

Miscoe Hill Middle School Students Collaborate to Create Amusement Park Rides

MENDON – Superintendent Maureen Cohen and Principal Jennifer Mannion proudly share that Miscoe Hill Middle School students created prototypes of amusement park rides, in a hands-on project to encourage literacy in automation and robotics.

Students worked in teams across 12 class periods under the supervision of Technology teacher Brittney Kahler, serving as architectural, computer, electrical, or mechanical engineers, or as project manager.

Students used their knowledge of VEX structure/motion pieces, mechanisms, movement, and programming to create a prototype ride. Team members collaborated on ride design and workflow, while also developing solutions to obstacles they



"Tower of Screams" - From left, Neva Lilburn, Ben Duplessis, and Cecilia Taylor created the "Tower of Screams."

Photo contributed by Mendon Upton Regional School District

encountered. Automation and Robotics students also collaborated with students in Digital Media classes to create logos for the new rides, and flyers and tickets for the Grand Opening of the Miscoe Hill

Amusement Park on Dec. 20. All sixth-graders attended. Students developed rides including a pirate ship and a

AMUSEMENT

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Upton Selectmen, EDC Look to Revitalize Downtown Revitalization

Officials say residents focusing on community center



Upton town officials say residents are excited about the new community center scheduled to open in June, but interest in the downtown revitalization project has dwindled. *Contributed Scott Calzolaio*

By Scott Calzolaio

On Jan. 10, the Upton Board of Selectmen and the Economic Development Committee of Upton rekindled the conversation regarding the future use of two town-owned properties in downtown Upton: the Holy Angels Church and the Knowlton-Risteen Building.

According to town officials, the community is currently excited about the new community center opening in June, but the sentiment towards the other ongoing projects in the town has dwindled.

EDC Chairperson David Ross says, "People drive by the church and are saying, you know, 'What's happening here?'... There are still a lot of questions still on how exactly to proceed downtown."

In 2019, the original vision for the church building's future included a few acceptable ideas such as saving the church, making it a mixed-use lot, or creating affordable housing. However, no defini-

DOWNTOWN

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Mendon Historical Society Plans March Events

Celebrate Women's History Month – March 4

Join us on Saturday, March 4, at 2 p.m. as we celebrate Women's History Month with a cinematic performance of World War Women: The Unsung Heroines of WWII - featuring Judith Kalaora founder and Artistic Director of History at PlayTM. This program follows the unprecedented work of heroines who risked everything. They organized resistance movements, blew up rail tracks, and flew dangerous

missions in an effort to boost to the war effort.

The event will take place in Goss Hall at the Unitarian Church located at 13 Maple Street, Mendon. This program is made possible through the generosity of a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council Mendon Chapter. For more information visit mendonhistoricalsociety.org or by email mendonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Mendon Antique Appraisal Show – March 25

Dust off those relics and join us as we discover which items may be priceless and which might end up in your yard sale! On Saturday, March 25, the Mendon Historical Society will host it own Antique Appraisal Show. The event will take place from noon to 3 p.m. at the Museum located at 15 Hastings Street, Mendon. For details and to register for the event, please contact us at mendonhistorical@gmail.com. Pre-registration is recommended. Refreshments will be served.

Fuel Assistance Available

If you or someone you know needs help keeping warm this winter, please don't wait, the Fuel Assistance program may help. This program helps to defray the cost of winter heating bills with applications being accepted through April 30.

The Mendon Senior Center processes applications for Mendon residents of all ages under

the administration of SMOC (South Middlesex Opportunity Council). If your gross household income falls within the limits you may qualify for fuel assistance and may also qualify for discounts on electric and telephone bills.

Call Janet Hubener, Outreach Coordinator at the Mendon Senior Center at 508-

478-6175 to request an instruction checklist and to make a free confidential appointment. Janet is also available to provide home visits to Mendon residents. Please note- anyone who is eligible for fuel assistance is automatically eligible to use the Mendon Food Pantry. Please contact the senior center with any questions.

February Updates from Mendon Town Clerk's Office

Nomination papers for Mendon's Annual Town Election are available beginning Monday February 6 in the Town Clerk's office. The deadline to return these papers to the Clerk's office is March 28 at 5 p.m. Elections will be held for the following offices: Select Board (2), Moderator, Board of Assessors, Board of Health (2), Housing Authority, Parks Commission, Planning Board, Taft Library Trustee (2), Water Commission, and MURSD School Committee. Please call our office if you have any questions about the process at 508-473-1085.

The Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday May 16, 2023 at the Miscoe Hill School. Vote by mail is available for this election and applications can be submitted anytime before the deadline of Tuesday May 9, 2023 at 5 p.m. Applications can be found online at <https://www.mendonma.gov/elections/links/vote-by-mail-application>

or in the Town Clerk's office. Completed applications can be mailed, emailed, or dropped off in the Clerk's office or the Clerk's drop box located near the lower town hall door.

The Clerk's office continues to accept Annual Census Forms. Please return your forms as soon as possible. For your convenience, census forms can be mailed, emailed, or dropped off. A reminder that a completed 2023 census form is required in order to qualify for the Senior Trash Discount.

The 2023 dog licensing period has begun. All dogs ages 6 months and older must be vaccinated against rabies and be licensed yearly by March 31. Please don't delay. Late fees of \$15 per dog will be assessed beginning on April 1. Dog fees can be paid online at <https://www.mendonma.gov/home/pages/online-payment-center> or you can come down to the office to register your dog.

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MENDON

Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

29 North Avenue, Mendon • 508-473-3259 • TaftPublicLibrary.org

HOURS: Tues. & Wed. 10-7 • Thurs. 3-7 • Fri. 12-5 • Sat. 9-12 • Sun. CLOSED • TRIAL MONDAYS Feb. 6 - Mar. 13 OPEN from 10-4

ADULT PROGRAMS

Open Mondays into March

Would you like to see the library open more hours? From February 6 through March 13 the Taft Public Library will be open on Mondays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on a Trial-Only basis. Join us for a test run of open days. Then, if you'd like to see us continue to open more hours, show your support at the Mendon Town Meeting on Friday, May 5 at 7 p.m. at the Miscos Hill Middle School Auditorium.

View our Recently Completed 5-Year Strategic Plan

The Taft Public Library Strategic Planning Committee has finished its work on the Taft Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 and it can now be viewed on our website www.taftpubliclibrary.org. The library and the committee would like to thank everyone who provided feedback. The committee was comprised of Library Director Andrew Jenrich, Children's Librarian Tara Windsor, Library Trustee Leesa Michael, Library Trustee Alison Chu, Charles Noel, Sue Ruggiero, Savannah Histen, Naomi Vogt, Mary Anne Moran, and Lauren Scott.

Upcoming Events:

To register for an event, click on the Library Event Calendar & Registration link at the top of the library's homepage www.taftpubliclibrary.org.

Cooking with Chef Rob Scott

Chef Rob Scott returns with a whole new set of cooking demonstrations on Zoom! Rob joins us virtually from his kitchen on Long Island. All ages are welcome

to participate. The recipes will be sent out before each class if you want to cook alongside Chef Rob! Sessions are at 7 p.m. The next sessions are:

March 28: Panzanella Salad with Vinaigrette Cod with San Marzano Tomatoes and Fennel with Toasted Ciabatta Bread. Please visit our website to register for any and all of these sessions.

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club will meet on Monday, February 13 at 7 p.m. to discuss *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards. Adult Book Clubs are held on the second Monday of the month.

For upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259 to request copies of the books or log in to your account from our website to request them through interlibrary loan. The next Adult Book Club books are as follows:

March: *Blind Tiger* by Sandra Brown

April: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club will meet to discuss *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* by David McCullough on Thursday, February 23 downstairs in the library. If you'd like to join us, stop at the downstairs circulation desk or give the library a call at 508-473-3259 to request a copy of the McCullough book.

The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club meets quarterly. Participants at the McCullough discussion will be discussing the reading list for the next year.

German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your vocabulary? German Conversation Club is no pressure, just fun! Led by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group meets the last Monday of each month from 6 - 7 p.m. The next German Conversation Club will be on Monday, February 27 at 6 p.m. Registration is required. To register, visit our website.

Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join us on the first and third Wednesday of every month at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on! Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. Crafts are not supplied.

Positive Parenting: Strategies for Children of All Ages with Meredith Daelhousen, LICSW

In this hybrid workshop parents will:

- Find out what really matters to children and how to reconnect
- Learn effective ways to manage difficult, oppositional, and stressful situations while maintaining your sense of calm
- Use effective communication skills
- Learn active listening skills
- Learn to implement behavioral interventions that will get results
- Plan and schedule self-care activities for the whole family.

Workshop is Wednesday, February 15 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the library or via Zom. To register, visit our website.

Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library will meet on Tuesday, February 28 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the library's Art Holmes Community Room for their monthly board meeting. Board meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend. If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com to confirm the date and time of the meeting.

TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS

Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website: www.taftpubliclibrary.org and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.

Itty Bitty Story Time

Itty Bitty Story time is designed for our youngest patrons birth to 3 years old. Join us for a lot of fun on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Story & Craft Time

Join us for story and craft time! Perfect for the preschool-aged child! All sessions take place Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

Alphabet Storytime

It's all about the alphabet! Each week we will focus on a different letter. We will read a couple of books, sing songs, and learn about the letter of the week. Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgens

Miss Deb will join us on Tuesday, February 28 at 10:30 a.m. for a fun-filled, musical morning. Registration is required and limited.

Book Clubs

Registration is required for all book clubs. Books are available for pickup at the Children's Circulation desk. Pizza and refreshments will be served. Please let us know of any dietary restrictions.

8-12 Book Club- We will be reading: *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl. The book club discussion will be held downstairs in the library on Tuesday, February 14 at 5 p.m.

Graphic Novel Book Club- This month we will be reading: *Sherlock Bones and the Natural History Mystery* by Renee Trembl. Join us on Tuesday, February 28 at 5 p.m. to discuss this month's book picks.

Coffee and Conversations & Puppet Storytime

Dates: Wednesdays: 3/1, 4/5, 5/3/23 Time: 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. Location: Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave., Mendon

Join us for an informal playtime where families will be able to build social connections, learn about early childhood development and family friendly resources. Taft will supply Muffin House Muffins!

Please stay for the 10:30 a.m. Puppet Storytime. Join Newton & Friends of Through Me to You Puppetry for songs & stories. At the end of the 30-minute show, children can greet the puppets. Geared for children 2 to 5 years, but all are welcome.

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MENDON Mendon Cultural Council 2023 Grants Announced

Previous grant recipients The Mendon Cultural Council have granted include Miscoc Hill School, Daniel's Farmstead Farmers Market /Music Series, and Blackstone Valley Community Chorus to name a few. A complete list of recipients can be found below.

The Mendon Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community.

Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally ap-

pointed volunteers.

Grants Awarded For 2023 are: Blackstone Valley Community Chorus, BVT, Fantastical Folktales of Flowers, Greater Milford Community Chorus, Reflection of the 60's Through the Music of The Beatles, Magic Show by Scott Martell, Mendon Historical Society, The First Lady of the World, Birch Alley Brass Christmas Concert, Claffin Hill Music, Daniels Farmstead Foundation.

The Mendon Cultural Council will seek applications again in the fall. For guidelines and complete information on the Mendon Cultural Council, contact culturalcouncil@mendonma.gov. Applications and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available online at www.mass-culture.org.

The Council is looking for new members to join. Please contact spetralia@mendonma.gov for more information.

Mendon Senior Center Upcoming News

The following programs will be offered at the Mendon Senior Center. To register, either stop by or call 508-478-1675. Space is limited for many programs.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Education Programs

The Mendon Senior Center will be hosting the following two programs on Wednesday, February 22 from 1 - 2:15 p.m. The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's and Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body. The first program will help you to recognize the common signs of the disease in yourself and others and includes the next steps to take including how to talk to your doctor. The second focuses on lifestyle choices and how they impact the aging process. Learn about important research into diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement.

The Ukraine War and Vladimir Putin

This in-depth presentation by Henry Quinlan on Thursday, March 2 at 10:30 a.m. at the Mendon Senior Center will review many facets of this war including what you don't know but should. He will discuss the consequences expected and unintended. Mr. Quinlan has 35 years of experience in dealing with the former Soviet Union and Russia including living in Moscow for five years. He will examine the origins of the war, the status of the war today, corruption in both countries, options for ending the war and a new world order emerging after the way—just to name a few topics. The program is sponsored by the Friends of Mendon Elders.

My Life, My Health

Sign up today for My Life, My Health a six-week workshop sponsored by Tri-Valley, Inc. for individuals living with a Chronic disease or individuals who are caring for someone with a Chronic Disease. It is free and will be held Wednesdays March 15 – April 26 (no class April 12) from 1 - 3:30 p.m. at the Mendon Senior Center. My Life My Health- the Stanford University Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is for anyone living with an on-gong medical condition like: Arthritis, Cancer, Chronic Back Pain, Asthma, COPD, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Diabetes, Fibromyalgia, High Blood Pressure, Heart Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Stroke, and more.

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Can You Plan for an Unplanned Retirement?



Mark Freeman

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Many people plan to take an early retirement, so when that day arrives, they're ready for it. But what if you were to face an unplanned retirement? Would you be prepared to deal with the financial issues?

It's something worth thinking about, because any number of factors — illness, a spouse's illness, downsizing, other issues

— could lead to an abrupt departure from the workforce. But taking action while you're still working may help you make the transition easier on yourself.

Your first move, of course, should be to at least consider the possibility of having to retire earlier than you planned. You can then move on to some concrete steps, possibly including the following.

Build an emergency fund. Under any circumstances, it's a good idea to build an emergency fund — but it's especially important if you want to prepare for an unforeseen retirement. Generally speaking, your emergency fund should contain three to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. But if you suspect an earlier-than-anticipated retirement may be in your future, and you have some time to prepare for it, you

should consider an emergency fund that contains a full year's worth of expenses.

Consider your portfolio's asset allocation. If you're concerned about an unexpected retirement, you may want to consider the equities allocation in your portfolio. If you think you may need to tap into your portfolio sooner than you expected, you may not want to be over-exposed to investments most vulnerable to market volatility. However, these are the same investments that offer you the most growth potential — which you'll need to help stay ahead of inflation. So, look for an investment balance that's appropriate for your needs. As part of this positioning, you may want to shift some assets into income-producing vehicles, while also adding to the "cash" portion of your portfolio to boost your liquidity.

Evaluate your Social Security op-

tions. An unplanned retirement may cause you to consider taking Social Security earlier than you had planned. You can start taking Social Security when you're 62, but your monthly benefits will be up to 30% lower than if you had waited until your full retirement age, which is likely between 66 and 67. If you have sufficient income through other sources, you may be able to delay taking Social Security until your checks will be bigger — but of course, if you need the money, waiting may not be an option.

Address your health care needs. If you take an unplanned retirement, and you have employer-sponsored health insurance, you'll have to look for alternatives. You might be able to get extended coverage from your employer, but this could be quite expensive. Of course, if you're already 65, you can get on Medicare, but if you're

younger, you might be able to get coverage under your spouse's plan. If that's not an option, you may want to explore one of the health care exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act. To learn more about these exchanges, visit healthcare.gov.

Taking an unexpected retirement can certainly be challenging — but the more prepared you are, the better your outcomes are likely to be.

If you would like to discuss your personal situation with a financial advisor contact:

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Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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 HOURS: Tues. - Thurs. 10-8 • Fri. & Sat. 10-4 • Sun. & Mon. CLOSED

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

Community Center Progress

For the latest updates and photos of the new community center at 9 Milford Street, future home of the Upton Library and Upton Senior Center, visit uptonlibrary.org.

Printing, scanning, faxing

Are available at Upton Town Library. We have a self-service machine, and staff assistance is always available. The first five pages per day are free of charge, additional pages are 10 cents for b/w, 25 cents for color and 50 cents for faxing. Most phones can connect directly to our printer, and our desktop workstations can print anything that you've emailed to yourself.

Explore graphic novels!

Graphic novels are a literary form that combines images and pictures to create compelling stories. Modern graphic novels include everything from superhero collections and fantasy adventures to poignant memoirs and histories. Our collection is divided into three sections based on reading level, theme

and type of images, so readers of all ages can find appropriate content.

Special Events

Our Winter Reading Challenge ends on February 25. Kids, tweens, and teens may return their completed challenge sheet to the circulation desk to receive their prize kit for a snowman craft. One prize per participant.

A Succulent Planting Party

for tweens and teens ages 10-16 will be held on February 22 from 6 - 7 p.m. Participants will decorate two terracotta pots and plant a variety of succulents. This program requires registration on our Event Calendar. Special thanks to donations from Petal and Crumb in Upton.

It's Tinker Time!

On Saturday, February 25 from 1 -2 p.m., kids ages 5-12 will have the chance to become engineers and tinker around at different building stations. Activities include homemade tinker toys, marshmallow and toothpick structures, and paper cup tower challenges. Participants must register on our Event Calendar for this event.

LIBRARY EVENTS – In Upton Town Hall

Music & Movement

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins will take place February 7 and 21 from 10:30-11 a.m. Join us for stories, songs, and fun. Best for ages 1-5. Partial funding for this program is through a grant from Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. Currently, this is a drop-in program.

Baby Storytime

Baby Storytime is for ages birth to 3 and is every Friday at 10:30 a.m. This is a 20-minute lapsit program featuring stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. For ages 0-3.

Preschool Storytime

Preschool Storytime is every Thursday at 10:30 a.m. and is for ages 3 to 5. This is a 30-minute program, featuring longer stories, songs, rhymes, and crafts. Currently, storytimes are drop-in programs. For ages 3-5.

Teen Group

This group meets weekly every Tuesday from 3 - 4 p.m. and focuses on a new theme each month, sharing books, crafts, games, and more. For February, our theme will be fantasy! This group is for tweens

and teens ages 10-16. This is always a drop-in program.

Kids' Book Club

Our book club members explore popular juvenile and pre-teen titles on the first Wednesday of each month. Join us March 1 from 4 - 4:45 p.m., to discuss the graphic novel "Chef Yasmina and the Potato Panic" by Wauter Mannaert. This group is for ages 8-12 and reads mostly middle grade titles. We welcome new members all year round! New members may contact Mrs. Murphy at lmurphy@cw-mars.org.

Upton Reads Book Group – Town Hall

An eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction with meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening of each month. This group will meet in person at Upton Town Hall, with a Zoom remote option. Tues., Feb. 14 at 12:45 p.m., and Thurs., Feb. 16 at 6:45 p.m. : The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell, by Robert Dugoni.

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

2023 Upton Annual Town Meeting & Election Calendar

Annual Town Meeting
 Thursday, May 4, 2023 - 7 p.m.
Annual Town Election
 Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Last Day for Voter Registration for the Annual Town Meeting and Election is Monday, April 24, 2023 -5 p.m. Town Clerks Office.

Nomination Papers for the annual town election will be available from the Town Clerk's Office beginning Monday, February 6, 2023. The last day to obtain nomination papers is Friday, March 17, 2023 by 5 p.m. Papers must be submitted to Registrars of Voters for certification of names on or before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. After certification, papers must be filed with the Town Clerk on or before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2023. Objections to and withdrawal of nominations must be filed with the Town Clerk on or before 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2023

Offices to appear on the May ballot are:

- Moderator:
 - One for one (1) year
- Board of Selectman:
 - One for three (3) years
- Board of Assessors of Taxes:
 - One for three (3) years
 - One for one (1) year
- Mendon Upton Regional School District Committee:
 - One for three (3) years
- Cemetery Commission:
 - One for three (3) years
 - One for one (1) year
- Board of Health:
 - One for three (3) years
 - One for one (1) year
- Recreation Commission:
 - One for three (3) years
- Trustees of Public Library:
 - Three for three (3) years
 - One for one (1) year
- Planning Board:
 - One for five (5) years
- Housing Authority:
 - One for two (2) years
 - One for three (3) years
- Finance Committee:
 - One for three (3) years
- Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds:
 - One for three (3) years
- Constable:
 - One for two (2) years



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Experienced Employees Welcome Aboard New Owner of Colonial ChemDry

Business spotlight

When Michael Halliday decided his next career step would be to run a business, he had two requirements: he wanted it to be in a Massachusetts town, and it had to serve the community. Originally from the western part of the state, Halliday spent most of his adult life in the south, first as a submariner in the Navy, and then as an engineer for the government, working on Navy projects. Returning north would put him near his family. Operating a business that served the community would be a natural extension of what he saw as his role in the military, serving people.

Halliday settled on Colonial ChemDry, in part because of its long presence in Upton; it's located at 152 Milford Street. "A

business like this one that's been around for forty years is rooted in the community, and I wanted to build on that," he said. ChemDry is a franchise-based company known for using unique, specialized cleaning tools and patented agents to clean carpets in the home or business with little water and leaving behind minimal residue. That means rugs dry faster and stay clean longer.

"There's been a lot to learn, but I'm enjoying it. The tinkering engineer in me likes maintaining the equipment, too." Halliday did a lot of research and as part of that, found it reassuring to learn the ingredients in the cleaners are safe for people, the rugs, and the environment. He explains this is possible with ChemDry because the equipment agitates the rug as part of the process,

and therefore doesn't need strong chemicals the way other processes might.

Halliday adds, "I'm especially grateful such experienced technicians were already here. From them, I've picked up a lot." Colonial ChemDry employees average over 20 years at the company, having received extensive training from the parent firm, and more importantly, invaluable experience

working for clients. "Over the years, they've seen all kinds of problem spots and know what to do, plus they go the extra mile when needed. They're proud of the results they achieve, and I am too." The employees have warmly welcomed him on board his new "ship." Says Office Manager Stacy Boulanger, "Everyone here is very happy to be working under Mike. He



Colonial ChemDry's new owner Michael Halliday with the powerhead star tool that sprays a cleaning agent and agitates it to extract dirt from carpets.

offers full support to the staff. Mike makes sure to show his appreciation and makes the workday enjoyable. He's made many positive changes so far."

Customers also appreciate Colonial ChemDry's high de-

gree of expertise. "Most people who bring us in have used us before. They can't believe the

CHEMDRY *continued on page 8*

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Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
01/24/2023	35 North Avenue	\$375,000
01/23/2023	37 Blackstone Street	\$410,000
01/23/2023	12 Talbott Farm Drive	\$800,000
01/20/2023	16 Brookview Lane	\$530,000
01/17/2023	29 Thornton Street	\$300,000
12/30/2022	29 Miscoe Road	\$682,500

Date	Upton	Amount
10/10/2023	115 Glen Avenue	\$674,999
12/29/2022	10 Grafton Road	\$725,000
12/23/2022	27 Sienna Circle #36	\$669,500
12/23/2022	25 Sienna Circle #35	\$718,03

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



12 Talbott Farm Drive in Mendon recently sold for \$800,000. Photo credit www.zillow.com

Upton and Mendon Both Receive Nearly \$6k in Fire Safety Grants

In January, the outgoing Baker-Polito administration announced that 266 municipal fire departments would 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 [citizen] SAFE programs. The previous record of 253 communities was set in FY 2018.

Both the Upton Fire Department and the Mendon Fire Department received a S.A.F.E. grant of \$3,781 for child education, and a Senior SAFE grant of \$2,077 for educating senior citizens.

“For more than 25 years, the S.A.F.E. grant program has pro-

vided hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts students with fire and life safety lessons that last a lifetime,” said then-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 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>.

CHEMDRY

continued from page 7

kinds of stains we can get out, especially pet odors. And people with allergies, such as dust mites, really like the results, too.” He is adding some newer equipment for cleaning area rugs at a humidity- controlled room in his facility that will allow the company to complete the work in about a week rather than the few weeks as is needed now. The business focuses mostly on residential carpets and area rugs, but will also clean granite and wood and more, at homes as well as businesses.

While Colonial ChemDry travels to towns across the region, Halliday especially looks forward to working with more homes and businesses right in Upton, getting to know the neighbors. He’s also reaching out into the town, for example, by taking a company van to the Trunk or Treat event last fall. “I’d like our company to give back. When I was in the service, we’d help with the Special Olympics, and we built homes for people who needed them. I’d like to do more like that here in town as part of our contribution to the community.”

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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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Community Concert Band Recruiting New Members

No "anxiety-inducing" audition required

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."

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 himself plays trombone professionally, 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>.



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SCHOOLS

Miscoe Hill Middle School Students Create Original Music Through Project Based Learning

Superintendent Maureen Cohen and Principal Jennifer Mannion proudly share that Miscoe Hill Middle School created original musical scores as part of a project focusing on music in advertising. Michael Weber, a band teacher at Miscoe Hill Middle School, created the project with the purpose to engage his students in something that they experience daily, while also understanding the work behind it. The music students participated in their own "rock band" and learned the basics of guitar, drums, bass, and piano in the process. Weber then reached out to local businesses to take part in this endeavor. The Mendon Fire Department and Harshaw Paving in Uxbridge happily agreed to partner with his students. First, the students evaluated their own strengths and weaknesses before choosing an instrument to play as part of the band. Then, they composed music and executed a plan to refine their work throughout the project. Weber supported the students with ongoing coaching, but allowed them the freedom to develop their own creative visions and pathways.

"With this project, students were able to try out instruments and music-making while also simultaneously fostering team building and group activities," said Weber. "This initiative was a huge success and aided in the

confidence and community involvement of the students."

This class follows the District's commitment to Project Based Learning, an approach to teaching that highlights the use of problem-solving and collaboration in the design of authentic, real-life projects. Partnering with community members has created an avenue for students to bring their learning to life in meaningful ways.

"Project-based learning, at the heart, is about student agency," Superintendent Cohen said. "By working hands-on and collaboratively, students not only develop a deeper connection with the topic, the iterative process of refinement, reflection, and partnering with community members brings authenticity into their learning as well."

To see the students' work for the Mendon Fire Department, visit <https://bit.ly/3D2RNVk> or our Facebook page @Free-PressPapers.

Mendon-Upton Regional School District School Building Highlights



Nipmuc Regional High School

A news crew from WBZ CBS Boston stopped by Nipmuc Regional High on Thursday, Jan. 26 to talk to Mr. Gorman, and his students about their latest successes in rocketry.

Gorman and his team placed runner-up in an international competition and did some work alongside a rocket company.

Miscoe Middle School

Despite the lack of snow, Ski Club has seen yet another successful season. Administrators thank parent volunteers, as well as coordinator Sue Allen. Participants visited Wachusett Mountain every Friday for fresh air and great exercise. The season ended in January.

Miscoe Student Council will host a Winter Carnival for grades 5 and 6 on Feb. 16. Student council members encourage their peers to come out for a night of games, snacks, prizes, and fun.

Term 2 Ended on Jan. 23, and grades were posted to PowerSchool Jan. 31.

MCAS dates for the school year 2022-2023 are as follows: ELA will be April 6 and April 11 for grades 5-8. Math will be May 9 and May 11 for grades 5-8.

Science MCAS will be May 15 and May 18 for grades 5-8.

Session 3 enrichments will start for Miscoe and will run from Feb. 6 through March 31. Classes such as cooking, babysitting, chess and board games, model making, ancestry, after school sports, and Dungeons and Dragons will be offered.

Henry P. Clough Elementary

For the next 10 weeks, Motoko, a Japanese storyteller, is coming to be a writer-in-residence to work with grade 4 students. She started mid-January and the students and teachers said they are so excited

about the work they will be doing with her. This initiative is thanks to a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant for \$5,000.

Clough is planning a fun family event on Valentine's Day where parents and guardians are invited to "Breakfast With Books". Before school on Feb. 14, the PTO will host a breakfast and families will be able to read together and enjoy breakfast.

Memorial Elementary

There is still more room in many of the Memorial Elementary School Extra Enrichment courses. Topics range from Robotics and Legos to soccer and yoga. This session of enrichment courses will run from Feb. 6 to March 31. Morning sessions will occur from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. and afternoon sessions from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Courses range in price starting at \$60. More information and sign-up forms can be found on the school's website under "News".

Source: Mendon-Upton schools. Compiled by Scott Calzolaio for Upton & Mendon Free Press

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SCHOOLS

A 'Cool' New Adult Program at BVT

The HVAC&R Shop gets a facelift

UPTON – To keep pace with technological advancements, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District enhances its vocational, academic, and community offerings with grants that strengthen its ability to serve its students and the greater community. With a \$225,000 FY22 Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant for equipment, the highly-popular Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) shop has undergone an impressive renovation.

The grant allowed the school to acquire and install industry-grade equipment like air purification systems, boilers, furnaces, building automation workstations, and line sets. The numerous upgrades increased the vocational-technical training for the day students and adult learners in the new HVAC&R Moonlight Program, as well as help increase the number of skilled workers entering the trades.

The shop renovation occurred over the summer break with the help of students, staff, retirees, and the facilities department, which manages numerous preventative maintenance projects during that time frame. It was an impressive undertaking:

- All furniture and equipment were removed from the shop.
- Ceiling, walls, and trim were cleaned and painted.



Two students in the highly popular Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Registration adult program at Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School. The HVAC&R shop was recently renovated with a \$225,000 state grant. Courtesy photo

- Interior and exterior shop doors were replaced.
 - Installation included a new epoxy floor, LED lighting, moveable wood workstations, a sink, student lockers, a heating/AC unit, and standard safety signage.
- The upgrades, such as cleaning, painting, and installing new industry-grade equipment and workstations, were completed with in-house resources. The vocational instructors helped with plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and painting projects. Additionally, HVAC&R Instructor Matthew LaJoie, had students Travis Cook and Robert Poirier working in the shop over the summer, as did Painting & De-

sign Instructor Tim Buono, who worked with students Maddison Moore and Emma Fiore.

The District will make nearly a half-million dollars of enhancements parlaying the grant from the state with a \$200,000 match from its certified excess and deficiency fund with the added value of student project designers and laborers to renovate without financially impacting local tax dollars or municipal assessment requests.

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Roach makes Dean's List at Northeastern

Mendon resident Robert Roach was recognized for achieving Dean's List honors at Northeastern University Khoury College of Computer Sciences for the fall 2022 semester. Each student receives a letter of recommendation and congratulations from their college dean.

Roach, who is a sophomore

majoring in computer science, earned the distinction by carrying a full program of at least four courses and a quality point average of 3.5 or greater out of a possible 4.0 and no single grade lower than a C-minus during the course of his college career. This is Roach's third consecutive placement on the Dean's list. Roach graduated

from Nipmuc Regional High School in 2021.

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OBIT

John Robertson, Jr.

UPTON – John Robertson, Jr., died peacefully at his home in Upton on January 14, 2023, attended by his family and surrounded by the forests, waterways and wildlife he and his wife faithfully stewarded for 60 years.

He was born on March 24, 1928 in Norwood, MA, the son of John Robertson of Hawick, Scotland, and Helen (Metcalf) Robertson of Norwood, MA. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Cynthia (Tourtellot) Robertson; his son, John Robertson of South Berwick, ME and his wife Nancy; his daughter Katherine Snow Robertson of Upton and her former partner Bronislaus Kush of Worcester; and his daughter Laurel Ruth Robertson and her husband, Brian Moriarty, also of Upton. His descendants include five grandchildren (Samuel, Thomas, Peter, Margaret and Callan) and three great-grandchildren (Mallory, Malcolm and Priscilla). His older sister, Jean Springer of Shelton, WA, also survives him.

John was raised in Norwood, MA and enlisted in the US Navy in 1946. After receiving an honorable discharge, he enrolled at Northeastern University, where he earned a BA in Chemical Engineering and a MA in Engineering Chemistry.

John worked as a co-op at Dennison Manufacturing while still a student, and then embarked on a 46-year-long career in the abrasives industry. He worked at Norton Company in Worcester before accepting a position as Research Engineer at Bay State Abrasives. He retired from Bay State as Manager of R&D after 38 years with the company. John holds several patents, and his technical articles have appeared in numerous publications.

John and his family moved to Upton in 1963, where he was active in community affairs for many decades, serving on the Finance Committee, School Committee and the Board of Selectmen. He also served on the Board of Library Trustees for 25 years, persevering over four failed attempts to construct an updated facility.

He was last elected to the Board in 2021, and was a sitting member at the time of his death. In 2021, he and Cynthia went door-to-door, personally encouraging Upton voters to fund a new state-of-the-art library/community center. The motion passed, and the nearly-completed building is slated to



open in spring of 2023.

He was a proud member of the American Legion Post #173, participating in numerous civic ceremonies over the years. A brick in honor of his service in WWII is installed in the Veterans Memorial Walkway at the George Lincoln Wood VFW Post 5594 on Milford Street, Upton.

John was one of Upton's leading advocates for open-space protection. While on the Board of Selectmen, he actively supported the purchase of a large tract of land on Peppercorn Hill for conservation purposes. He summed up his position by observing that "When it's gone, it's gone."

In 2021, John and his wife sold the development rights to their 40+ acres of woodland property to the Town, ensuring that it will be preserved in its natural state and remain accessible to future generations. Today, approximately one-third of Upton's landscape is protected as open space.

While in his 40s, John decided to learn Russian, and became proficient in reading and speaking the language. He played the bagpipes, collected stamps and minerals, and lovingly cared for the gardens, fruit trees and animals on the farm he and his wife maintained. He also wrote several books, including two on Upton's history. He had just completed a third book about his childhood during the Great Depression, the war years and young adulthood.

John Robertson was a man of faith. He frequently cited the importance of service and faith in speeches he gave at Town events.

A Memorial Service followed by Military Honors, was held on Saturday, January 28, in the United Parish of Upton.

Donations in his memory can be made to: The Friends of the Upton Library, PO Box 662, Upton MA 01568 or to the Metacomet Land Trust, P.O. Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038.

The Pickering & Son Upton Funeral Home is honored to assist the Robertson Family with arrangements. www.UptonFunerals.com

The Sweetest Season is Here

Girl Scouts are out in full force selling their iconic cookies. This tradition dates back to 1917 when a troop in Oklahoma sold shortbread cookies as a fundraiser. Over the past one hundred plus years Girl Scouts have grown their fundraiser to expand from the original trefoil shortbread cookie to more varieties and two national bakers to provide the cookies to all its Girl Scout troops across the country. Many of you wonder, what do they do with the money from all those cookie boxes? You see girls in grades K-12 selling them to friends and family, outside in parking lots in the cold and snow, and on forms posted at workplaces but how do Girl Scouts benefit from those sales.

First of all, profits are 100% spent locally for purposes of programing, training, facilities, camping equipment, parade flags, town supply of snowshoes and many other necessary items for Girl Scouting activities. Secondly, troops use funds to go on trips that range from kindergarteners going to Build-a-Bear, to horseback riding, camping, whitewater rafting, high school trips to Montreal,



philanthropic activities in the community, whatever exciting things girls enjoy budgeting and planning for with their funds.

Just as important as raising funds is the experience. Girls learn valuable life skills of speaking to customers, financial planning, and money management. There are quite a few badges in financial literacy and business skills that girls can earn at each level from Daisies to Ambassadors. This year Cadette troop

30016 organized a cookie rally where the older girls set up games and activities for younger girls to play and practice their cookie skills and trivia. As stated by Ainsley Allen, "My favorite thing about the cookie rally was helping the younger kids and teaching them what I know about selling cookies."

So when you see those Girl Scouts out and about, stop by to purchase or donate a box or two. Be sure to talk to the girls to see what exciting things they have planned. Visit www.gscwm.org to find a cookie booth near you. In case you are wondering, the national favorite is definitely thin mints!

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AMUSEMENT

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“swing around” with a winter blizzard theme.

The amusement park project used Project Lead the Way curriculum in Automation and Robotics, which uses hands-on projects to empower students and develop lifelong, real-world skills. The project also aligns with the District’s Portrait of a Learner, encouraging development as a Skillful Collaborator, Solution Seeker, Mindful Learner, and Inspired Innovator.

“These students developed great projects. They also acquired confidence that they can use the skills they acquired to create, build, and problem-solve, which will benefit them throughout life and their careers,” Superintendent Cohen said. “Congratulations to all the students, and to Ms. Kahler for her expertise in assisting students.”

Videos of the projects may be viewed on Brittney Kahler’s Twitter feed @bkahler5174

SPORTS

Northbridge/Nipmuc Hockey in Line for States

By Chris Villani Sports Writer

The Northbridge/Nipmuc hockey team finished up the first half of the season with seven wins and in a strong position to qualify for the state tournament.

“We are in a good position from a power rankings standpoint,” head coach Ryan Neville said following the first 11 games of the campaign. “A lot of things are within our control over the second half of the season. I’m pleased with how the season has turned out.”

Neville was quick to credit his team’s resilience. Northbridge has bounced back after losses and done well to follow up one victory with another in multiple spots this winter. On the ice, Neville praised his team’s balance.

“We get scoring up and down, not only from multiple players, but from multiple lines, so that has helped,” he said. “We also have really good defensive zone coverage from the forward group.”

Nipmuc seniors Derek Consi-

gli and Patrick Schrafft have anchored a blue line that is skilled, albeit thin.

“We are mostly rolling with four defenseman, so those guys are logging a ton of minutes and doing really, really well,” Neville said. “The guys we have are experienced, they know what to expect. They can get the puck out of the zone quickly, which helps us in transition.”

Junior Brett Flanders scored the most points for the Rams through the first 11 games with six goals and 13 assists on the team’s top line.

“He does a good job facilitating the puck,” Neville said. “He moves it around, gets it out of our end, and gets it on the stick of his linemates.”

Nipmuc junior Joe Sullivan is tops on the team on goals and second in points. Neville described him as a “shifty skater.”

“He can stick handle with the best of them and he can put the puck away when he gets the chance,” the coach said.

Some young Nipmuc athletes have also boosted North-



The Northbridge/Nipmuc hockey team, including junior Brett Flanders (above), is in a strong position to qualify for the state tournament. Courtesy photo

bridge this winter. Freshman Garrett Consigli is on the third line and has scored multiple times this year. Neville said Consigli has been able to play well on both the power play and the penalty kill.

Northbridge’s ultimate goal is getting to the tournament, but Neville said he also wants to make sure his team is playing its best hockey at the most important time of the season. The biggest bane for Northbridge has been penalties, so playing more

disciplined hockey will be important for the rest of the campaign.

The schedule down the stretch should also help Northbridge be tested come tourney time.

“We have nine games to finish the season against really tough opponents, that should prepare us for what we will face in the tournament,” Neville said. “We are looking forward to putting in the work and making every moment count over the next several weeks.”

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DOWNTOWN

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tive choices were made.

Ross stated that the "blank canvas" approach is not working and suggested the EDC discuss the possibility of hiring a consultant to determine what the community truly needs.

"We've gone down this road as far as we can," he said. "and it's time to pivot now and potentially look at saying it might be the town's responsibility to find a use for, or rehab at least one of these properties."

The joint discussion also touched upon the possibility of selling the lots to a private bidder and the issue of parking in the downtown area.

While there are high sentiments towards preserving the church building, its purpose would still be up for question.

No decisions were made during the meeting but committee member Eugene Bernat stated his belief that re-engaging the community on the possibilities could be vital to the success of the projects.

"We really strongly believe that we need to re-engage the public," Bernat said. "I think we do need the support of the community no matter what we do. And I'm not sure that, without some sort of very focused visioning process, we can get that support."

The future of the Holy Angels Church and the Knowlton-Risteen Building remains uncertain as the community continues to weigh its options.

The EDC hopes to re-engage the public and gather input on potential uses for the properties, keeping all setbacks in mind.

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SPORTS

BVT Hockey Playing Under Own Colors for 1st Time

*By Chris Villani
Sports Writer*

After more than 20 seasons of participating in a co-op boys' ice hockey program with Grafton, Blackstone Valley Tech has its own team this winter for the first time. The Beavers knew they could generate enough interest to field a varsity team, but with nearly 40 athletes trying out, were able to field a JV program as well.

"The kids have embraced it," varsity head coach Turk Chambless said. "They have really enjoyed the fact that they are playing for their school."

Chambless said Valley Tech athletic director Mike Dense explored the possibility of starting a new program during the off-season. After discussing it with the principal and the superintendent, the decision was made to raise the funds needed to have a program that is just for BVT.

Despite being a first-year program, the Beavers have held their own on the ice through the first half of the season. BVT posted a .500 record and every game has been competitive, Chambless said.

"That's all I asked for at the beginning of the season, to have the kids buy into it," he said.



Blackstone Valley Tech has its own hockey team this winter for the first time. *Courtesy photo*

"There is not one game where I look back and say that we did not compete."

Senior captain Lukas Petone is the team's top point scorer and one of the primary drivers of the offense. Fellow captain Nick Laflamme led the team in goals through the first half of the year. Junior Joseph Manzi has excelled and shown his versatility on the ice.

"He is a great kid, he works very hard and I have moved him back and forth from play-

ing defense to playing forward just to shake things up a little bit and he's been playing great," Chambless said.

Colin Chambless and Thomas Liddy are two more captains and leaders for the Beavers this winter and have added depth on both ends of the ice.

After an encouraging start, Chambless said the goal for his team is to remain competitive heading down the stretch, with the ultimate goal of making it to the state tournament in the pro-

gram's first season.

"A lot of these kids have never played varsity hockey before, so we want to be playing our best hockey at the end," the coach said.

If Valley Tech is in the tournament, Chambless wants to make sure his team is a "tough out." The first half of the year gives him confidence that his will be a difficult squad to match up with come playoff time.

"We know we can compete with anybody," he said.

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