Projected FY20 School Budget Up by $1.9 Million

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter

It’s shaping up to be a “challenging” budget season for the Mendon–Upton Regional School District as preliminary projections for the FY20 budget shows a $1 million gap between revenues and revenue.

School officials presented the first-pass budget for the January 28 School Committee Meeting, a budget that maintains level services—keeping the same programs and staff in place—while making some “critical” investments.

“In building a budget you have to start with your beliefs about learning; what are your core values,” said Superintendent Dr. Joseph Maruszczak while presenting the budget.

The $37,273,111 FY20 budget is a $1,920,843 or a 5.43 percent increase over the current FY19 budget. Some of the major drivers of the increase include a $644,000 or 3.26 percent increase in salaries due to contractual obligations, a $360,000, 5 percent, increase in Health Insurance; a $80,735, 5 percent, increase in Transportation costs; a $162,000, 17.2 percent, increase in Special Education Transportation costs; and a $62,370 increase in heating oil and boiler maintenance at all four district schools.

The budget also includes funding for new four “critical” positions in the district including two district-wide school psychologists, an Elementary Special Education Team Chair/Dean of Students, and a Health and Wellness Teacher at Missce. The new positions are important to their goal of “providing social-emotional services that all learners need to thrive,” said Maruszczak.

On the revenue side, Chapter 70 aid only increased $20 per student for a total of $44,020, while regional transportation reimbursement was level funded.

“In the eight years at Superintendent, I have never seen a worse State Budget come to the table,” said Selectman Brett Simas.

The School Committee will need to certify the draft of the FY20 budget at the January 28 School Committee Meeting. “As a result, the burden for this year will be significant based on the preliminary budget, with an assessment increase (not including debt) to Mendon of $928,687 or 10.12 percent and Upton of $1,127,665 or 10.13 percent.

Even with using $300,000 from the district’s E&D (Excess and Deficiency) account and $150,000 from revolving accounts, there will still be a ‘substantial’ funding gap. “There are still a lot of variables on the revenue and expenditure side, but we have some serious concerns at this juncture,” said Maruszczak. “If the gap isn’t closed through discussions with officials from both communities, we are looking at fairly significant cuts to staff and programming”.

Back in 2015, the towns voted to approve an override to fund the school district after the proposed budget exceeded the 2.5 percent tax levy. With the district still six weeks away from certifying their FY20 budget, the town and school district will need to hash out how the proposed budget would be funded.

“Because of the limited tax base in these two towns, the budget is always a challenge; but it is also a difficult school district to let alone grow it and continue to move in a positive direction, additional resources are needed,” said Maruszczak. “The key is to never lose our compass and the amazing work we have done around our strategic plan.”

Over the next few weeks, school officials hope to present their preliminary budgets to the Finance Departments of both towns. The School Committee will need to certify their final budget during their March 11 meeting before sending it to the town for their approval during the May 2 Upton Annual Town Meeting and the May 3 Mendon Annual Town Meeting.
Essay on Honoring the American Flag Wins State Honors

Alex Heather (age 14), a Misconis Hill student from Mendon, was awarded first place in the district and fourth place in Massachusetts for his essay, "Why I Honor the American Flag." His was one of 1241 statewide entries in the VFW Patriot Pen essay contest. A banquet was held in late January at Double Tree in Leominster to honor the district winners and announce the state winners. Heather Family photo

Genealogy Research Clinics

The Upton Historical Society is continuing their Genealogy Research Clinics on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 3 to 6 p.m. in the Pay Room of the Knowlton-Ritten Building on the Upton Town Common during 2019. There will be no clinics in July or August. Upcoming clinics are February 7 and 14 and March 7 and 14.

These clinics are an opportunity to receive research assistance, hints on local resources, assistance with computer resources, or an understanding of genealogical standards. Limited supplies are available along with samples for creative ways to share genealogical research. No registration, no set curriculum. Bring questions and curiosities to take advantage of Seema Kenney’s education and experience as well as the many resources readily available from the Upton Historical Society.

Kenney is a professional genealogist with training from Boston University, National Archives, and the ProGen Study Group. She is an officer in three genealogical groups in Massachusetts as well as a member of the Genealogy Societies in Maine and Connecticut. Having self-published one-quarter of her family, Kenney is also familiar with many of the issues associated with completing, organizing, and writing research results. She continues her education by participation in local groups as well as on-line education and looks forward to assisting others research their family or other local history questions.

Dean’s List

The following local students were named to the Dean’s List at their respective schools during the fall 2018 semester.


Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater: Mendon- Lauren Brady, Mark Dicampos, Grace Merten, Katherine Ryan, Joanna Salucci, Emily Santos and Jennifer St. John. Upton-Shane Dougherty

Emerson College, Boston: Upton- Samantha Jokela.

Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg: Mendon- Justin B. Ball and Brandon A. Guillon. Upton- Noah A. Charron and Kaelan B. Farragher.

Johnson & Wales University, Providence: Upton- Taylor Naumi majoring in Sports, Entertainment, Event – Management.

Nichols College, Dudley: Mendon- Olivia Laureau and Kevin Larson both Dean High Honors. Upton- Matthew Born, Michael Lasalle, both Dean High Honors, and Liam Martin, Dean’s List.

Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Penn.: Upton-Davin Fazio


Providence College, Providence: Upton- Katherine Vennard.

Quinnipiac University, Hamden, Conn.: Mendon- Samuel Paul. Upton- Ariana Lanceri

Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.: Upton- Abelgaj Rapiello, President’s List.


University of New Hampshire, Durham: Mendon- Antonio Barboza and Olivia Dolbec, Honors and Elizabeth Hilton, Alyssa Imparato, High Honors. Upton- Margaret Moss, Bailey Kierstead and Alexander Hey, Honors; Lauren Comfort and Amy Schiavo, High Honors; and Sophia Hegarty, Highest Honors.

University of New Haven, West Haven, Conn.: Mendon- Ashley Whitemore majoring in Psychology and Criminal Justice. Upton- Kristina Morrone majoring in Criminal Justice.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester: Mendon- Michael Altavilla, a member of the class of 2020 majoring in electrical and computer engineering, and Timothy Snow, a member of the class of 2022 majoring in mechanical engineering. Upton- Nicholas Levellle, a member of the class of 2022 majoring in mechanical engineering, Karin Plante, a member of the class of 2020 majoring in biochemistry, and Olivia Kirkins, a member of the class of 2020 majoring in mechanical engineering.

Kristina Morrone, Mendon, Honors and Elizabeth Hilton, Alyssa Imparato, High Honors. Upton- Margaret Moss, Bailey Kierstead and Alexander Hey, Honors; Lauren Comfort and Amy Schiavo, High Honors; and Sophia Hegarty, Highest Honors.

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Upton Teen’s Fundraising Efforts Hit Close to Home

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter/Columnist
February 4 marks World Cancer Day and is a day meant to raise awareness about the disease and to encourage prevention and early detection through education; something high school senior Andrew Floyd understands the importance of all too well.

The 15-40 Connection is an organization that educates individuals on recognizing the signs of cancer to give them the best chance for treatment and survival. The organization, based out of Westminster, travels to businesses and schools throughout the state giving presentations on early detection.

Ironically and thankfully, the organization visited the school of Andrew’s 16-year-old cousin, Asa. Not long after that, Asa noticed some changes to his health and went to see his doctor. He was eventually diagnosed with testicular cancer.

Andrew explained the 15-40 Connection showed up to check the event out and gave a hefty donation.

Houskeeper added she and Andrew were overwhelmed with the support they received. “It was truly heartwarming to see community members join together to help make the event so successful. From donating a tree, to helping set up, selling tickets, and coming to our event, the event truly could not have been possible without the help of the community,” she said.

Andrew’s mother, Donnamarie, said the weekend was very inspirational as well. “We had many cancer survivors come and admire the trees this year and to expand the event to cancer prevention with the 15-40 Connection was amazing. My husband and I were thrilled that Andrew not only wanted to bring this special event back but wanted to support the 15-40 Connection with the proceeds.”

Advertisers Club Introduces Mount Saint Charles Academy

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter/Columnist

There’s a special academic community located in Rhode Island that not only offers its students a vibrant environment to excel at both academically and socially, but also helps them lay the foundation for a successful path toward college and beyond.

Located in Woonsocket, Mount Saint Charles Academy (MSC) is a private, co-ed catholic school for students in the 6th through 12th grades that has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence and outstanding athletic, arts, and social programs that encourages students to spread their wings.

“We take a holistic approach to learning,” explained President Alan Tenreiro. “We feel it’s the student’s total experience here that gives them the tools to succeed.” And succeed they do. The school boosts a 99 percent graduation rate with a considerable number of seniors going on to some of the most prestigious colleges in the country.

The committed faculty at MSC recognizes that each student is an individual with different interests. “Every student here is known, valued, and treasured; that’s our motto,” said Tenreiro, a 1992 “Mountie” graduate himself.

Students are encouraged to explore the multiple opportunities the school provides. All the traditional academics including English, mathematics, science, religion, and social studies are part of the curriculum, but nontraditional courses such as computer science, engineering, and robotics are also offered as is an AP Capstone Diploma program.

There are more than 50 athletic teams at the school where students practice and play in first-rate facilities. Students have the opportunity to take part in everything from basketball, ice hockey, baseball and football, to lacrosse, tennis, swimming, track, and more. Two other standout athletic programs include the school’s Sur La Glace figure skating and training and a varsity equestrian riding team.

Approximately 55 percent of the students attending reside in Rhode Island while the remaining come from Massachusetts; many from the Blackstone Valley including Upton, Milford, Blackstone, Hopedale, Mendon, and Bellingham. Recently, the school began free busing to and from locations in certain communities.

For busy working parents, an after-school program for no extra cost allows students to stay on campus until 6 p.m. and take part in activities, study at the library, or enjoy a beverage or something to eat with friends at a new café onsite.

For parents who seek a private education for their child but feel they cannot afford it, MSC is considered among the more affordable schools, running approximately $9,100 yearly for middle schoolers and $14,400 for high school students. Online registration is available for entrance exams which are scheduled to take place February 9 or May 4.

To see if Mount Saint Charles Academy is right for your student, schedule a tour by calling 401-769-0310 or View www.mountsaintcharles.org.
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Milford Regional Recognized by American Red Cross for Blood Donation Milestone

Milford Regional Medical Center has been recognized by The American Red Cross for great success in blood donations at their site in 2018. Pictured (left to right): American Red Cross representatives Nancy Sullivan, senior account manager; Kathy Lawler, account executive; Ana Parrelli, district manager, donor recruitment and outreach; standing with Milford Regional’s Edward J. Kelly, president & CEO; Nicole Heim, executive vice president and COO; Camille Williams, blood bank/hematology manager; and Judy Barron, administrative laboratory director. MRMC photo

Milford Regional Medical Center has been recognized by The American Red Cross for collecting more than 1,000 units of blood during 2018 at the hospital’s Blood Donor Center. The dedicated donor space at Milford Regional, located off the Imaging Center waiting room, opened in February 2017 and has since enabled the Red Cross to run scheduled blood drives three or four times a month, as well as additional drives when a special need for red cells has occurred on short notice.

Milford Regional transfuses about 3,000 red cells annually and blood donor partners are now able to know where their collections have been used through the Red Cross’s “Blood Drive Partner Journey.” Blood products collected at Milford Regional in November were used at Labey Clinic, Salem Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital, St. Luke’s Hospital, Elliot Hospital, Tufts Medical Center, South Shore Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Catholic Medical Center, VA Medical Center, West Roxbury VA, White River Junction, Children’s Hospital, Exeter Hospital, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

For information on blood drives scheduled at Milford Regional, go to MilfordRegional.org.

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New Vice Presidents and Promotions at UniBank

Officials of UniBank announce a number of personnel changes. Carolyn N. Rogers has joined the Bank as Vice President, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager. She is responsible for working with business line leaders across the organization to facilitate annual budgeting, ongoing balancing, income statement forecasting, and to enhance the Bank’s line of business and profitability reporting.

A Taunton resident, Rogers has over nine years of experience in the banking industry having worked most recently as Senior Financial Analyst for Radius Bank. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from Syracuse University and a Professional Certification in Commercial Lending from the New England College of Business and Finance.

Michael A. Jacobs, Jr. has been promoted to Assistant Vice President and Loan Operations Manager and will be responsible for management of loan operations including loan processing, servicing, accounting, and reporting.

A Worcester resident, Jacobs has been with UniBank for three years and has 11 years of experience in banking and financial services. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport Management from West Virginia University with minors in both Communication and Business Administration.

The Breast Center New Medical Director

Milford Regional Medical Center is welcomed Diana Caragacianu, MD, FACS, as the new Medical Director of the Breast Center at Milford Regional.

Dr. Caragacianu is not only a respected breast and endocrine surgeon from the Georgetown University School of Medicine, but she is a leader in high-risk screening and genetics. Her advanced training includes fellowships in surgical oncology at the National Cancer Institute and breast surgery at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School. She further enhanced her skills with specialized international training in intracavitary radiation for breast cancer and oncologic surgery.

Dr. Caragacianu’s approach to breast health has always been to build relationships with her patients and earn their trust. She is passionate about partnering with her patients, sharing her expertise and knowledge to help them proactively take part in deciding what is best for them. Because of this, Dr. Caragacianu’s reputation as an advocate for patients precedes her arrival at Milford Regional as does her commanding knowledge of breast and endocrine health.

“there is so much beauty in being a source of strength and hope during a patient’s initial diagnosis of cancer; recovery from surgery, or even through a benign process, and continuously being part of many patients’ lives years later to celebrate their life and survivorship,” says Dr. Caragacianu.

Under her leadership, patients at Milford Regional’s nationally accredited Breast Center can expect an individualized, multi-disciplinary team approach for all screening, diagnostic, high-risk evaluation and cancer treatment needs and, when necessary, a referral to a survivorship program.

These are the businesses that contract to advertise in The Upton and Mendon Town Crier at least 12 times a year. They receive a frequency discount, feature article about their business (minimum 1/16 page ad) and listing in this directory.

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| Medway Oil & Propel Company | 12 | next
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| Merrimac Oral Surgical Associates | next | next
| Milford Federal | next | next
| Mount St. Charles | 3 | next
| Muffin House Cafe | next | next
| Nathans’ Jewellers | 7 | next
| New England Seals & Seals | next | next
| Park Place Dental | 4 | next
| P.A.W.S. Bad & Biscuit | next | next
| Phelps Insurance Agency | next | next
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The Advertiser’s Club Directory

Free, nourishing meals offered monthly to all in the local community.

Second Tuesday 6:30 p.m. Dinner, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Small Hall, 27 Pearl St., Milford. Sponsored by Food with Friends. 508-473-2000

Last Wednesday 4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford. Also sponsored by First Methodist Church of Milford. 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org 5:30 p.m. Community Pasta Supper, Supper’s Episcopal Church, 61 Wood St. (Rt.135), Hopkinton. Sponsored by the Hopkinton Christian Service Connection. 508-435-4536 or stPaul@hopkinton.org

Every Thursday 3:30-12:30 p.m. Lunch, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Small Hall, 27 Pearl St., Milford. Sponsored by St. Vincent DePaul Society. 508-473-2000

Third Thursday 5:30 p.m. Community Supper, United Parish, 1 Church St., Upton. Donations accepted. Reservation, three days ahead by calling 508-529-3192.

Last Thursday 4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford. Also sponsored by First Methodist Church of Milford. 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org 473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Every Friday 12 noon Lunch, Blessing Barn, 146 South Main St., Milford. Sponsored by the Bethany Community. 508-478-0010.

Every Sunday 4:30-6 p.m. Supper, Unitarian Universalist Church, 23 Pine St., Milford. 508-473-3399, or分支机构@version.com

Bread and Wine at Upton-Mendon Town Crier

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| Iadarola Plumbing & Heating | 12 | next
| Imperial Cars | 24 | next
| Imperial Hyundai | 1 | next
| J.C. Parmenter | next | next
| Joles艦er Overhead Door | 11 | next
| Joyce Plumbing | 11 | next
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| Park Place Dental | 4 | next
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As February 4 is recognized as World Cancer Day, I started thinking about the many family members and friends I know who have been affected by this disease. The list of those who have been diagnosed is long, much too long as far as I am concerned.

My sibling, an in-law, a dear friend from high school, and my nephews are just a few of the many around me that have been diagnosed. I recently read an article that detailed the results of each one's diagnosis. And then I, like probably so many others, went directly to the internet, read about that type of cancer, saw some random statistics, and feared the worst.

Still, as I followed each one's journey battling the disease, I realized the one thing they all had in common was hope. Whether it was hope through their faith and spirituality, hope through the support of their family and friends, or hope through the medical advancements made—that feeling of optimism I believe made a difference.

And seeing that, some of my fears slowly began to fade as I saw their progress. Some of those I know have won their battle and some are still in the thick of it and their outcomes are unknown but they are fighting and determined to win.

In certain cases, such as my sibling and my in-laws, it’s amazing what we go so just to consume our conversations for so long such as surgery, scans, doctor's appointments, treatments, and results, no longer dominate our discussions. Because they are doing so well, our conversations now revolve around work, kids, sports, vacations and so on. As for me, I feel truly grateful.

And they themselves have tried to turn their illness into something positive. My sibling now volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment and so many others have tirelessly raised money or time to other cancer causes. Still, I'm not living in a bubble. I understand all too well that not every cancer diagnosis has a fairy tail ending. I've been on that side of the disease too.

So to all those who are on the front lines fighting this disease—you're courageous and strength are beyond measure. Cancer is cruel, cancer affects so many, and yes, cancer sucks. But when I hear of someone I know diagnosed, I first try to remember there are advancements, there is awareness and education, but most of all, there continues to be hope.

Herbert Procknow
United Parish Distribution for Laid Off Federal Workers

During the longest government shutdown in United States history, many federal workers have missed two paychecks. To help ease their financial burden, United Parish of Upton has conducted a drive to collect personal care items. Distribution of the items has occurred on a number of dates with the final time being Saturday, February 2 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at United Parish Church, One Church St., Upton. Anyone needing the assistance is invited to attend.

Think Summer, Think Hosting a Fresh Air Child

Fresh Air summers are filled with children running through the sprinklers in the grass, gazing at star-filled skies and swimming for the first time. This summer, join volunteer host families in Blackstone Valley, and opening heart and home to a Fresh Air child. Each summer, thousands of children from New York City's low-income communities visit suburban, rural and small town communities along the East Coast and Southern Canada through The Fresh Air Fund's Friendly Towns Program. The Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, has provided free summer experiences to more than 1.8 million New York City children from low-income communities since 1877. Fresh Air children are boys and girls, from seven to 18 years old, who live in New York City. Children who are re-invited by host families may continue with The Fresh Air Fund through age 18 and can enjoy extended trips. For more information about hosting a Fresh Air child this summer, please contact Leslie Breault at 508-451-3188 or visit www.freshair.org.

Hopedale Resident is Complete Payroll Solutions Employee Benefits Advisor

Complete Payroll Solutions, a Human Resource, benefits and payroll service provider, announced that Kevin Schuler of Hopedale has joined the company as an Employee Benefits Advisor. In this role, he assists clients with designing and implementing comprehensive human resource and benefit packages to attract and retain top talent, including health and welfare plans, 401(k), and life and disability, while helping them remain compliant with government regulations. A graduate of the New England Institute of Art, he brings ten years of experience to his new role and has held an Accident & Health Life license since 2007.

Building Bridges Through Song

WESTBOROUGH-Shir Joy Chorus will present its Winter Concert, Building Bridges Through Song, on Saturday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. at Congregation B'nai Shalom, 117 E. Main St., Westborough. This concert of Jewish music is aimed at uniting and healing the community through song. Selections will include rounds and part songs from ancient times to the present, and will include solos on cello and banjo, as well as piano accompaniment by Lisa Marcus-Jones. Shir Joy's concerts always include a sing-along. Snow Date is Sunday, February 10 at 7 p.m. Tickets are $15 per person and may be purchased at the door, from a chorus member or at ShirJoyChorus.com.

Shir Joy Chorus is an adult, transdenominational community chorus, under the direction of Nan A. Kapuainen Gibbons, dedicated to learning, sharing, and performing Jewish music from the rich and varied Judaic cultures of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. Founded in 2011, it is an independent nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, funded by the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts, the Westborough Cultural Council, members of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and private supporters. The chorus is non-auditioned and is open to all people regardless of ethnicity or religious background.

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Beginning Bridges CFCE, a non-profit offering free services, supports parents as their children’s first, best and most important teachers in Mendon, Upton, Northbridge and Uxbridge. Offering a variety of programs for children and parents, it’s goal is to support parents as they guide their children to reach their optimum potential and works with similarly-minded community partners. Funding for the Coordinated Family & Community Engagement Grant (CFCE) is provided by the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care and sponsored by South Middlesex Opportunity Council.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 2: Music and Movement with Deb Hudgins at the Whitinsville Social Library, 10 a.m. A drop-in, theme-based music and movement program for preschool children with the theme Take Your Child to the Library Day.

Saturday, February 2: “Roots in Nature, Bonds to Nurture” at Upton State Forest 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Beginning Bridges in partnership with Woodland Adventures invite all to escape to nature. Make sure to dress to play in the woods and according to the weather. Register by contacting Emily at Emurray@smoc.org or 508-278-5110.

Friday, February 8: Music and Movement with Deb Hudgins at the Upton Town Library, Main St., 10:30 a.m. A drop-in, theme-based music and movement program for preschool children.

Thursday, February 14: Muffins with Mom: Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave, Mendon, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Muffin House Café and the Taft Public Library this is a free drop-in event for up to 15 families. Light refreshments are served, family friendly resources are available and socializing encouraged.

Wednesday, February 20: Music and Movement with Deb Hudgins at the Whitinsville Social Library, 6:30 p.m. A drop-in, Pajama theme-based music and movement program for preschool children.

Thursday, February 21: Snow Much Fun Playgroup at the Uxbridge Playcenter, 9:15 a.m. to 11 a.m. All things snow will be explored with free play, a craft, circle time and more. Register by calling the playcenter, 508-278-5110.

Friday, February 22: Music and Movement with Deb Hudgins at the Upton Town Library, Main St., 10:30 a.m. A drop-in, theme-based music and movement program for preschool children.

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Email: Darlmack@aol.com
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SHOP LOCAL! BUY LOCAL!
Reil Planning to Seek Another Term; Second Selectman’s Seat Also on Ballot

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Beginning February 12, nomination papers will be available for any Mendon resident interested in running for office. Mendon’s Town Election is scheduled for May 14. Selectman Mark Reil’s three-year seat is up for re-election; he has confirmed he is planning to run again. And due to Rich Schofield’s resignation several months ago, the remainder of his one-year term, will also be on the May ballot.

Other offices, their term length, and current office holder up for re-election include Moderator for one year, Jay Byer; Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee for three years, Diane Duncan; Assessor for three years, Kenneth O’Brien; Board of Health for three years, Andrew Fiske; Planning Board for five years, John Vandersluis; Park Commissioner for three years, Allan Byrne; Water Commissioner for three years, Kevin Ruddin; Tree Warden for three years, Alan Tetreault; Housing Authority for five years, Diane Stevens; and two Taft Public Library Trustees for three years, Amy Fahey and Sharron Luttrell.

Completed nomination papers, which require 29 signatures from registered Mendon voters, are due back by March 26 at 5 p.m. The last day to register to vote in the May election is April 24 at 8 p.m. The Town Clerk’s office will have extended hours that day until 8 p.m. for citizens interested in registering. In addition, any one may register online at www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/.

Residents with questions on their voter registration status should contact Town Clerk Ellen Agro at 508-473-1085 or eagro@mendonma.gov. Regular business hours for the Town Clerk’s office are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Change to Mendon Tax Due Date

The Mendon Town Hall is closed on Fridays, therefore, third quarter FY19 Real Estate and Personal Property taxes will be due Monday, February 4.

Please call the Treasurer/Collector’s office at 508-473-6410 with any tax related questions or concerns.

Fattman Establishes Emergency Assistance Phone

The Office of State Senator Ryan C. Fattman (R-Sutton) is rolling out a newly established phone available 24/7. The line, which may have an issue that needs to be addressed immediately, “said Fattman on a newly established phone available 24/7. The line, which can be reached at 774-276-7128, offers the ability to contact the senator and his staff at any hour of the day and on weekends. “We recognize that things happen that may not fall into the 9 to 5 schedule, and require assistance outside of regular call hours. It is essential, especially during the winter, to be available to anyone who may have an issue that needs to be addressed immediately,” said Fattman.

Constituents can also reach the Boston Office at 617-722-1420.

Mendon Cultural Council Grants Announced

The Mendon Cultural Council announces the award of 16 grants totaling $4,638.00 for cultural programs in Mendon and surrounding towns for the 2019 calendar year. The Mendon Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCC) serving 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.

Mendon grants support a large range of grass-roots activities: concerts, exhibitions, field trips for school children, after-school programs, writing workshops, summer concerts series, nature and science programs, and workshops and current office holder up for re-election include Moderator for one year, Jay Byer; Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee for three years, Diane Duncan; Assessor for three years, Kenneth O’Brien; Board of Health for three years, Andrew Fiske; Planning Board for five years, John Vandersluis; Park Commissioner for three years, Allan Byrne; Water Commissioner for three years, Kevin Ruddin; Tree Warden for three years, Alan Tetreault; Housing Authority for five years, Diane Stevens; and two Taft Public Library Trustees for three years, Amy Fahey and Sharron Luttrell.

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Mendon grants support a large range of grass-roots activities: concerts, exhibitions, field trips for school children, after-school programs, writing workshops, summer concerts series, nature and science programs, and town festivities. Previous grant recipients include Birch Alley Brass, Daniels Farmstead Music, the Muscoot Hill School Newspaper as well as events at the Taft Public Library, Mendon Senior Center, and the Mendon Town Beach. The 2019 recipients include:

- Birch Alley Brass/Bill Moffatt
- A Sense of Place/Matt Merten
- A Universe of Stories/Scott Jameson
- Blackstone Valley Community Chorus Spring Event
- Blackstone Valley Community Concert
- Island Vacation/Roger Ticknell
- Daniels Farmstead Music
- Amazing Hero Art/Kelly Lucier
- Greater Milford Community Chorus
- School Newspaper/Karen Arnold
- Historical Portrayals by Lady J
- Mendon Festival/Dan Byer
- Music of the Beatles
- Clarion Hill Symphony Orchestra
- Quintessential Brass/Leslie Havens
- Cosmic Classics/NE Brass Band

The Mendon Cultural Council will seek applications again this fall. For guidelines and complete information please visit the Local Cultural Program online at MASS-Culture.org Applications are due in October. Be sure to visit Facebook Mendon MA Cultural Council.
Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

Joseph Addison

Joseph Addison was an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. His name is usually remembered alongside that of his long-standing friend, Richard Steele, with whom he founded The Spectator magazine.

Valentine’s Day Activities

The Mendon Senior Center will offer a variety of Valentine’s Day activities. On Tuesday February 5, Janet Weirsma will be holding two sessions for making beautiful Valentine’s Day Cards at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. A History of Valentine’s Day Cards will be offered on Thursday, February 14 at 11 a.m. with Wayne Phipps. Learn how Valentines have evolved since the Victorian era and how they were assembled in the printing factory in Worcester. Many cards will be on display.

The presentation will be followed by a Valentine’s lunch of spaghetti and meatballs while listening to music played by Earl Pearlman of the Mendon Council on Aging. Lunch is 5 per person.

To register for any of the activities stop by the Senior Center or call 508-478-6175.
Home Improvement

State Funding to Benefit Upton State Forest

State Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury) and State Representative David K. Muradian, Jr. (D-Grafton) announced that the Upton State Forest will benefit from state grant funding and partner contributions from the Bay State Trail Riders Association (BSTRA) to support trail repairs and improvements. The state funding was awarded through the Partnerships Matching Funds Program coordinated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). On an annual basis, DCR accepts applications for matching-funds, which are donations from organizations for park improvements that are matched by DCR. Through the program, DCR awarded a total of $990,582 to 25 municipalities, non-profit organizations, and other entities in Fiscal Year 2019. Upton State Forest will receive $25,529 to continue trail work by reopening drainage ditches and spreading processed gravel for a uniform, safe surface for visitors.

“This grant program provides critical matching funds to support capital projects at parks, beaches, and other reservations across our Commonwealth,” said Moore. “Kudos to the BSTRA for stepping-up to the plate to help with restoring and preserving the trail network at Upton State Forest. Hundreds of our neighbors and visitors to the State Forest will benefit from the tremendous work that will be carried out as a result of this grant funding.”

“The Department of Conservation and Recreation’s impactful grant to restore pathways within the Upton State Forest will now ensure a safe place for visitors,” said Muradian. “Providing more trail work and park improvements, generously matched by the Bay State Trail Riders Association, guarantees that not only the community, but Commonwealth as a whole can enjoy the park for many years to come.”

The Sweet Tradition of Maple Sugar Days

The sweet tradition of Maple Sugar Days continues the first weekend in March at the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, River Bend Farm Visitor Center, 287 Oak St. Uxbridge. Guided tours start every hour at 11:00, noon, 1:00 and 2:00. Tours last about 90 minutes. Park accommodations available upon request. For updates during inclement weather, and wear appropriate footwear for a short walk. Program is free for all outdoor elements. Please dress for the steamy sugar house to watch syrup being made. Tours include both indoor and outdoors. Please dress for the steamy sugar house to watch syrup being made. Tours include both indoor and outdoor elements. Please dress for the weather, and wear appropriate footwear for a short walk. Program is free for all ages and open to the public. Reasonable accommodations available upon request. For updates during inclement weather, please email blackstoneheritage@state.ma.us or call 508-278-7604.

Wayne Grenier Electrician
“A Homeowner’s Electrician”

Call at 508-234-4237

“I will return your call!”

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“I will return your call!”
Observations help researchers determine species decline and migration patterns. Bring an adult. For more information, please call Park Ranger Viola at 978-318-8417. Schooled students welcomed (merit badge requirements). Youth under the age of 18 please while supplies last. Junior Rangers Level 2 – earn wildlife credit. Scout Troops, home binoculars, pack a snack and water. Observations will be reviewed over warm beverages.

Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park volunteers and West Hill Team will discuss how winter residents and migrants survive finding water in the dam’s unfrozen sections of rivers and ponds. Explore various habitats and the birds that migrate or make their home in the pine groves, marshes, and riparian (river) habitats of West Hill Dam. Participants should dress for the weather, be prepared to hike about a mile to the various sites, snow shoes or deep snow boots are recommended. All are welcome to bring binoculars, pack a snack and water. Observations will be reviewed over warm beverages.

Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park (BHC) has named Devon Kurtz its Executive Director and made new appointments to its Board of Directors. At its annual meeting in January held at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Board voted to advance BHC’s Deputy and Interim Director Devon Kurtz to the position of Executive Director. Kurtz joined BHC in 2014 to develop the exhibits and interpretive plan for its new visitor center in Worcester, which recently opened in November, 2018. Prior to joining BHC, Kurtz served as the Director of Public Programs for the Higgins Armory Museum and Concord Museum following twelve years as the program coordinator for Old Sturbridge Village. In his new role, Kurtz will be a dedicated steward of BHC’s environmental resources, an interpretive partner with the National Park Service of the region’s history, and a committed advocate for the region’s economic development and progress. The Board of Directors also elected officers: Chair, Richard H. Gregory III; Vice Chair, Richard T. Moore; Secretary, Todd Helwig; and Treasurer, Gary E. Furtado. BHC’s Immediate Past Chair is Harry T. Whitin.

Directors re-elected for a three-year term on BHC’s Board include: Lee Dillard Adams (MA), Jeannie Hebert (MA), Richard T. Moore (MA), Donna Williams (MA), Harry T. Whitin (MA), and Robert Billington (RI). Other members of the Board include: Joseph Barbato (MA), Michael D. Cassidy (RI), Allen Fletcher (MA), Richard H. Gregory III (RI), Todd Helwig (MA), Bill Bentler (RI), Pieter de Jong (MA), Gary E. Furtado (RI), Dennis Rice (MA), Robert Dandrade (MA), Thomas Kravitz (RI), and Yvonne Chita (MA).

Blackstone Heritage Corridor Names Kurtz Director and Board Appointments

The Annual Great Backyard Bird Count for Cornell University will be held Sunday, February 17, at West Hill Dam at 2 p.m. In case of heavy rain or snow, it will be Saturday, February 23 at 10 a.m. Meet at the office, 518 East Hartford Ave., Uxbridge to help count the winged winter residents and migrants at West Hill Dam. Past counts have observed rough-legged hawks, chykkadees, robins, and others. Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park volunteers and West Hill Team will discuss how winter residents and migrants survive finding water in the dam’s unfrozen sections of rivers and ponds. Explore various habitats and the birds that migrate or make their home in the pine groves, marshes, and riparian (river) habitats of West Hill Dam. Participants should dress for the weather, be prepared to hike about a mile to the various sites, snow shoes or deep snow boots are recommended. All are welcome to bring binoculars, pack a snack and water. Observations will be reviewed over warm beverages.

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Recently hired consultant Peter Flinker of Dodson & Flinker Associates explained how the process will work to move the measure forward. Flinker stated a working group of approximately 30 to 40 residents will be meeting over the next several months to discuss various concerns, issues, opportunities, and visions for the revitalization. Ultimately, through those discussions, the hope is to bring a shared vision for the first phase of the project to the May 2 Town Meeting.

During the public forum, residents broke down into smaller groups in an effort to voice concerns they have with the current downtown and improvements they’d like to see should the measure move forward. A representative from each group then reported their conversations back to the entire audience. Some of the issues reported with the area’s current state included lack of parking, a dangerous intersection, the inability to walk easily, and an outdated appearance.

Some residents stated they’d like to see the Library in a new location, a restaurant or boutiques added to the area and several unused buildings repurposed.

“It just understanding, it’s going to take years to put this plan in place but we need to start somewhere and this is the start,” said EDC member David Ross in closing.
**Dining Guide**

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**Dinner**
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Friday-Saturday, 5:00-10:00
Sunday, 4:30-9:00
Monday, Closed

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**& Seafood Restaurant**

New England Steak

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Thursday, February 14

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**Widows of Malabar Hill**

to read an eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction. The title for February 12 and 14 is

**Nicholson, a novel about a young stable boy whose wealthy employer purchases two elephants.**

and non-fiction titles. The February 27 meeting will discuss

and discussions last for one hour.

The Library hosts monthly book discussion groups. All groups meet in the Library Gathering room, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room. No registration required.

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**Teen Group – C.A.R.T. - will be working on Recycled Art this month!**

The group will explore books about using different materials and create several projects using popsicle sticks, magazines,

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**LEGO Club**

Join Library Director, Matthew Bachtold, as for the Thursday LEGO Club in the Children's Area for ages 5-12. Drop in from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and make new friends and build new creations.

LEGOs are supplied, you come for the fun!

---

**Preschool Storytime**

Preschool Storytime will be held Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. in the Gathering Room. Join Mrs. Murphy in February with themes including Valentines’ Day, Presidents’ Day, and Dental Health. Yoga Storytime will be February 14. Spanish Storytime will be February 28. Drop in for stories, songs, and a simple craft. All sessions are for ages 3-6. No registration required.

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**School Vacation Events**

On Tuesday February 19 at 10:30 a.m., the Upton Town Library and Upton Cultural Council present musical group Rollei Polie Guacamole in the Memorial School cafeteria. This award-winning band will present a high energy 45-minute show that’s a mix of funk, rock and folk music mashed into original tunes about natural living, eating healthy and staying active. Fun for all ages, no registration is required.

Looking for something else to do during school vacation week? Enjoy Giant Board Games on Thursday, February 21 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Memorial School cafeteria. All ages are welcome to stop by and try large versions of popular games such as checkers, Jenga, Connect 4, bowling, and more! No registration required.

On Friday February 22 from 1 to 3 p.m. enjoy the movie, Smurfs – The Lost Village, rated PG.

A mysterious map sets Smurfette and her friends on an exciting adventure to discover the biggest secret in Smurf history. Suggested ages 5-12. Registration is suggested but not required and can be done on UptonLibrary.org or by calling 508-529-6272.

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**Library Book Discussion Groups**

The Library hosts monthly book discussion groups. All groups meet in the Library Gathering room, and discussions last for one hour.

Library Book Group – meets on the last Wednesday of each month and alternates fiction and non-fiction titles. The February 27 meeting will discuss The Elephant Keeper by Christopher Nicholson, a novel about a young stable boy whose wealthy employer purchases two elephants.

Upton Reads – meets on the second Tuesday at 12:45 p.m., and the second Thursday at 6:45 p.m. to read an eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction. The title for February 12 and 14 is The Widows of Malabar Hill by Sujaata Massey, a mystery set in 1920s Bombay.

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**Tax Information**

The Upton Library can help residents access tax forms and instructions from federal and state websites. Ten pages of free printing for tax forms.

Printed booklets for Massachusetts State tax returns will be available but no Federal tax booklets have arrived. Printed copies of the instructions for the 1040 are available for use in the library or may be borrowed for one week.

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**Valentine’s Day is Coming!**

Don’t just send them roses ....  
**Send them to LaRose’s!**  
Specialists in:  
Relaxation • Deep Tissue • Cranio Sacral  
Sports Injury • Pregnancy Massage

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Milford Medical Center  
114 Water St., Milford  
508-478-0082

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Nomination Papers Available Monday in Upton

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Monday, February 4 will officially kick off Upton's election season, the day residents interested in running for office may pick up their nomination papers in the Town Clerk's office. Upton's Town Election is scheduled for May 14.
A total of 18 offices will be determined on May 14 and include Board of Selectmen for three years; the incumbent is Gary Daughtery. Other offices include Town Moderator for one year; the incumbent is David Looper; Mendon Upton Regional School Committee for three years; the incumbent is Dorothy Scally; Assessor for three years; the incumbent is William Taylor; Planning Board for five years; the incumbent is Paul Carey, Board of Health for three years; the incumbent is Richard Robinson; Cemetery Commission for three years; the incumbent is Glenn Fowler; Recreation Commission for three years; the incumbent is Richard Porter; three trustees for the Public Library for three years; the incumbents are Judith Katz-Goodman, Kathleen Kelley, and Diane Czakal; Trustee for the Public Library for one year; vacant due to a resignation, Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds for three years, Michael Oliver is the incumbent; five constables for three years; the incumbents include James Bates Jr., Steven Driver, Sandra Hakala, Michael Moran, plus one vacancy.

The last day for candidates to obtain nomination papers is Friday, March 22 by 5 p.m. Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the Registrars of Voters for certification of names on or before 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 26. After certification, papers must be filed with the Town Clerk or before Tuesday, April 9 by 5 p.m.
Those candidates who wish to withdraw their nomination papers must do so through the Town Clerk's office no later than Thursday, April 11 by 5 p.m.

The last day to register to vote in the Town Election or the May 2 Annual Town Meeting is Friday, April 12 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Town Clerk's office will have extended hours that day. Residents with questions on the election or voter registration status should contact the Town Clerk's office at 508-529-3565 or kmcelreath@uptonma.gov. Regular office hours for the Town Clerk are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Additional Exercise Class and Nutritional Counselling

Want to get in better shape in 2019? To help, the Upton Center, Farm St., is adding an additional Strength & Stretch session with Wendy Reid on Fridays at 10 a.m. beginning Friday, February 15. The original Strength & Stretch session, also with Reid, continues on Mondays at 10 a.m. Reid, who is also a nutritionist will now be providing 15 minute 1-on-1 nutrition counselling sessions following her Friday classes. Drop in for the exercise classes or call 508-529-4558 to sign up for a 1-on-1 nutrition sessions, which are held at 10:45, 11:00 and 11:15 a.m.

Valentine’s Celebrations at the Center

Upton Center, Farm St., will have a variety of Valentine celebrations beginning with a Valentine's Breakfast at Memorial School on Monday, February 11 at 9:30 a.m. Enjoy breakfast with the school's first graders. Please register by February 7. Create a Valentine's craft with Betty Brault on Tuesday, February 12 at 10 a.m. and last but not least have a Pancake Breakfast with Upton Town Manager Derek Brindisi on Thursday, February 14 at 9 a.m. There is a $3 fee. Please register for all the events by stopping by the Center or calling 508-529-4558.

Upton Garden Plots Are Available

Upton residents, who want to raise their own food but don’t have space for it can get a plot in the Upton Community Garden. Most plots are 4 by 16 foot, raised beds for growing organic vegetables, flowers and herbs. Plots are available to Upton residents and Upton based community groups. Elevated beds may be available for gardeners who have difficulty accessing the standard height beds.
There is a $5 participation fee to defray costs. To sign up for the 2019 season send a note to: UptonMACommunityGarden@gmail.com by April 1.
Available plots will be assigned by lottery. A number of plots are reserved for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and community groups. Please indicate if you fit into one of these categories.

**THE UPTON CENTER**

The Upton Center is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Staff is available by phone from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Activities are subject to change. Please call 508-529-4558 with any questions.

**FEBRUARY 1, 2019**

**Monday, February 4**
Super Bowl Birthday Bash, 12:45 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 5**
Shopping Trip to Salvation Army, Shaw’s, Job Lots, Walmart Loop, Northbridge, 9:15 a.m.

**Wednesday, February 6**
Lunch at Stephanie’s, 12 p.m.

**Thursday, February 7**
Podiatrist Appointments, 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Please call to schedule an appointment)

**Friday, February 8**
Talking Books Tea Party, 10 a.m.

**Monday, February 11**
AARP Tax Appointments, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Please call to schedule an appointment) Valentine's Breakfast at Memorial School, 9:30 a.m., Van departs Center at 9:15 a.m.

**Tuesday, February 12**
Valentine's Craft with Betty, 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, February 13**
Shopping Trip to Market Basket, Oxford, 9:15 a.m.

**Thursday, February 14**
Valentine’s Pancake Breakfast with the Town Manager, 9 a.m.

**Friday, February 15**
BVT Salon Visit, Departs at 8:45 a.m. for 9 a.m. Appts.
One-on-One Nutrition Meetings, 10:45 a.m., Call the Center to Schedule Appointment Afternoon Movie & Cocoa, 12:30 p.m.

**Monday, February 18**
Center Closed for President's Day

**Tuesday, February 19**
Tai Chi, 1 p.m. ZENgenvity, 2:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 20**
Card Players Group, 10 a.m. Wii Games, 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, February 21**
Computer Class, 9 a.m. Strength and Stretch, 10 a.m. Library Table, 11 a.m. Canasta, 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, February 21**
Knit and Crochet Group, 10 a.m. Bingo, 1 p.m.

**Friday**
Strength and Stretch, 10 a.m. (Call if you’d like a 1 on 1 Nutrition Appt afterwards)
The Early Development of the South Side of Upton Common

Submitted by Tom Bair, Upton Historical Society

Editor’s note: This is part one of a two-part series submitted by Tom Bair of the Upton Historical Society. Material for the article was obtained from the Upton Historical Society archives.

In the early years of the Massachusetts colony, residents were required to attend their town’s Congregational Church unless given special release to attend in another town or denomination. The church and its meeting house were also the center of municipal government. Residents of what was-to-be Upton had to travel many miles to attend church in Uxbridge, Hopkinton, Mendon or Sutton. In 1731 residents began petitioning to establish a new town from portions of these surrounding towns. The petition was approved by the Commonwealth on June 14, 1735 creating Upton.

Establishing a new town required building a meeting house/church be constructed and obtaining the services of a minister. Upton’s first meeting house was built near the junction of Grove and Mendon Streets. The crude 35 by 50-foot building took five years to complete.

Not everyone was pleased, since the location was not near the geographical center of town requiring some to still travel a long distance. And as the population grew there was need for a larger meeting house. After many years of discussion, a second meeting house was built in 1771 at the eastern end of the current town common, among the shops and businesses in the area. The commercial buildings included Wood’s corn and sawmill mill beside Center Brook, torn down in 1840; three shops opposite the common making what was called the Arcade Block; and other shops along Grove St. to the stream.

In 1833 the Commonwealth declared that town government be constructed and obtaining the services of a minister. Also in 1848, the Unitarian Society built a church next to the Arcade Block. When the Unitarian Society moved to West Upton in 1874, they sold the building to the Catholic Church. It became Holy Angels. In 1878, Barnabas Stone built a new grist mill on the east side of Center Brook where the town parking lot is now located.

The construction of the two churches and moving of the old church was one of the more significant changes in Upton center. Part 2 of this series will explore the businesses that came and went along Millford and Grove Streets.

A print of the second meeting house built in Upton which was built in 1771 at the eastern end of the Town Common. In the mid-1800s, after Massachusetts separated church and state, the building was sold. The new owners removed the steeple and moved the rest of the building across the street to the west side of Center Brook. Upton Historical Society Archive

Brook.

In 1848, the Unitarian Society built a church next to the Arcade Block. When the Unitarian Society moved to West Upton in 1874, they sold the building to the Catholic Church. It became Holy Angels. In 1878, Barnabas Stone built a new grist mill on the east side of Center Brook where the town parking lot is now located.

The construction of the two churches and moving of the old church was one of the more significant changes in Upton center.

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Sen. Moore Office Hour
State Senator Michael Moore, D. Millbury, will hold an office hour at the Upton Center, 2 Farm St. on Monday, February 4 from 9 to 10 a.m. Constituents are invited to drop by. An online calendar of district office hours is also available on the Senator’s website, SenatorMichaelMoore.com as well as contact information for those who cannot attend the office hour.

Ceramic Bowl Painting Party
Bring the whole family for a Sunday afternoon of creative fun on February 10 from 2 to 4 p.m. at United Parish Church of Upton when Claytime of Shrewsbury will present a Ceramic Bowl Painting Party. Cost is $15 per bowl. Donations received will benefit the Community Supper at the United Parish. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited, so please sign-up in advance at http://unitedparishupton.org/siteforms/view.php?id=12 or at the parish office. Contact Leeanne Luukemeyer at 774-573-3155 for more information.

Tax Appointments
It is tax season and AARP tax preparers will be at the Upton Center, Farm St., on Mondays at 1 p.m. to help Seniors at no charge. Spaces fill fast. Please call the Center, 508-529-4558, to schedule a time. Be sure to pick up the AARP tax intake forms in the office and complete them in advance of your appointment. There will be no appointments February 18, the President’s Day holiday.

Upton-Mendon Town Crier
FEBRUARY 1, 2019
Sen. Moore to Review College Costs for Veterans

State Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury) was appointed by Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland) to serve on a Special Commission to study the cost and feasibility of exempting Massachusetts veterans from tuition, fees and associated costs of attending public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth.

"I look forward to being part of this effort to review potential opportunities to better assist our veterans with pursuing a college education," said Moore, who serves as Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education. "The mission of this Special Commission reaffirms our deep appreciation to the men and women of our Armed Forces, and their families."

The Special Commission will perform several key functions including an evaluation of the cost and feasibility of exempting veterans from paying to attend in-state public colleges and universities, the societal impact of such an exemption for veterans and their families, and the effect of such a policy on the finances of the Commonwealth.

Moore will serve on the Special Commission alongside 12 other members including the Secretary of Department of Veterans Services, the Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education, a member appointed by the Governor who is a member of the Student Veterans of America, along with several other legislative colleagues.

The Special Commission was established as part of an omnibus veteran assistance bill signed into law earlier this year and codified as Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2018. By statute, the Special Commission is required report its findings and any recommendations to the Legislature by July 1.

Legislators Announce Upton SAFE Grants

State Representative David K. Muradian, Jr. (R-Grafton) and State Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury) announce that the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services has awarded grants to Upton for the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) program and Senior SAFE.

There are two types of SAFE grants: the original SAFE program was established 23 years ago as a state initiative to provide resources to local fire departments to conduct fire and life safety education programs in grades K-12. Their mission is to enable students to recognize the dangers of fire, and more specifically, the fire hazards that tobacco products can pose. The Senior SAFE program was created by the Legislature in the FY’14 budget in order to help local fire departments to support fire and safety education for older adults, who are the most at risk of dying in fires in the Commonwealth.

Since the creation of the SAFE program, the annual average fire deaths for children have been reduced by 72 percent. The program provides training for children in schools teaching them how to create and practice home escape plans, stop, drop and roll, how to report fires and extinguishing small fires to reduce a child’s anxiety levels during stressful situations. The Department of Fire Safety hopes to have similar results with the Senior SAFE program by teaching them how to handle situations where oxygen is present and what to look for when one cannot hear a fire alarm.

Under FY’18 budget, Upton will receive $3,754 for the SAFE Program and $2,400 for the Senior SAFE Program.
Blood Drive
MILFORD-Larry Blood Drive to benefit the Kraft Family Blood Donor Center in conjunction with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women’s Hospital will be held at DCH Toyota of Milford, 300 Fountain St., Milford, BlackstoneValley.org, email administrator@blackstonevalley.org, call 508-478-6700 or stop by the offices, 258 Main Street, Suite 306, Milford. MACC Match on Friday, February 8 at 11 a.m. at Sky Buffet, 340 E. Main St., Milford. Richard Day will talk about controlling energy costs.

Knights of Columbus Foxwoods Trip
MILFORD-The Knights of Columbus Valley Council 88 is sponsoring a Foxwoods trip on Friday, February 8. The bus will leave the municipal parking lot across from Sacred Heart Church, Milford, at 4 p.m. and leave Foxwoods at 11 p.m. The cost is $20 per person and includes transportation, a five-box buffet, admission to the casino, and a $20 slot play.

Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair
MILFORD-The Milford Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair is seeking exhibitors for the 25th Annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair which takes place on Saturday, March 16, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Milford High School Cafeteria. Businesses, agencies or programs which serve children and or families, are invited to be exhibitors. Tables are free, but space is limited. For more information, call 508-634-2356, or email familynetwork@milfordma.com by February 28.

Network of Enterprising Women
HOLLYSTON-Network of Enterprising Women (NEW) will meet on Monday, February 4 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at Cheryl Cohen Mosaics, 300 Woodward St. 2nd floor, Holliston. Danielle Surkin of Relaxation Creation will lead discussion of how to handle stress in the work place. Light breakfast provided. Guests welcome; free admission for the first-time guest and $10 for all others. For more information, visit NetworkofEnterprisingWomen.com or call 508-234-2356.

Pasta for Paws
UXBRIDGE-The 7th Annual Spaghetti Dinner, Pasta for Paws, for dogs and people will be held at the St. John’s Episcopal Church, 55 Fountain St., Milford, on Saturday, February 9, from 9 to 9 p.m at WPV Post 1385, 13 Cross St. (Rt. 16), Uxbridge. Proceeds from the dinner and raffles will help build a Quaker oma's Open Barn in Auburn. Attendees will enjoy a full pasta meal, live music and a cash bar. Tickets, available in advance from Dog Orphans or DogOrphans.com, are $15 for adults, $5 for children and free for those five and under. Tickets at the door are $20.

American Red Cross Blood Lessons for Children
MILFORD-Lenny Morone, Director of the Milford Community School Unit Program, announced registration for the 7th Session of Children’s American Red Cross Blood Lessons, which are held from mid-February through the end of March, at the Milford High School Pool. Walk in registration will be held on Monday, February 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the Milford High School Pool lobby. Space is limited and registration is accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis for Milford residents only. Residents must show proof of residency.

Non-Milford residents are welcome if space is available beginning on Tuesday, February 12. Call the office at 508-478-1115 to register. Saturday classes for 10 and older begin at 9 a.m. while Mini-Whips, ages 4 and 5 have lessons at 10:30 a.m. Classes for ages six and older in Levels 1-6 are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 6:40 p.m.

Call the Milford Community School Unit Program Office for any questions or visit the website, MCS.Milford.MA.us.

Beekeeping Basics Workshop
WORCESTER-Ken Warach, a veteran beekeeper from Northbridge, will be giving a free workshop on Beekeeping Basics for Blackstone Heritage Corridor’s Volunteer Beekeepers Program on February 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester, 5 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester. Warach will offer a visual tour of the inside of a beehive, explore what goes on in a colony, explore the environmental challenges honeybees face and the steps beekeepers can take to help them thrive. A sampling of 15 different honeys will be offered. Registration is required; email VolunteerBlackstoneHeritageCorridor@or call 508-234-4242.

MUE Comedy Night
MENDON-MUE-MUE (the Mendon Upton Education Foundation) announces that the MUE Comedy Night will be held on February 22, Doors open at 7:30 p.m. The show starts at 8:30 p.m. Purchase tickets in advance for $35 at MUE@org; $30 at the door. The 21+ event will also offer a cash bar and light appetizers. Proceeds from the event support MUE, which offers creative, innovative and sustainable programming grants to Mendon Regional schools.

Twice Blessed Thrift Shop
HOPEDALE-The Twice Blessed Thrift Shop at the Sacred Heart of Hopedale Church will offer half off all domestics such as sheets and comforters plus all small appliances such as coffee makers and slow cookers during February. New, limited stock of First Communion dresses for $24.99. The shop is open every Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Creating a Haven, Inviting Nature into Our Homes
MILFORD-The Greenleaf Garden Club will be holding the following events.

BVA Events
BVA Events

Coffee Break, Women’s Bible Study
WHITINSVILLE-Coffee Break, a non-denominational community Bible study for women and Story Hour for children, will continue its Winter/Spring season with a study on The Fruit of the Spirit, on Fridays from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at Fairlawn Church, 105 Goldswate Rd., off Hill St., Whitinsville.

Refreshments and quality child care are provided, a nursery for infants up to two years and story hour for children up to age five.

Coffee Break is free and open to women in the Blackstone Valley who want to learn and read about the Bible, share questions and concerns, and develop friendships. Each lesson is independent, so you do not need to be a Bible student to know what you are reading. Study guides are provided free of charge.

For directions, questions, or to get more information, call Ginette at 508-234-4806 or the church secretary at 508-234-2838.

Calendars
Empowering Students to Make Healthy Decisions

Miscoe Hill Middle School, in partnership with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, presented "Project Here" at the school on January 2. Miscoe Guidance Counselor Beauregard Sinko presented parts of the "Project Here" program to the 7th and 8th grade students, each speaking of her enthusiasm and inclusive teaching style. "She inspired both my children to learn by using real life examples and hands on opportunities. She strives to bring out the very best in each child by helping them to see what is unique and special about them," read one nomination. “She has a unique plan for each child and has a way of helping kids to see where they excel and where they can improve all the while making them feel good. I love how empathetic she is, and this comes out in her teaching style," read another. From doing the "floss dance" when students learn a new math concept, to wiping away her own tears after reading Charlotte's Web every year to her class, the nominations painted a picture of the "wide-spread positive impact" she has had on her students. "I can not think of a more worthy recipient of this award," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Maruszczak. "She is the epitome of heart, passion, and commitment." Brigham thanked the School Committee, Administration, her colleagues and family for their continued support over the past 24 years. "I am humbled," she said. "I have been so blessed to work with some extraordinary students and their wonderful parents." Brigham received the 7th Golden Apple Award from the district. Beginning at the end of this year, three teachers will be chosen to receive a Golden Apple award.

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Empowering All Learners

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter

Empowering students to “thrive” is more than just traditional classroom learning, according to school officials at Nipmuc Regional High School. That is why for the fourth year in a row, Nipmuc students were given the opportunity to explore their passions and try something new during a full-day learning conference.

Nipmuc’s first 21st Century Learning Conference of 2019 was held on January 23, and was built on the district’s newly adopted mission – “Empower All Learners to Thrive.”

“We are big believers in the power of achievement and academic success, but we are also believers that it is just as important for students to find their passions and to be global problem solvers,” said Nipmuc co-Principal John Clements. “We wanted to tap into what kids are curious about, said Clements. “What they could learn about that would be transferable to all aspects of their lives.”

Administrators and teachers, including Clements, co-Principal Mary Anne Moran, and Career, Community, and Innovations Coordinator Leigh-ann Ramsey, spent the last several months developing a conference filled with engaging sessions that partner students with community professionals, teachers, and peers in order to explore their passions.

One of the sessions, Solution Seekers could head to the Tesla Robotics Challenge session, where students worked in teams to build and code a robot to complete simple tasks. “The more students understand about coding and technology, the more prepared they are for anything,” said Nipmuc Teacher Ron Cochran, who helped run the half-day session. “Technology is everywhere. This is a chance for them to get exposed to it in a fun way.”

Students looking to explore something more creative could be found in the Art Room becoming Inspired Innovators by learning how to create vessels on a pottery wheel. “It’s a skill, and it takes practice and patience,” said Nipmuc Art Teacher Kevin Campbell, one of the leaders of the session. “It’s a skill, and it takes practice and patience.”

Outside in the courtyard, students worked on becoming Skilled Collaborators by joining a team challenge to build a 40” x 80” ice rink to share with the community. Learning the art of networking, learning how to change a tire and basic car maintenance, taking a nature hike and taking a culinary tour of Italy were just a few of the dozens of sessions that students themselves found to make use of “learning adventures” they thought would inspire them to build useful skills.

“We wanted to tap into what kids are curious about,” said Clements. “What they could learn about that would be transferable to all aspects of their lives.”

“Learning is transferable to all aspects of our lives,” said Clements of all the different sessions that were offered throughout the day. “It is our job to show the students how each one of these is a learning experience and that they can pull the learning out of any moment.”

Overall, the winter 21st Century Learning Conference was a “success,” said Moran and Clements in an interview after the event, one they say gets better and better every time. “The feedback was overwhelmingly positive,” said Moran. “It’s an exciting and empowering event, it opens doors for our kids.”

Songs and Melodies Warm a Cold Winter Night

The brass section of the sixth-grade Miscoe Hill Band gets musical during their Winter Concert under the direction of Band Teacher Lauren Amritiana. Melissa Orff photo.

The Miscoe Hill School 6th Grade Chorus sings away the winter blues during their Band and Chorus Concert on January 16 under the direction of Chorus Teacher Haley Steinberger. Melissa Orff photo.

Tiered Focused Monitoring Review at Valley Tech

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has informed Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, that a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review will be conducted of the school.

As part of the process, DESE’s Office of Public School Monitoring will conduct an onsite review of Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School on Monday, February 11. The Office of Public School Monitoring visits each district and charter school every three years to monitor compliance with federal and state special education and civil rights regulations. Areas of review related to special education include student assessments, determination of eligibility, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team process, and IEP development and implementation. Areas of review related to civil rights include bullying, student discipline, physical restraint, and equal access to school programs for all students.

During the onsite review, the Office of Public School Monitoring will interview the chairperson(s) of the district’s Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Other onsite activities may include interviews of district staff and administrators, reviews of student records, and onsite observations.

Parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The review chairperson from the Office of Public School Monitoring will send all parents of students with disabilities an online survey that focuses on key areas of their child’s special education program. Survey results will contribute to the development of a report.

Parents and other individuals may call Michelle Hennessy-Kowalcheck Public School Monitoring Chairperson, at 781-338-3704 to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the Department will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the district with a report with information about areas in which the district meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the district requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The public will be able to access the report at DOE-MASS.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports.

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The Mendon-Upton Regional School District K-12 Visual Art educators announce that 38 art students have had work selected for display at the Youth Art Month (YAM) exhibit in Boston.

Art educators across the state have been asked to submit as many as six pieces of student artwork in a wide range of media. There will be hundreds of artworks on display in the exhibit.

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Art Education Association, the Your Art, Your Story exhibit, is being held at the Massachusetts State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, from February 11 through March 27. The exhibit will be open to the public on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., from February 11 through March 27 and is closed weekends and on Presidents' Day, Monday, February 18. Entrance to the exhibit is free.

Clough students taught by Chelsea Stone are, l-r, Top row: Holden Parker - Grade 4, Ava Fernandes - Grade 3, Pepper Langley - Kindergarten. Bottom row: Amalcea Lefort - Grade 4, Reid Lomnicki - Grade 4, Alison Fletcher - Grade 2.

Memorial students taught by Jessica Fowler are, l-r, Top row: Lisa Lenfest - Grade 2, Audrey Gowen - Grade 4, Cate Tengler - Grade 3. Bottom Row: Adeline Cormier - Kindergarten, Emmett Tetreault - Grade 1.

Miscoe Hill students taught by Alice Gentili are, l-r, Top row: Paul Van Norman - Grade 6, Kylie French, Adlin Genovesse, Samira Evens - Grade 6, Zubreta Booth - Grade 6. Bottom row: Matthew dos Santos - Grade 7, Nolan Mann - Grade 6, Elizabeth Scharn - Grade 5.

Memorial students taught by Jessica Fowler are, l-r, Top row: Lisa Lenfest - Grade 2, Audrey Gowen - Grade 4, Cate Tengler - Grade 3. Bottom Row: Adeline Cormier - Kindergarten, Emmett Tetreault - Grade 1.

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Miscoe Hill students taught by Jonathan Hansen are, l-r, Top row: Astrid Lee - Grade 8, Kameyn Sellers - Grade 8, Connor Jason - Grade 8. Bottom row: Sean Remilliod - Grade 8, Kaley Dirazian - Grade 7, Meghan McCobb - Grade 7.

Nipmuc students taught by Alison Clish are, l-r, Top row: Christina Derocher - Grade 9, Kylie Jordan - Grade 12. Middle row: Natalie Plourde - Grade 12, Rachel Goodwin - Grade 10. Bottom row: Keri Stewart - Grade 10, Ashley Porter - Grade 11.

Nipmuc students taught by Kevin Campbell are, l-r, Top row: Olivia Sandborn - Grade 11, Kellen House - Grade 10. Middle row: Jessica Noel - Grade 10, Sophia Stadley - Grade 12. Bottom row: Parker Snow - Grade 12, Kendall Willis - Grade 11.
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Nipmuc student athletes may be swimming under a different school’s banner this fall, but the Warriors are once again an integral part of a strong swimming co-op at Grafton.

The Indians took over the co-op beginning this year with swimmers from Grafton, Northbridge, Sutton, Auburn, Northboro, and Wayland. Two of the top eight swimmers this season are Nipmuc student athletes.

The results have shown on the slopes. At the midway point of the season, all skiers have six more dual meets left.

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Q: How does your experience differ from that of other ski clubs? A: Our ski club is unique because we offer a variety of programs for all ages and skill levels. We have a strong focus on developing young skiers through our Jr. Program and are proud to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all our members.

Q: What are some of the key benefits of joining your club? A: Joining our ski club offers a range of benefits, including access to our full array of programs, opportunities to train with like-minded individuals, and the chance to develop valuable life skills such as perseverance, teamwork, and commitment.

Q: What are some of the achievements of your club members? A: Our club has a long history of success, with many of our members achieving top results in regional and national competitions. Additionally, we have a strong track record of developing talented young skiers who have gone on to excel at higher levels of competition.

Q: What advice would you give to someone considering joining your club? A: We encourage anyone interested in skiing to join our club and experience the many benefits and opportunities we offer. Whether you’re a beginner or an experienced skier, there is something for everyone at our club, and we look forward to welcoming new members.

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Nipmuc/BVT Ski Co-Op Continues to Grow

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Nipmuc/Blackstone Valley Tech ski co-op added athletes from Milford and Hopedale this winter, bringing the total team roster up to 17. At the midway point of the season, all skiers have six more dual meets left.

The success is defined not just by the top skiers, but also in the way the younger athletes work with those who are new to the sport. Happy Valley Asian Bodywork has been instrumental in helping these younger skiers develop their skills and confidence.

Nipmuc’s Katie Pollen and Marie Rausch, two seniors, are also on the cusp of qualifying, and O’Hagan said he is hoping to have the team represented by all five states. Qualifying is a bit more challenging this winter. In past years, the number of skiers has been equal to twice the number of teams for each gender. This year, the field will consist of a number equal to 1.5 the number of teams, O’Hagan said.

With three meets left in the season, all skiers have six more chances to race and earn better qualifying times. O’Hagan said he is working, along with assistant coaches John Rausch and Aaron Joyce, to continue to spread the word about the program in an effort to keep the roster growing in winters to come. The success is defined not just by the top skiers, but also in the way the older athletes work with those who are new to the sport.

Seniors Pollen, Rausch and Taylor Burroughs have taken eighth grade skier Payton Alves under their wing. O’Hagan said, who is new to the sport, is headed. “He is a very, very good skier,” the coach said. “I have high expectations for him in the future.”

Another eighth grade student, Ronan Joyce, has shown the type of promise that has O’Hagan excited about the future. O’Hagan said he wants to continue to recruit, noting that three of the six girls on this year’s roster are set to graduate. He said he’s hoping to work with Hopedale and Milford at eighth grade orientations to let incoming freshmen know about the ski team and their opportunity to participate.
Nipmuc Group Young, But Boosting Northbridge Hockey

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

First-year Northbridge hockey coach Ryan Neville is excited for what the future may bring for the Nipmuc High School students that are part of the co-op, since most of them have multiple seasons left with the program. But as the Rams hit the home stretch in position to get back to the district tournament, some Nipmuc athletes have already broken through and become integral pieces of this year’s championship game.

As of the start of the week, Richards was still deciding whether to play football at Bentley University in Waltham or the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, according to Nipmuc Athletic Director Chris Schmidt. Chester, a stalwart on the line for Nipmuc, will head to Newport, R.I. to play for Salve Regina.

Kilcoyne recently completed an undefeated regular season in the pool for the Grafton swimming co-op, winning all 18 events she entered. She has state-qualifying times in all eight individual events and has helped three relay teams earn spots in the state meet as well. She’s committed to swim for Williams College. Dover Willow Dunster will attend the University of Rhode Island, but first she will compete for Grafton in the league, sectional and state meets this winter.

Seniors Hope to Bring Unified Sports to Nipmuc

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

A pair of Nipmuc seniors are spearheading an effort to bring “unified” sports to Nipmuc High School, combining general education and special education students on a basketball team that would begin play next fall.

The students, Gabi Puchovsky and Lucy Hawkins, are working on starting the team as part of their DECA marketing project and will host a basketball scrimmage during halftime of the varsity boys’ game on Wednesday, February 6. They said the team is a great way to make the already welcoming environment at Nipmuc even more inclusive.

“These students with intellectual disabilities will get the chance to play a sport with a Nipmuc uniform,” Hawkins said. “It’s a great way to have them feel included and help unify our school.”

“Sports are such a big part of our school, we thought this would be the best way,” Puchovsky added.

Wednesday’s scrimmage will include several students from the special education department as well as members of the Warrior’s junior varsity basketball team. Puchovsky said she and Hawkins will be selling bracelets that read “Warriors Play Unified” to raise money to cover some of the costs associated with the new team.

They will also set up a table to provide information explaining what unified sports is all about.

“We want to build some excitement within the school and the community about our plans for the team,” Puchovsky said. Puchovsky and Hawkins both volunteered with Seven Hills Foundation, a program providing support to adults with disabilities. They said the relationships they formed there encouraged them to reflect on how high school students treat people with intellectual disabilities.

“In our school we have noticed students in general education do have kindness and respect, everybody sits together at lunch, but what we don’t see is these relationships extended beyond the classroom,” Puchovsky said. “We are trying to make those relationships more impactful.”

Both students are heading off to college next fall, but plan to start a club with an adviser and a basketball coach that will help get the team off the ground next school year.

Seven Nipmuc Athletes to Make College Commitments

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Nipmuc Regional High School athletic program will see seven members of the Class of 2019 ink college letters of intent to continue their athletic careers during a signing day ceremony on Wednesday, Feb. 6.

The group includes soccer standouts Jackson Bukont and Colby Hegarty, football players Matt Richards and Tom Chester, swimming and diving stars Samantha Kilcoyne and Willow Dunster, and softball star Kali Scirocco.

Bukont and Hegarty helped the Warriors’ soccer team capture a state title in 2017 and advance all the way to the state championship game again this past fall. Bukont, who will attend St. Anselm’s in New Hampshire, was among the team’s top point scorers this season. Hegarty is heading to Northeastern after a standout career in goal. He finished his senior season with 15 shutouts, including one in a state final game that required penalty kicks to decide the winner.

Richards and Chester had similar team and individual success on the gridiron. As two of Nipmuc’s captains, the duo led the Warriors to the Division 3 Super Bowl at Gillette Stadium this fall and to three straight Central Mass. district championships.

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Kah Scirocco still has one season to play for Nipmuc on the softball diamond before joining the Greyhounds of Assumption in Worcester. She has been a consistent and productive presence at the top of the lineup for Nipmuc, and earned the honor of being a captain last season.

The annual signing ceremony will take place on Wednesday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the PDC room at Nipmuc Regional.

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Grafton/BVT Hockey Makes Tourney, Eyes State Title

By Chris Villani

Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Grafton/Blackstone Valley Tech ice hockey co-op has already locked up a spot in the district tournament, but the Indians have their sights set on a repeat of their division title two winters ago when they hoisted a state championship trophy.

“We want another state championship, everyone in that room does,” said head coach Mike Binkoski. “But all we can control is the next practice.”

Grafton/BVT began the week with a 10-2-2 record, thanks in part to a come-from-behind, 4-3 win over Westboro that earned a postseason berth. Grafton/BVT trailed 2-1 going into the final period, but Binkoski said, “It was a great high school hockey game, back and forth. Each team had momentum on their side at various points and to come out on top was awesome.”

One of the goals in the Westboro win came off the stick of BVT junior Chase Vartabedian and Adam Shobe and junior Braden Levasseur, Valley Tech athletes all, have anchored a blue line that allows fewer than two goals per game, on average. “Statistically, if you can do that, you are going to win a lot of games,” Binkoski said. “So we are built from the back end out with those guys.”

Griffin DiAntonio, another BVT senior, did not score a goal through the team’s first 14 games, but Binkoski feels it’s a matter of time before he breaks through. “He is not putting up many points he wants to right now, but he is skating the best I have seen him skate in his four years,” the coach said. “He is getting scoring changes. They are not going to go away, but he will start to.”

With six games left in the regular season, peaking at the right time is top-of-mind for Grafton/BVT as the team looks to put itself in the best position possible for the tournament. “We want to get the top seed overall, or the top seed in our division,” Binkoski said. “We want to get to be on the home bench and wear white.”