multimedia Communications; Conner Gomez, Engineering & Robotics; Haden Houatchanthara, Plumbing; Mara Keane, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Dylan Leeds, Engineering & Robotics; Haley Marston, Dental Assisting; Markas Petone, Health Services; Isabella Reed, Biotechnology; Sean Russo, Information Technology; Eva Schairer, Health Services; Scarlet Sergel, Dental Assisting; Alexa Seward, Engineering & Robotics; and Addison Snow, Culinary Arts.

2026: Isabelle Balon, Biotechnology; Aidan Naughton, Information Technology; Benjamin Rivelli, Plumbing; Allegra Sadik, Health Services; and Adalynn Wooster, Cosmetology.

SUTTON

2023: Benjamin Judson, Automotive Collision Repair & Refinishing; Samuel Judson, Drafting & Design Technology; Haley Kirouac, Engineering & Robotics; Ryann Lombardi, Health Services; and Colin Medeiros, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2024: Kylie Carlsen, Multimedia Communications; Christopher Gubbins, Construction Technology; Julianna Hawley, Multimedia Communications; and Peyton Nolan, Multimedia Communications.

2025: Emma Cliadakis, Culinary Arts; Morgan Gervais, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Benjamin Hicks, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Tyler Houlihan, Health Services; William Kelly, Construction Technology; Madison Malo, Dental

Assisting; Caroline Martin, Engineering & Robotics; and Jaren Peckham, Construction Technology.

UPTON

2023: Julia Bern, Construction Technology; Jack Dunham, Health Services; Bradley Lyon, Drafting & Design Technology; Jason Nguyen, Dental Assisting; Amelia Rouleau, Construction Technology; and Katelyn Steele, Engineering & Robotics;

2024: Andrew Adams, Drafting & Design Technology; Jacob Giancola, Engineering & Robotics; Brian O'Connell, Automotive Technology; Robert Poirier, HVAC&R; Logan Rae, Health Services; and Laith Shloul, Electrical.

2025: Samantha Carroll, Information Technology; Eric Dunham, Engineering & Robotics; Kylie French, Painting & Design Technology; Cassidy Lyon, Health Services; Jack Nealley, HVAC&R; and John Simas, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

2026: Thomas Bailey, Automotive Collision Repair & Refinishing; Justin Fransen, Engineering & Robotics; Jack Lupien, Electrical; Ryan May, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Van Richard, Engineering & Robotics.

UXBRIDGE

2023: Isabel Cahill, Multimedia Communications; William Crosby, Painting & Design Technology; Isabella Gannon, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Maxwell Guyton, Engineering & Robotics; and Sunny Moscatelli, Cosmetology.

2024: Yara Alomar, Health Services; Kali Bly, Cosmetology; Savannah Brodeur, Cosmetology; Noah Cahill, Engineering & Robotics; Caterina Corapi, Engineering & Robotics; Micah Deary, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Trevor Horgan, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Sean Knox, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Grace Mathieu, Engineering & Robotics; and Marissa Osimo, Health Services.

2025: Alexi Cox, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Samuel Kirby, Electrical; Mikaela Swanson, Biotechnology; and Stephanie Zaitoun, Engineering & Robotics.

2026: Gabrielle Gannon, Engineering & Robotics; Veronica Jordan, Health Services; Daniel Noel, Engineering & Robotics; Khari Torku, HVAC&R; and Parker Waugh, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, Blackstone Valley Tech creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for the 2023-2024 school year will be held Monday, Jan. 30, through Friday, Feb. 3, from 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Registration packets will be sent to families of eligible children during the week of Jan. 17. If you do not receive a packet by Wednesday, Jan. 25, please call the school office at 508-634-2214x8.

Registration paperwork can be dropped off at the office, emailed to ltuite@hopedaleschools.org or mailed to Hopedale Memorial School, 6

Prospect St., Hopedale, MA 01747.

There will be no in-person registrations. Please be sure all paperwork is completed and any necessary documents needed to register are with your packet. This registration is for Hopedale residents only.

Please Note: Your child must be 5 years old on or before August 31, 2023, to be eligible for Kindergarten this year.

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FEBRUARY 2023 - HOPEDALE SR. CENTER ACTIVITIES (508)634-2208

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	2 10:00 am Watercolor Classes 1:00 pm Tai Chi <i>Errand Van Available</i>	3 10:00 am Re-boot Strength & Balance
6 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:30 pm BINGO	7 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge	8 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	9 10:00 am Watercolor Classes 9:00 am – 2:30 pm AARP Tax Clinic by Appt. 1:00 pm Tai Chi	10 10:00 am Re-boot Strength & Balance
13 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:30 pm BINGO	14 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge <i>Errand Van Available</i>	15 9:30 am Nurse Clinic 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	16 10:00 am Watercolor Classes 9:00 am – 2:30 pm AARP Tax Clinic by Appt. 10:00 am Knitters' Group 12:00 pm Valentines' Day Lunch & Karaoke Party 1:00 pm Tai Chi <i>Errand Van Available</i>	17 10:00 am Re-boot Strength & Balance
20 CLOSED FOR PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY 	21 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge	22 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	23 9:00 am – 2:30 pm AARP Tax Clinic by Appt. 1:00 pm Tai Chi 1:00 pm COA Board Meeting	24 10:00 am Re-boot Strength & Balance
27 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:00 pm Lunch at Sr. Center 12:30 pm BINGO	28 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge <i>Errand Van Available</i>			

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Volunteer opportunities for seniors

Are you a senior citizen looking for a way to volunteer in the community? If so, consider any of these volunteer opportunities:

- Become a “Grandfriend” at the Bright Beginnings Center Preschool in Hopedale
- Become a “Reading Buddy” at the Bancroft Library (Summer Program)
- Call BINGO (Monday afternoon)
- Assist in preparing the monthly Newsletter for

mailing

- Deliver Meals on Wheels (Meals are delivered on week-days only around 11:30 am.)
- Teach a Class at the Sr. Center
- Escort Grocery Bus or Help Us Serve Meals at Our Monthly Lunches
- Train to be an AARP Tax Preparer

Source: <https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/council-aging>

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Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park Presents “Parked at Home” Series Online



Every park has a story. Learn about your local national park and six other unique National Park Service (NPS) sites this winter through the “Parked at Home” virtual series.

Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park is made up of six different sites in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. “Parked at Home” programs offer local residents a chance to learn about these communities, and places far beyond New England. In addition to deep dives on Blackstone Valley topics, “Parked at Home” sessions bring in NPS staff working in other regions of the country. This year, staff from Blackstone River Valley NHP will talk to historian Megan Kate Nelson for the opening program. Then, they will partner with rangers at the following sites: Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration, Eisenhower National Historic Site, Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park.

What connects these diverse park sites? Rangers will explore common themes such as labor, land, and opportunity. Tune in to discover the great risks people took to make company towns nearby in Rhode Island—and as far away as Skagway, Alaska. Hear about the immigration process at Ellis Island and discover how the makeup of mill villages in the Blackstone Valley changed as people moved in from around the world. Get new insight into the ways that making music has changed with the Industrial Revolution.

Each discussion will last approximately one hour. The “Parked at Home” series begins

on Thursday, March 2, 2023, and runs on consecutive Thursday nights through April 13, 2023, at 7:00 PM EST. Presented in partnership with Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. This series is free and open to all. To register, visit the National Historical Park’s website at www.nps.gov/blrv. For more information, contact Park Ranger Allison Horrocks at Allison_Horrocks@NPS.gov.

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 427 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at www.nps.gov, on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice, Twitter www.twitter.com/natlparkservice, and YouTube www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice

Megan Kate Nelson, Saving Yellowstone March 2: 7:00 PM EST

In documentaries and popular media, National Park Service sites are often called America’s “best idea.” During this program, we will consider this argument with historian and author Megan Kate Nelson. Dr. Nelson is the author of several books, including *Saving Yellowstone: Exploration and Preservation in Reconstruction America* (2022). Learn about the origins of Yellowstone National Park and join us for a conversation on the history of public lands in the United States.

Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration March 9: 7:00 PM EST

How far have you traveled for work—or for a dream? For

centuries, people have moved to the Blackstone Valley for new opportunities. Some of the immigrants seeking a new life in the Valley first passed through Ellis Island Immigration Center. During this program, rangers from Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park will discuss this process with a ranger from the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration.

Eisenhower National Historic Site March 16: 7:00 PM EST

Join Park Rangers to discuss President Eisenhower’s legacy and his vision for a “postwar” America. Learn about how the Blackstone River Valley served as a major industrial hub that aided the war effort during World War II, and the long-term repercussions of the military industrial complex.

Reconstruction Era National Historical Park March 23: 7:00 PM EST

What makes a place a land of opportunity? In the years fol-

lowing the end of the Civil War, workers in the Blackstone Valley continued their struggle to secure basic rights in the workplace. Thousands of miles away, recently liberated people in the South Carolina Lowcountry pursued the opportunity to own land and to exercise the rights of citizenship. How did the trade in cotton connect these two places, and what social conditions set them apart?

Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park March 30: 7:00 PM EST

Get the inside scoop on one of the newest national parks in the United States! Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park, located in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, was established in 2020. Learn about the many people who have called Ste. Genevieve home through a discussion of its history. Discover connections between the distinctive French architecture and ways of life in Ste. Genevieve and industrial communities in Rhode Island.

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park April 6: 7:00 PM EST

Have you ever taken a big risk?

From Rhode Island’s early mill villages to Alaska’s company towns, people throughout United States history have taken great risks to make more than just a living. Learn about the blueprint for America’s industrial communities, Slatersville, RI, and hear thrilling stories from the Klondike Gold Rush.

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park April 13: 7:00 PM EST

Music can make us feel fully present. It also has the power to transport us back in time.

Learn about the history of Jazz in New Orleans and the rhythms of New England’s mills from the comfort of home. Rangers will discuss how music has been part of workers’ lives for the past two centuries. Tune in to learn about the role of rhythm and blues in national parks.

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Living Healthy

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.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center realizes you have choices when it comes to eye care. We are different. We focus on excellent and advanced eye care and treat our patients as if each and every one is family. We are from the community, most of us live in the community and our focus is to serve the community. As with any medical problem, the sooner you seek medical help, the better the chances are of a good outcome. We are available,

EYES

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MILFORD - FRANKLIN EYE CENTER



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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.org

at www.mass.gov.org

"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 fiscal 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@ma-house.gov, Curtis.boucher@ma-house.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 ac-

tioning 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.find-help.org to explore additional sources.

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EYES

continued from page 12

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Sports

Hopedale's Frohn Lets His Skills Do The Talking On the Ice

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Jake Frohn first laced up the skates in the first grade during a learn-to-skate program.

Soon after, he found himself playing for the Outlaws Hockey Club in Hopedale where he would play until he took up residency with the South Shore Kings.

His entire career found himself playing center like his favorite player, Boston Bruins Patrice Bergeron.

As a freshman he found himself making the Hopedale varsity team where he would begin centering the third line, but as the season progressed, Coach Mike MacQuarrie moved him up to the first line where he gelled nicely.

"As a freshman, it was very cool to get to play with two very talented seniors on that first line," Frohn said. "I really learned a lot from them and although it put a lot of responsibility on me to keep up with them, their knowledge helped me improve my game."

According to the Blue Raiders Coach, Frohn is by no means a big player—he's undersized, but has a big heart and a good hockey IQ.

"Being small defiantly has its advantages; I can get to the puck quicker and blow past the defenders," he said.

"They try to take the body to me, but all I have to do is make one quick move to get away from or go around them."

As a sophomore, he, like a majority of high school athletes, saw his season cut short thanks to Covid. Things were a little more difficult (like wearing masks under their helmets) due to Covid, and although it was somewhat harder than usual sea-

sons, Frohn said it didn't affect him all that much.

"Following the Covid season I grew and got stronger and found that my junior year was my best to date," Frohn said. "I was not being pushed around as much even though I was still on the smaller size (5'6" and 145 pounds) for a hockey player going up against 6' plus kids. I can take the hits and play pretty physical hockey."

Last winter, the Hopedale center scored 5 goals and had a team-leading 28 assists.

MacQuarrie noted that Frohn had a very productive junior campaign and could have had a lot more goals if it had not been for the misfortune of hitting numerous pipes and crossbars.

As he enters his senior season as a captain, he is hoping to help the younger athletes use their skill and talent to not only to get ready for their upperclassmen years, but help the squad make it back to the Division 3 State Tournament. Last year the Clockers defeated Middleborough and West Springfield before falling 2-0 to Lynnfield in the Round of 8.

Individually Frohn is closing in on 100 points during his Hopedale career and he is hoping that he can accomplish the rare feat.

"Only a few Hopedale players have been able to get to this point in the program and I am hoping that I can get there too," Frohn said.

The Blue Raider Coach referred to Frohn as an athlete who brings an intensity to both practices as well as the game.

"He is a soft spoken individual, but always plays hard and big for us," the Coach said. "If we are to get to the playoffs this season, Jake needs to be a big part of our game plan."



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Senate Passes Bill Supporting Parents Running for Public Office

Legislation would recognize child care costs as a valid campaign expense

The Massachusetts State Senate passed legislation that would support parents running for public office by recognizing childcare as a valid campaign expense.

“Public service is a personal choice made more complicated and daunting for working parents, especially women, who face the added costs of childcare,” said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). “While we’ve made great strides in diversifying our electoral representation in Massachusetts, there is much more we can do to make the decision to run for office easier for people with kids. I want to thank Senator Jehlen for championing

this issue and look forward to it advancing in the legislative process.”

“This bill would break down a major barrier to open elective office to people who have traditionally not had that opportunity,” said Senator Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville), Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development. “Many of us currently in office would not be here today if we didn’t have trusted people taking care of our kids while we knocked doors for our first campaigns. Allowing campaign finances to be used for child care means that more people in

our communities can participate than ever before and amplify the voices of those who have previously not been heard.”

Under the bill, a political candidate would be able to expend campaign funds for childcare costs, using money raised in support of a political campaign. The bill tasks the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance with the creation of regulation to oversee the implementation of this change.

The bill now heads to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for consideration.

Real Estate Corner

Recent Home Sales

Date	Hopedale	Amount
01/06/2023	102 Greene Street	\$369,000
01/06/2023	7 Robertson Drive	\$540,000
12/30/2022	36 Adin Street	\$722,000
12/30/2022	54 Dutcher Street #6	\$265,000
12/28/2022	121-123 Freedom Street	\$350,000

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



54 Dutcher Street, Unit 6, in Hopedale recently sold for \$265,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Emergency Kit Checklist



3 days of nonperishable / non-cook food
water (1 gal. per day per person), medication



flashlight, battery operated radio, extra batteries



first aid kit, cash, cell phone and charger



ID cards, information: (Dr., meds, allergies), family / friends contacts, toothbrush / toothpaste, blanket and washcloth



clothes and baby or pet supplies if you need them

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: The likelihood that you will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. This list may help you get through the first 3 days, after a disaster. It is a starting point, as individual needs vary depending upon circumstances. For additional information, visit: www.Ready.gov & www.mass.gov/mema/ready



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