This proposed budget will mean asking for an additional $491,828 (6.8 percent) from Mendon and $469,452 (5.42 percent) from Upton.

The $38,952,699 FY21 budget proposal is a 6.97 percent, or $2,537,768, increase from FY20. “I am fully aware that this is a sizable ask to both of our communities and clearly exceeds the 2 ½ levy increase,” said Maruszczak.

Based on the school enrollment in Mendon (44.48 percent) and Upton (35.52 percent), each town will have to fund a “substantial” $1,299,334 and $1,608,954 respectively based on the proposed budget.

Maruszczak said that the budget was built on keeping level services and adding some “critical needs” including hiring two full time School Psychologists ($160,000 which will be offset by a $95,000 reduction in contracted services).

“We are seeing increased stressors, anxiety and mental health needs across all four schools,” he said.

The budget also includes the hiring of an Elementary Special Education Team Chair and bringing back the Media Specialist/Librarian for the high school.

“Right now, there is a paraprofessional manning the library, but [not having a librarian] has implications in

Massachusetts Presidential Primary on March 3

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Massachusetts is one of 14 states that will hold its Presidential Primary on Tuesday, March 3. Local residents will head to the polls on Super Tuesday to help determine the Democratic, Republican, Green-Rainbow, and Libertarian candidates who will appear on the ballot for the Presidential Election in November.

In Mendon and Upton, the Democratic ballot for Presidential Preference will include 15 candidates’ names, however, many have already dropped out of the race.

Regardless, names on the ballot will include Deval Patrick, Amy Klobuchar, Michael Bennet, Andrew Yang, Pete Buttigieg, and Marianne Williamson.

Those who have dropped out are Patrick, Bennet, Booker, Castro, Delaney, Yang and Williamson.

The Republican ballot for Presidential Preference includes William Weld, Joe Walsh, Donald Trump, and Rourke “Rocky” De La Fuente.

The candidates on the Green-Rainbow Party ballot for Presidential Preference are Dario Hunter, Sedimam Kinamo Christin Moyowasifza-Curry, Kent Mesplay, and Howard Hawkins. And the names that will appear on the Libertarian Party ballot include Arvin Vohra, Vermin Supreme, Jacob George Hornberger, Samuel Joseph Robb, Dan Taxation is Theft Behrman, Kimberly Margaret Ruff, Kenneth Reed Armstrong, Adam Kokesh, Jo Jorgensen, and Max Abramson.

Also on the Primary ballot, residents are running for State Committee Man, State Committee Woman, and Town Committee.

In Mendon, running on the Democratic ballot for State Committee Man is Kevin Tagliatieri and for State Committee Woman is Lisa Moszynski.

For Town Committee, Democratic candidates are Thomas Merolli, Albert Crisfield, Leigh Martin, Rand Barthel, Alegna Brugos, Amy Fahey, Michael Merolli, Peggy Veal, and Carolyn Crosby Barthel.

Running on the Republican ballot for State Committee Man is Ryan Chamberlain and Kevin Powers and Maureen Maloney for State Committee Woman.

On the ballot for Town Committee is Deborah Jean Perro, Tina Jankauskas, Michael Montoya, Justine Southwick Brewer, and Mark Reil.

In Upton, there is no running on the Democratic ballot for State Committee Man, however, Mary Anne Duhe is running for State Committee Woman. There are no names on the ballot for Town Committee.

On Upton’s Republican ballot, Paul Frost and James Knowlton are running for State Committee Man and Mindy McKenzie and Brenda Brown are running for State Committee Woman.

There are no names on the ballot for Town Committee. And neither the Green-Rainbow or Libertarian parties have residents running for Committee seats.

In Mendon, the primary polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Miscoe Hill School, North Ave., and in Upton, the polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Nipmuc Regional High School, Pleasant St.

A Rare Sight this Winter

A rare sight this winter has been ice coating the ponds and lakes. This partial coating of ice covered a small pond on Glen Ave. in Upton following a bitterly cold day and night on February 14-15. Jane Bigda photo

The winter of 2019-2020 has been warm. While there have been cold snaps, they have been few and short-lived. As a result, ice on ponds and snow on lawns has been light. So far Boston has officially recorded about 15 inches of snow this winter, which is about a foot less than the average.

According to Dave Epstein, a meteorologist for the Boston Globe and on WBZ TV, there is a number of reasons for the lack of snow and cold. The first is the polar vortex, which can drag cold weather into New England if it expands or moves south. This winter the polar vortex has been locked into the northern part of the planet resulting in warmer temperatures and rain instead of snow locally.

Another reason for the milder weather is spins in the jet stream that carries Pacific storms across the nation have been in the west instead of the east this year.

While local skaters and skiers have not had a good season, those who hate shoveling snow have. Could there be an early spring?
The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation announces the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park February/March 2020 Interpretive Programming Schedule. All activities are held at the River Bend Farm, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge, unless otherwise listed and are for all ages unless an age range is noted. Children must always be accompanied by an adult. Call the park, 508-278-7604, for more information.

Winter Hiking Workshop, Saturday February 22, 12:30 p.m. Join a workshop about proper winter hiking safety, technique, attire, gear, and more.

Winter Recreational Hike of the Goat Hill Trail, Saturday February 22, 1 p.m. An easy, three-mile round trip with the Blackstone River Watershed Association around Goat Hill, past the Goat Hill Lock and along the Blackstone River. Hot chocolate will be served after the hike. Dogs are permitted on a leash. Portions of the trail are hilly and may be more strenuous if icy or snow covered. This forest trail has roots and rocks along the path. Be prepared for cold weather, wear appropriate footwear and consider bringing hiking poles, drinking water and a snack.

Canal Walk, Sunday February 23, March 1 and Friday, March 6 and 20 at 1 p.m. A two-mile guided walk along the Blackstone Canal following the Blackstone River Greenway. The walks explore the canal’s historical and cultural significance and its role in the farm to factory transformation of the Blackstone Valley. All walks end at the start location. If conditions permit, bring snowshoes and hiking poles. The walk on February 23 is at Plummer’s Landing, Church St., Northbridge; March 1 at Blackstone Gorge, County St., Blackstone; and March 6 and 20 at River Bend Farm.

Winter Nature Walk, Thursday February 27. Enjoy a one mile walk around the field paths and along the river to look for signs of winter wildlife. Leashed dogs welcome. If conditions permit, bring snowshoes and hiking poles.

Maple Sugar Days, Saturday and Sunday, March 7 and 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Park staff and volunteers introduce participants through the maple syrup process. Identify maple trees, see them being tapped, participate in gathering sap, and visit 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 half mile walk. Guided tours at 11 a.m., 12, 1 and 2 p.m. Program runs rain, snow or shine, but may be modified. For updates during inclement weather, please email blackstone.heritage@mass.gov or call 508-278-7604.

Sugar Makers Open House, Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Celebrate Maple Month by visiting the open sugarhouse and talking about maple sugaring from tree to table. Enjoy a short video on sugaring in the hayloft of River Bend Farm Visitor Center.

Brown Bag Along the Blackstone, Thursday, March 19, 12 noon. Pack a lunch and watch an episode of Along the Blackstone at River Bend Farm Visitor Center.

Revolution is in the Air, Saturday, March 28 at 2 p.m. at Congdon Street Baptist Church, 17 Congdon St., Providence, will explain the history and archaeology of the North Shore archaeological site, located in Providence’s nineteenth-century “Snowtown” neighborhood. "Snowtown was noted for its constant flow of undocumented residents, ramshackle housing, and varying levels of what many city-dwellers at the time considered ‘unsavory behavior’,” Ms. Olson explains. "Regardless of contemporary perceptions, Snowtown’s residents were inextricably intertwined with the labor, transportation, and technological revolutions occurring in Providence during that time." All are invited to attend. The final lecture, the National Women’s Rights Convention of 1850, will be Saturday, March 28 at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center, 3 Paul Clancy Way; (for GPS use 115 McKeon Road), Worcester.

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508-478-MILK (6455)
How do you test a person for 2019 Novel Coronavirus? Testing is only available through the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any healthcare provider who suspects a person is infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus should call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to discuss testing, at 617-983-6800.

Who should be tested for 2019 Novel Coronavirus? Only those who have been in a place where 2019 Novel Coronavirus is occurring, or have had close contact with someone who has it, and are experiencing flu-like symptoms, should be tested.

What do to if you have visited a place where 2019 Novel Coronavirus is occurring or had close contact with someone who has it?

• Monitor your health for 14 days after your last possible exposure.

• Watch for these signs and symptoms – a fever, coughing or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

• Other early symptoms could be chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.

• If you develop any of these symptoms, call your healthcare provider.

• Before going to your medical appointment, be sure to tell your healthcare provider about your possible exposure to 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

If you do not have any of these symptoms, you can continue with daily activities such as going to work, school, or other public areas.

How to learn more.

For current information regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, visit the DPH website at Mass.gov/2019 coronavirus or the CDC at CDC.gov/coronavirus.
Claflin Hill Symphony Presents Favorite Destinations

The Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra continues its Twentieth Anniversary Season celebration on Saturday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the Milford Town Hall Grand Ballroom with “Favorite Destinations in Heart and Mind.”

The program will feature music of Aaron Copland, Our Town, together with Ferde Grofé’s Grand Canyon Suite, Ottorino Respighi’s Pines of Rome, and a world premiere of a work written for the CHSO’s Anniversary Season by Webster composer Robert Christensen, Adirondack Sketches.

The entire concert will be accompanied by projected images and photos illustrating the natural beauty of each region the music depicts.

“It has been a truly monumental season so far,” stated Paul Surapine, Founding Executive & Artistic Director of CHSO. “Beginning with our November concert which featured Gustav Holst’s The Planets and Maurice Ravel’s Daphnis & Chloe, the orchestra has performed one amazing and epic concert after another this season, culminating in the recent All Tchaikovsky concert on Saturday, February 8, a performance that may go down as one of the greatest performances ever by the CHSO in 20 years!”

“We’re looking forward to this next program, which in a sense, will be the Birthday Celebration Concert of the season, featuring some of our favorites works from the past 20 seasons including Copland’s Our Town which will be accompanied by pictures of our community and Claflin Hill events and members from the past two decades.”

The world premiere of Robert Christensen’s Adirondack Sketches has a special connection to Claflin Hill, as the composer is the former Director of the Julius Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Conn., during which tenure, Surapine was a student there.

“It is truly a very special opportunity to be able to re-connect with a teacher from my past – a teacher who had a significant part in my high school training and helped launch me into a lifetime of music study and performance, and to be able to bring to life a composition that he has written for us in this Anniversary Season. Although I’ve bumped into Bob along the way now and again over the past 20 years, he has been observing the growth of Claflin Hill and is very proud of the work we have done in our community to create and nurture a world-class culture.”

The CHSO Season will continue through April, with performances on the CHSO Homefield Credit Union Jazz Series at the Caffe Sorrento on March 21; The CHSO Family Symphony Matinee on Sunday, March 29; a chamber concert at Apple Tree Arts in Grafton on April 4 and the season finale at Milford Town Hall on April 25.

More information and tickets for the Claflin Hill Symphony concerts can be purchased at ClaflinHill.org or by calling the CHSO office, 508-478-5924.

The handicap accessible Milford Town Hall is located at 52 Main St., Rt. 16, Milford.

Get in on the Act!

Get in on the act now by participating in the 11th Annual One Act Play Festival on the Mumford Friday and Saturday, March 27 and 28 at 7 p.m. in the Singh Performance Center, 60 Douglas Rd., Whitinsville. This inclusive event brings hundreds of people of all ages and abilities together to celebrate creativity and engage in a little friendly competition. One act plays may include comedies, dramas, published works and original pieces presented by area theater companies and laymen alike. The Festival is judged after each performance and cash awards, and a trophy, are presented after the last act on Saturday evening. Participants and attendees of the One Act Play Festival are invited to enjoy a wine and cheese reception next door in the Heritage Gallery on opening night, Friday, March 27 from 6 to 7 p.m.

For more information about participating in the 11th Annual One Act Play Festival or to download a submission form please visit: OpenSkyCS.org/news-events/events. This event is sponsored by ValleyCAST and Open Sky Community Services.

Upton, Mendon Town Crier
Mattelian and Ross Take Out Papers for Selectman’s Seat

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

As of February 14, incumbent Stephen Mattelian and David Ross have taken out nomination papers for the three-year Board of Selectmen’s seat. Upton’s Annual Town Election is scheduled to take place May 19.

Mattelian is seeking his second term for the elected office. Ross ran for the Selectman’s seat last year but lost to Maureen Dwinnell. He currently sits on the Economic Development Committee. Several other residents, all incumbents, have also taken out their nomination papers, including David Looper for Town Moderator for one year, Richard Garoarian for Recreation Committee for three years, Renia Richards for Housing Authority for five years, and Linda Jones for Housing Authority for three years.

Other elected seats without nomination papers pulled as of February 14 include Assessor of Taxes for three years, James Earle is the incumbent; Mendon Upton Regional School District Committee for three years, Philip DeZutter is the incumbent; Cemetery Commission for three years, Robert Pray is the incumbent; Cemetery Commission for one year, Jay Ferris is the incumbent, Board of Health for three years, Richard Desjardins is the incumbent; three Library Trustees for three years, Megan Donson, Charlotte Davidson is the incumbent; Board of Commissioner of Trust Funds for two years, James Glowacki is the incumbent; Board of Commissioner of Trust Funds for one year, Robert Fleming is the incumbent, and Housing Authority for four years, Richard Kennedy is the incumbent. The last day for candidates to obtain their nomination papers is Friday, March 27 at 5 p.m. Candidates must submit their completed papers to the Registrars of Voters for certification of names on or before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31. After certification, papers must be filed with the Town Clerk on or before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14. The last day to withdraw from the election is Thursday, April 16 by 5 p.m. The last day to register to vote in the Annual Town Election and at the May 7 Annual Town Meeting is Friday, April 17. Residents with questions on their voter registration status should contact the Town Clerk’s office at 508-529-3566 or KMcirola@uptonma.gov. Office hours 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.

The Upton Bloomer Girl Scholarships

The Upton Bloomer Girls will be awarding several $1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are Upton residents attending any high school and who are looking to continue onto higher education. Scholarships are also available to children and grandchildren of any current Bloomer Girl member.

The Upton Bloomer Girl Scholarship applications are available at the Nipmuc Regional High School and Blackstone Valley Tech guidance departments. The Scholarships are funded by Bloomer Girls fundraising events and donations.
Opinion

Is That Really News?

By Kevin Rudden

As a reporter for several local newspapers, even I sometimes find myself saying “is that really news!” from time to time. There was a recent article in a local newspaper about the administration of Milford High deciding to change the colors of graduation caps and gowns from white for girls and red for boys to all red. As I read the headline my mind went quickly to “who should I contact to get the scoop?” and “can I get this in by the deadline?”

So, what makes this news? Is it the fact that now everyone in the graduating class would be wearing red? What is the big deal? Reading on, I saw that the big deal—if you could call it that—was the petition started on Change.org by a Milford senior, David F. Adelman, 78, of South Carolina, his step-children, Laurie Ann Miller Day and her husband, David of Florida, and Betty Kaye Ellis and her husband, Steve of Florida. He also leaves behind his siblings, Frederick A. Adelman and his wife, Blanche of New Jersey, Rhett Kennedy and her husband, Richard of New York, grandchildren, Benjamin Clarke Adelman of South Carolina and seven step-grandchildren. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews and great-grandchildren. He is predeceased by his step-son, Donald Melvin Miller and two siblings. Private family services will be held. Arrangements are under the care of the Chesmore Funeral Home of Hopkinton. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Legion, Legion.

I have covered Milford High School graduations for close to a decade, and I see firsthand how students make their individual personalities shine on graduation day. I can see their personalities by their blinged-out caps with special quotes and decorations. I see their individualism as they sing with the chorus or perform with the band. I see their differences as they walk across the stage to receive their diplomas—some solemn and some with whoops and hollers. And though I know I may be receiving some teenage eye rolls for saying this, I say to the Milford students that no matter what you wear on graduation day, it will still be one of the most momentous days of your life. That you should go out and make news not based on the color you wear, but in the difference you make.

Monthly Community Meals

Every Thursday
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Small Hall, 27 Pearl St., Milford. Sponsored by St. Vincent DePaul Society. 508-473-2009

Third Thursday
3:30 p.m. Supper, Unitarian Universalist Church, 23 Pine St. Milford. Use Fuumilford@verizon.net.

Last Thursday
4:30-6 p.m. Supper, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford. Sponsored by the Hopedale Churches (Unitarian, Sacred Heart and Union Evangelical). 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Last Saturday
4:30-6 p.m. Supper, Unitarian Universalist Church, 23 Pine St. Milford, use side door. Sponsored by Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish of Milford. lbabcock5@gmail.com.

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

Read the Town Crier Online

To read the February 21, 2020 Upton-Mendon Town Crier online visit, TownCrier.us. Click Online Newspapers in the left-hand column, scroll down to Upton/Mendon Town Crier PDF Archive, and click on UTC 20.02.21.pdf
New Budget Document Reviewed by Upton Selectmen

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Town department heads have begun presenting their new budgets to the Board of Selectmen for review in preparation for Upton’s Annual Town Meeting. On May 7, residents will vote on the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

During a February 4 meeting, public safety and the town accountants new budgets were on the agenda. However, prior to those discussions, Town Accountant Kenny Costa reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021 Town Manager’s Budget Recommendation document with the Board.

The 100 plus page report details the Fiscal Year 2021 budget and according to Town Manager Derek Brindisi, builds upon previous editions.

“Kenny has committed his time and energy towards developing a budget document that meets the GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) standards,” said Brindisi. “We’re not quite there yet. We think we’re a year or two away before we can submit this to GFOA to received their Gold Star Approval. We continue to try to be as transparent as possible and provide as much information as possible in all our budget documents.”

Costa opened up the conversation by reviewing that first few pages of the document which discusses such sections as the Citizen’s Guide to the Budget, the Budget Process itself, and a Community Profile.

Next, he discussed Upton’s Fiscal Year 2021 revenue estimates. The largest revenue source he said is property tax, which is 88 percent. Local receipts, which consist of motor vehicle excise tax and building and electrical permits, make up eight percent and state aid is four percent. “I was very surprised the number of excise tax receipts was over $1 million,” said Selectman Chair Stephen Matellian.

As Costa went on, he stated that debt totaling $373,000 will be coming off the books since debt exclusions for Stefan’s Farm and the Fire Station will be paid off. However, prior to those discussions, Town Accountant Kenny Costa reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021 Town Manager’s Budget Recommendation document with the Board.

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As Costa went on, he stated that debt totaling $373,000 will be coming off the books since debt exclusions for Stefan’s Farm and the Fire Station will be paid off. However, if funding for the new Community Center is eventually approved through a debt exclusion, that debt would increase again.

A brief conversation took place concerning the Upton’s largest expense, the Mendon Upton Regional School District, which accounts for 56 percent of the town’s overall budget. According to Town Manager Derek Brindisi, the School Committee was still working on their final numbers for the new budget. The Selectmen stated that based on preliminary figures, they may need to brace for a possible override or cuts depending on the School Committee’s request from Upton.

Other expenses in the budget Costa explained include total fixed costs which account for 12 percent of the budget and total town services which account for the remaining 32 percent. The complete Fiscal Year 2021 Town Manager’s Budget Recommendation report can be found on the Board of Selectmen’s page at UptonMA.Gov.

Upton Receives S.A.F.E. and Senior 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 the Town of Upton for the Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E. program) of $3965 and Senior SAFE of $2348 in the FY20 budget.

There are two types of SAFE grants: the original S.A.F.E. program was established 25 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 order to help local fire departments support fire and safety education for older adults, who are the most at risk of dying in fires in the Commonwealth.

SAFE is a shining example of a successful and valuable program that the Commonwealth provides to its citizens,” said Muradian. “Teaching children, and now seniors, two of our more vulnerable populations, how to handle emergency situations with less anxiety will help keep all members of the community safe. I know that these funds will surely go to good use within our community”

Moore noted, “I believe that education is absolutely vital in helping protect children and seniors of the Commonwealth in the event of a fire. The SAFE grants provide resources to educate members of our community who are at high risk so they are prepared to handle emergency situations, and subsequently keep themselves and their peers safe.”

Tax Preparation Appointments

The Upton Center is hosting AARP tax preparers on Mondays through March 30 to help senior citizens prepare their taxes at no charge. Appointments, which must be scheduled by calling the Center, 508-529-4558, are held from 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Spaces fill fast. Besides making an appointment pick up an AARP tax intake forms at the Center office, Farm St., and complete them in advance of your appointment. There are no appointments on Monday, February 17, President’s Day.

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Upton News

Upton Selectmen Review Public Safety Budgets

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

With budget season in full swing, the Upton Board of Selectmen are meeting with department heads to review budget requests. During a February 4 meeting, Police Chief Michael Bradley, Fire Chief Mark DiFronzo, and Town Accountant Kenny Costa presented their budget requests to the Board.

According to Bradley, the proposed overall Police Department budget for Fiscal Year 2021 is $1,852,749, which is level funded.

Part of the new budget includes a two percent cost of living increase as well as funding for a 14th officer, who Bradley says is needed as a result of an expected population increase over the next several years.

Additionally, the department is asking for a $5,000 rise in computer maintenance to cover increased costs in record management, software fees, and a contract for a scan fingerprint machine. Police clothing and training fee line items are also increasing.

Bradley continued that several grants including a 911 Support and Incentive Grant totaling $142,800 and 911 Training Grant for $25,000 are helping decrease overall expenses in the operating budget.

Next up was Fire Chief Mark DiFronzo, who presented the combined budget for the Fire, EMS, and Emergency Management Department. According to DiFronzo, the combined budget is proposing a $67,136 or 5.5 percent increase totaling $1,285,707.

DiFronzo is requesting an increase in total wages of $40,756 as a result of a two percent cost of living increase, one employee moving up a step, and the addition of one paramedic stipend.

DiFronzo also discussed expenditures that are expected to increase $21,455 in the new budget, some of which is the result of increases in building maintenance, repairs to vehicle, and radio communications equipment maintenance, among others.

As far as revenues to the Department, ambulance receipts are expected to bring in $260,000 and recently grant funding of more than $90,000 was used to purchase two cardiac defibrillator monitors. “I will continue to pursue other grant opportunities wherever and whenever we can,” said DiFronzo.

The Fire Chief hopes to bring forward two articles at the May Annual Town Meeting. One article will fund the purchase of portable radio equipment totaling $159,000 and the other article is a request for three sets of personal protective gear totaling $14,000.

Costa spoke briefly about the Town Accountant’s new budget which is requesting a two percent cost of living increase and a $3,000 increase in expenses in order to perform a full OPEB valuation required by the Town’s Annual Financial Statement Audit. The three budgets were approved by the Selectmen as submitted. Voters will act on these requests along with the rest of the town’s FY21 budget at the Annual Town Meeting on May 7.

Worcester State University’s Visual and Performing Arts Department announced that WSU Junior Hannah Silberman of Upton has been selected for participation in the 16th annual ArtsWorcester College Show, an exhibition and competition featuring some of Worcester’s most creative student artists. Silberman, who is studying Spanish, Psychology and Art, is one of 14 students representing Worcester State University in the show which features 73 pieces of artwork in various mediums by a total of 60 artists from several Worcester colleges and universities. Her selected artwork is shown in the photo. The show runs through March 7 at ArtsWorcester’s gallery, 44 Portland St., Worcester. For more information, visit ArtsWorcester.org. WSU photo

Local Student Exhibits at ArtsWorcester College Show

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Homefield Credit Union Promotions

Karl Mosan, Homefield Credit Union President & CEO, announced three recent employee promotions saying, “These individuals, all with tenure at HCU, are an incredibly dedicated and capable group of individuals who will most certainly shine in their respective roles. I am excited to see their ideas come to life as they all work to honor our Member Promise of maximizing the member experience, one interaction at a time.”

Lisa Garza-Lacey has been promoted to AVP, Operations. A graduate of Our Lady of the Lake University in Texas, she joined the Credit Union in August 2010 and was promoted to Senior Operations Specialist in 2017. In her new role, Lacey will be responsible for the day to day administration and supervision of Deposit Operations and Loan Servicing Department, ensuring the Credit Union is in compliance with all related regulations and is functioning at peak capacity.

Stephanie Antaya, SHRM-CP has been promoted to AVP, Human Resources and Compliance. A graduate of Assumption College, she joined the Credit Union in 2014. In her new role, Antaya will be responsible for managing and directing all daily Human Resource activities such as recruitment, compensation, and benefits administration. She will also continue to assist in the administration of the Credit Union’s compliance program.

Kenneth Lewis has been promoted to AVP, Market Manager. A graduate of Fitchburg State University, he joined the Credit Union in 2015 as a Member Services Officer. In his new role, Lewis will direct the activities of the Retail Banking Department at the Main Office, North Grafton, to ensure quality member service consistent with the Credit Union’s Member Service Standards is delivered, while focusing on increased market share in deposits, loans, and ancillary services.

Last Call Snowman Contest

Our Snowman Contest is now going on.

Make a snowman, snap a photo and send it along with the snow person's dimensions (height and circumference), the names anyone in the picture, and your hometown, to TownCrierEditor@gmail.com.

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157 Main Street MILFORD
**Free Homebuyer Bootcamp**

Michael Shain of Bay Equity Home Loans will host a free Homebuyer Bootcamp seminar on Wednesday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Milford High School, Room A-1. Snow date is Wednesday, March 25.

A panel of experts will discuss and answer questions about the home buying process including mortgage programs and the importance of credit.

Pre-registration is required. Call 508-478-1119 or visit MilfordCommunity.com and click on "Register for Activities," then select "Adult Winter/Spring > One-Night Workshops > Homebuyer Bootcamp." Space is limited. Free pizza will be served!

For more information, call Shain at 508-330-8487 or email mshain@bayeq.com.

**Blackstone Valley Garden Club**

The Blackstone Valley Garden meets on Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m. Gretel Anspach, a trustee of Massachusetts Horticultural Society, a lifetime Master Gardener and past president of the Mass Master Gardener Association, will speak about pruning woody plants and trees. The meeting is at the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church, 61 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. Parking and entrance are at the rear of the building, off Church Street by Domino Pizza. Admission is $5 for non-members.
Mendon Cultural Council 2020 Grants Announced

The Mendon Cultural Council announces the award of 13 new grants totaling $5,300, for cultural programs serving Mendon residents in 2020. The awards are: 2020 Summer Concert Series, Birch Alley Brass, Blackstone Valley Education Foundation – Art in the Valley, BVCC Fall and Spring Concerts/Community Outreach Opportunities Celebrating New England: A performance for Seniors, Claffin Hill Symphony Orchestra, Concert by Quintessential Brass, Country and Western, Cowboy songs and Yodeling, Dragon and Fairy Wing Balloon Twisting Workshop, Free Community Art Celebration of Mendon.

Greater Milford Community Chorus, Musical Interlude – Thimble Pleasures 2020 Quilt Show, Nipmuc Music Recording Ensembles. Previous grant recipients have included Miscon Hill School, Daniel’s Farmstead Farmers Market/Music Series, and Blackstone Valley Community Chorus.

The Mendon Cultural Council will seek applications for the 2021 grants 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 Mass-Culture.org.

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. Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. Statewide, more than $3.3 million will be distributed by local cultural councils in 2020. Grants will support an enormous range of grass-roots activities. Nearly half of LCC funds support educational activities for young people.

Mendon Brothers of the Brush Memorial Flag Program

The Mendon Brothers of the Brush Association offer an opportunity to honor a friend or loved one who has served, or is serving, in U.S. armed forces by participating in the Memorial Flag Program. Any interested Mendon resident should complete the Flag Purchase Form and mail it in, along with the $200 fee, to P. O. Box 551, Mendon, MA 01756. Forms are available at MendonBrothersoftheBrush.org or at the Taft Public Library, Mendon Post Office, Senior Center, or Town Hall. All forms must be received by April 3 and participation will be on a first come, first serve basis. Questions may be sent to mendonbrush@gmail.com or call Flag Committee Chairman Rich Schofield, 508-958-2958.
Select Board Discusses Allowing Fire Chief to Appoint Per Diem and On-Call Personnel

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

During a February 4 meeting, Mendon Fire Chief Bill Kessler asked the Select Board to consider permitting him to appoint on-call and per diem fire fighters and paramedics.

Since Kessler was named Fire Chief in December of 2018, he’s been trying to build up his on-call and per diem staff.

The Fire Chief explained there’s a lot of competition to hire these positions, particularly paramedics, and he needs to move quickly to do so. With the Board typically meeting twice monthly and having meetings canceled from time to time, the timetable doesn’t always work to hire these individuals swiftly.

“I’ve had people waiting to get appointed and the Board wasn’t able to hold meetings for whatever reason,” he said. “I thought I’d ask the Board to consider delegating authority for appointments, just for on-call and per diem personnel, to me. If the Board wants to put some conditions, like I send them an email, I’m more than happy to do that as well. I just think this will help facilitate getting people in.”

Kessler continued that he had received an application from a qualified paramedic the day prior but because the appointment was unable to be placed on the Select Board’s agenda so quickly, it will need to be delayed.

“I don’t really have a problem with it,” said Select Board member Mark Reil. But the Board decided to further investigate the issue before making a final decision. However, because one per diem paramedic and one per diem basic EMT appointment were still pending, the Board agreed to permit Kessler to appoint those individuals in collaboration with the Town Administrator Kim Newman.

Prior to that discussion, a number of Fire Department appointments were on the agenda and approved by the Board that evening. They included Kevin Anderson to Firefighter/EMT, Gwen Costello to Per Diem EMT Basic, and Alex Drell to Per Diem Paramedic.

The Select Board’s next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25 at 6:30 p.m. and will take place in the Upper Town Hall.

CMRPC to Complete Mendon’s Master Plan

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

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Friends of Mendon Elders Book Sale

The Friends of Mendon Elders are sponsoring their 12th Annual Book Sale Friday, March 27 from 3 to 7 p.m., Saturday, March 28 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and again on Sunday, March 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Besides a large assortment of fiction, nonfiction, science fiction, and children’s books, puzzles, games, CDs, DVDs, and other previously viewed videos will be for sale.

Everything is being sold at unbelievable prices. Books are sorted and organized by author or subject to make shopping easier. The Book Sale takes place at the Mendon Senior Center, 62 Providence St., Mendon. Proceeds from this fundraiser support the Friends of Mendon Elders.

Mendon Gearing Up for Possible Races on Election Day

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

As of February 13, a number of nomination papers have been taken out by Mendon residents which could result in several races for various elected offices, including Select Board and Moderator. Mendon’s election is scheduled to take place on May 12.

Incumbent Lawney Timio and David Atkinson have both taken out their nomination papers for the three-year seat for Select Board. Atkinson has returned his papers. In addition, incumbent Jay Byer and Matthew O’Brien have both taken out their nomination papers for the one-year Moderator’s seat. A number of other incumbents have taken out papers and are, as of February 13, unchallenged. They include Alan Tetreault for Highway Surveyor for three years, who has returned his completed papers, Alan Greenberg for Board of Health for three years, Susan Edmonds for Board of Assessors for three years, Lisa Phipps for two Taft Library Trustees for three years, Bill Ambrosino for Board of Health for three years, who has returned his completed papers, Alan Greenberg for Board of Health for three years, Wayne Phipps for two Taft Library Trustees for three years, Daniel Byer for Park Commissioner for three years, Susan Edmonds for Board of Assessors for three years, Ellen Agro and Wayne Nicholson and Barry Iadarola are the incumbents, respectively. The deadline for candidates to take out nomination papers to obtain and return nomination papers to the Town Clerk’s office is March 24 by 5 p.m. The last day for candidates to withdraw from the Election is April 9. Campaign finance forms are due in the Town Clerk’s office eight days prior to the Election on May 4 and 30 days after the Election on June 11. Campaign signs may be displayed beginning April 12 and must be taken down by May 17. The last day to register to vote at the Town Election is April 22 by 8 p.m. in the Town Clerk’s office. Absentee ballots may be obtained no later than May 11 at noon. The last day to register to vote at the May 1 Annual Town Meeting is April 10 at 8 p.m. Residents with questions on their voter registration status should contact the Town Clerk’s office at 508-473-1085 or townclerk@mendonma.gov. Normal business hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Town Clerk’s office is closed on Fridays.

A preliminary price tag from CMRPC to complete the work totaled $80,000, half of which is available in the current budget. The remaining funding could be budgeted for next year. “I’ve had the opportunity to work with all these people...I have full confidence they will do a spectacular job,” Ambrosino said of the CMRPC staff.

In an interview after the meeting, Ambrosino said the Master Plan Committee will be reconstituted. Residents interested in volunteering for it should contact Gail Willman in the Planning Board’s office at 508-473-2679 or gwillman@mendonma.gov.
Woof-Worthy Dog Words

Courtesy Bruce Littlefield, author of The Bedtime Books for Dogs
NAPSA
The average dog knows 167 words but there are 10 that woof loudest.
10. “No” seems to be the second word every dog learns. The first is his name.
9. “Walk” becomes a crucial part of every dog’s day and something dogs look forward to.
8. “Business” (as in “do your business”) is a daily phrase.
7. “Wait” or “Stay.” Dogs spend a large chunk of their day waiting.
6. “Down” or “Lie Down.” Often a tougher to learn, this is a word that every good dog knows.
5. “Squirrel” or “Cat” seems to be universal for something to taunt, chase or bark at.
4. “Toy.” Many dogs know the difference in a ball, a Frisbee and their Squeaky.
3. “Come.” This is a word that could save your dog’s life.
2. “Sit” is the basic standard of all dog tricks.
1. “Treat!” The most beloved dog word is certain to make any dog drool with happiness.
Calendar

Twice Blessed Thrift Shop
HOPEFULS-The Second Heart of Upton and the Mendon Town Crier are pleased to announce the opening of the Twice Blessed Thrift Shop offering the following specials in February:

- Shirts, sweaters, accessories, outerwear, boots and jewelry: 2 for $5.00
- All children’s clothes: 2 for $5.00
- T-shirts: 2 for $5.00
- Regularly $5.00, now $3.00
- All mail orders from February 1-28 will be seated on February 29.

Open every Thursday the first full week of February fill a bag with clothes for only $7.00 - sweaters, accessories, outerwear, boots and jewelry. During this time, a portion of the $35 class fee will benefit Blackstone Heritage Corridor. Participants will also enjoy a maple sugaring themed painting created by Libra entitled First Snow over the Maple Field. The March 5 paint night falls just before the annual Maple Sugar Days event at Blackstone River Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge, MA, on March 7 and 8. Seating is limited, so advance ticket purchase is required by going online at BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org or by phone at (508) 234-4242. Blackstone Heritage Corridor's office, 670 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. For more info, contact Bonnie Combs at info@blackstoneheritagecorridor.org or call 508-234-4242.

Gardening is Murder
HOPEFADLE-The focus of the Hopefuls of the Hopedale Library presents Gardening is Murder on Wednesday, March 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the Library. Some garden for the love of it, but others, like Neil Sanders, garden more for the love of their spouse. Come and enjoy the “spouse's point of view” of gardening. In this humorous talk he promises to dispense good horticultural advice, debunk bad advice and provide valuable insight into the mind of your horticultural hunk. Sanders is a popular speaker at libraries, gardens and other organizations across New England. He writes The Principal Undergardener* blog and has published 12 mysteries, many of which feature garden clubs or horticulture in the plot. His writings have appeared in the Massachusetts Horticultural Society magazine, Lilyfeet and he coordinated the Society’s activities at the Boston Flower & Garden Show. The program is free but please reserve a place by March 9 by calling the Library at 508-634-2209 or stopping in during operating hours.

Beyond Your Hearing Aid or Cochlear Implant
NORTHEASTERN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION Central Massachusetts Chapter is sponsoring an informal rap session for hard-of-hearing people interested in issues affecting them and their loved ones. Beyond My Hearing Aid or Cochlear Implant, on Saturday, March 21 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Northborough Free Library. This meeting will be an informal rap session where participants can learn from each other. There will be CART (computer aided real time captioning), light refreshments and free admission. Everyone including first timers are welcome.

The parking lot for the library is behind the building, accessed via Patty Lane with directions available at Northboroughlibrary.org/abouthours.aspx. Please email info@hearinglosscentralma.org For more information on HLAA Central Massachusetts and notification of future events, email info@hearinglosscentralma.org.

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild Meeting
MONDAY-Award-winning Quilt Artist Heidi Poffenbry will present a lecture and trunk show at the March 9th guild meeting of Thimble Pleasures. At 7 p.m., at the Northborough National Historical Park’s Visitors Center. Learn more about the upcoming MQX last year in Manchester, N.H. Guests are welcome for a $5 fee.

Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair 2020 - Exhibitors Needed
MILFORD-The Milford Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking exhibitors for its 26th Annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair which will be held Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Milford High School Cafeteria. Any business, agency or program which serves children and or families, is asked to consider being an exhibitor. Tables are free, but space is limited. For more information, please call 508-277-4981 or email familyleotwork@milfordma.com by February 28.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue Trivia Night
WESTBOROUGH-Beth Tikvah Synagogue is holding its annual Trivia Night fundraiser on Saturday, March 21 at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 45 Oak St. Westborough. Doors open at 6 p.m. for socializing and smooching followed by the game at 7 p.m. led by Stump Trivia. There is room for eight teams of eight players and everyone from the community is welcome. Several small groups can team up to make teams that will compete in four rounds of four questions each with bonus questions in between.

The entry fee for this event is $20 per person with advance registration by March 18 by visiting BethTikvahSynagogue.org. Tickets at the door are $30.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
AREAThe Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce will be holding the following events. For more information or to register visit BlackstoneValley.org, email administrator@blackstonevalley.org, call 508-234-9090 or stop by the chamber offices, 670 Linwood Ave. Bldg A, Suite 5, Whitinsville.

I Love My Clogs
Milford. A wide selection of comfort clogs in various colors and styles will be offered. Cash, MasterCard, Discover and Visa accepted.

Milford Area Chamber of Commerce Events
AREAThe Milford Area Chamber of Commerce (MACC) will be holding the following events. To register visit MilfordChamber.org, email bhalley@milfordchamber.org, call 508-478-6700 or stop by the offices, 258 Main Street, Suite 306, Milford. St. Paddy’s Day Business After Hours, Wednesday, March 11 at 5 p.m., Sky Buffet, 340 East Main St., Milford. American Legion Post 100, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor WHITINSVILLE-In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Volunteers-In-Parks program in 2020, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is hosting Volunteer Open House events on Wednesday, March 18, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at its office, Linwood Mill, 670 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. Learn about the many volunteer opportunities throughout the 25 communities of the National Heritage Area and with the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. To register, contact Suzanne Buchanan at Volunteer@BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org or call 508-234-4242.

Transportation Drivers AND 7D School Van Drivers and Monitors Needed
OPENINGS FOR BETWEEN 20 – 39 HOURS
SIGN-ON BONUS
(New applicant sign on bonuses. Restrictions apply. Inquire at office.) $1,300 bonus if you have a valid 7D License $1,000 bonus if you do not have a 7D license

WANTED:
- Regular transportation drivers - no special requirements.
- 7D drivers wanted to transport students to and from school in company vehicles. If you are retired but do not have a 7D license we have all the paperwork to get your license and walk you through the process. It’s easy.
- Must be 25 years old and have a valid driver’s license for at least three years.
- Hours are early morning and mid-afternoon.
- Must be reliable and neat and presentable.
- Must attend regular staff meetings and driver’s training.
- Great if you are retired! Shifts available from 2 to 4 p.m.

Monitors also needed!
Call Mark’s Transportation at 508-473-3600
Our office is located at 51 East Main St. (Route 16) Milford, MA. Stop in the office to fill out an application from 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Upton, Mendon Town Crier
Michigan: On February 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. the Miscoe Hill Inspired Innovation Center will host The IIC Rover Challenge. Teams will be tasked with building an interesting “autonomous” rover capable of exploring the Inspired Innovation Center with one or more cardboard “passengers.” No programming or robotics experience is necessary, just a willingness to tinker and have fun. Parent attendance and participation are encouraged. Pizza and snacks will be provided. Space is limited so please reserve spot at InspiredInnovationCenter.com. For more information, email David Quinn dquinn@mursd.org.

NIPMUC: On February 20, 2020, the Miscoe Braves vs. the First Annual Miscoe Braves vs. Northbridge Dudley Regional High School Basketball Game will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Miscoe Hill High School. The game will be concessions and raffles. Admission is $5. Registration is now open for spring sports - baseball, softball plus track & field - for 7th and 8th graders. To register visit the Nipmuc Regional High School athletics page and click on the Miscoe Hill 2020 spring registration link. Tryouts begin on March 16.

NIPMUC: MCAS Testing is as follows: Grade 10 - EMA March 24 (session 1) and March 27 (session 2), Mathematics May 19 (session 1) and May 20 (session 2), Grade 9 Biology June 2 (session 1) and June 3 (session 2). Nipmuc is looking for parent volunteers to assist in Nipmuc’s After Prom Party planning. The After-Prom Party would not be possible without a fleet of parent volunteers each year. Anyone interested in volunteering or needing information should email After Prom Party Committee chair Nicole O'Brien, nipmucapp@mursd.org. To donate please visit Bit.ly/ NipmucAPP.

Good luck to the Nipmuc DECA students participating in the State Career Development Conference, February 27-29, at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. The conference features keynote speakers and different competitive events for the students. Nipmuc students will take part in a variety of exercises and skills competitions.

The Nipmuc Regional High School Athletic Hall of Fame was pleased to announce the inaugural Hall of Fame Class of 2020 several weeks ago and in looking forward to this first event on Sunday, March 15. For more information on the induction ceremony and the hall of fame visit Bit.ly/NipmucHallOfFame or Facebook, Nipmuc Regional High School Hall of Fame.

Faculty Basketball game will be held on Wednesday, February 26 at 3:30 p.m. There will be concessions and raffles. Admission is $5.

Thimble Pleasures Scholarship
Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild of Mendon reminds high school seniors that applications for its annual $1000 scholarship to a student who is planning to study a field of visual arts, design or textiles are available at local high school's guidance office or are available to download at ThimblePleasures.org. The application deadline is April 1.
regards to high school accreditation,” said Maruszczak.

Some of the other drivers of the budget include contractual salary increases ($553,231 or 2.75 percent), insurance increases ($589,597 or 11.96), retirement assessment increases ($77,050 or 9 percent), regular education transportation increases ($111,440 or 6.4), and special education transportation increases ($91,600 or 7.21 percent).

A notable change to the FY21 budget is the number of students attending charter schools – jumping from 6 to 12 students - costing the district approximately $92,000 in tuition charges. A $75,000 increase in the maintenance line item to fix a burner at the high school, an increase in textbooks and materials of $51,500, and an additional $60,000 in technology needs also contribute to the 6.97 total budget increase request.

The district won’t get much help from the state in funding these increases, as they only expect to receive an additional $65,319 ($30 per student) in state aid and $19,715 in regional transportation reimbursement for FY21.

Whereas in years past the district was able to dip into some of their E&D (Excess and Deficiency) Funds, there is not enough in the account to use to supplement the FY21 budget, said school officials. They will be using $250,000 from the receipts of the Before and After Program to help fund FY21 budget. That means the money will have to come from the two communities. This proposed budget will mean asking for an additional $491,828 (6.8 percent) from Mendon and $469,452 (5.42 percent) from Upton. The larger percent increase for Mendon is based on the fact the town is further away from its minimum local contribution as determined by the state.

“If we were to have a repeat of last year, where each of the communities funded their minimum local contribution, there would be shortfall of $1.8 million,” said Maruszczak.

He added that $1.8 million would equate to a reduction of 25 to 30 teachers and support staff as well as the new positions in the budget.

“We would see significant increases in class sizes,” said Maruszczak. “A reduction of programs and core academic and elective areas like music and art and world languages.”

Maruszczak said that the district could also see fewer academic supports for struggling learners, an increase in athletic fees, and cuts in technology and instructional materials.

“I think we are at a real significant inflection point,” he said. “Remember that back in 2009 through 2011 we lost 20 percent of our staff [due to budget cuts].”

In 2015 the two communities passed $2.5 million in overrides which was the last time there has been an override for the school district. Next steps, said Maruszczak, is to communicate with the Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees in both towns, and to communicate with all of the stakeholders.

“Our parents and our community need to know what our critical needs are,” he said. The formal Open Budget Hearing will be held on March 9 at 7 p.m. at Nipmuc Regional High School.

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Dean’s List

The following local students were named to the Dean’s List at their respective schools for the fall 2019 semester.


Western New England University, Springfield: Upton–Olivia MacKenzie Calnan majoring in Mechanical Engineering, named to the President’s List. Mendon–Joshua Horn majoring in Criminal Justice/Terrorism & Homeland Security Concentration and Rachel Morgan Thibodeau majoring in Health Studies/Pre-OTD Concentration. Both were named to the Dean’s List.

Art Heals: Get Creative for a Cause

Artists are being sought for the Art Heals: Chalk Festival that will be held on Saturday, May 9, rain date of May 16, the Blackstone Valley Tech campus, Upton from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Artists of all ages and experience levels are invited to create unique chalk murals on the theme Art Heals for a free exhibition. Working solo or in pairs artists work on a 5’ x 5’ pavement square starting at 8:30 a.m. on the festival day. Registration, $20 per artist, is required by April 9 and reserves a space to create a masterpiece. Proceeds will be donated to teen suicide awareness charities.

There will be 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes awarded in each category: Youth (Ages 12 & Under), Young Adult (Ages 13-17), and Adult (Ages 18+). All family friendly concepts must be submitted to BVT’s Visual Arts instructor, Ashley Maclure, via e-mail at amaclure@valleytech.k12.ma.us before the festival. This event is made possible in partnership with the Blackstone Valley Tech’s Visual Arts program and supported in part by a grant from the Upton Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, and a grant from the Cummings School Service Fund at Tufts University. For more information about the Art Heals: Chalk Festival, and to register, visit ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/artheals.
By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

FEBRUARY 21, 2020

... Guide

New England Steak & Seafood Restaurant
Bereavements and Banquets
Dinner Daily except Tuesday
Lunch Wednesday – Friday
Route 16, Mendon • 508-473-5079
www.nesteakandseafood.com

Muffin House
 authentic Mexican Food
Greatest Margaritas Around!!
Featuring:
Seaford dishes • Tacos al Pastor
Fajitas • Chimichangas
Burritos • Carnitas
Arroz con pollo

Live Music Every Saturday Night 7-9pm
75 Worcester St. Route 140/Route 122
N. Grafton 508-839-8800
Sun to Thu, 11 am - 10 pm
Fri & Sat, 11 am - 11 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS
Thursday, March 5th - Crafty Cosmo Night
We will be creating a St Patrick’s Day centerpiece
Thursday, March 12th - Trivia Night.
Both events begin at approximately 6 pm. For more info or to make a reservation, email Leslie at llfllamme@shiningrock.com or call 508-234-0400 x4

Muffin House Cafe
• Open Daily
• Bakery with Fresh Muffins/Pastries
• Breakfast and Lunch Sandwiches
• Best Blackberry Muffins Since Jordan Marsh

Upton, Mendon Town Crier

School News

Student Artists Part of Boston Display

Nipmuc students whose art is part of the Youth Art Month display in Boston are, l-r, Front:
David MacRae, Penelope Brodeur, Jenna Meleody, Avery Quinn, Nicole Ernst, and Claire
Mental. Back: Ashley Porter, Olivia Skiba, Emily Kirby, Alex Cummings, Jason Lazarz, and
Andrew Murphy. MURSD photo

BVT Practical Nursing Open House

Program (PNP) at BVT was ranked number three in Massachusetts. Space is limited. To
reserve a seat, fill out the sign-up form at ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/prn/OpnHouse.
This program was established in 2009 to provide adult learners with a life-
changing opportunity to pursue a career in healthcare. The PNP has approval from the
Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (MABORN) and the Accreditation
Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The PNP is a part-time program
that provides 1090 hours of course work and clinical experiences.
Applications are currently being accepted for the class starting in August 2020. For
more information, call 508-529-7758, Joann L. ext. 3014 or Lois Collins ext. 3122. Also
visit ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/PracticalNursing.
Commencement exercises were recently held for the PNP Class of 2020 in January. The 16 graduates completed
the requirements to earn a certificate in practical nursing and will be eligible to test for the National Council Licensure
Examination-Practical Nurses (NCLEX-
PN).

Learn about becoming a practical nurse at the Practical Nursing Open House at
Blackstone Valley Tech, 64 Pleasant St.,
Upton, Wednesday, March 11, from 6 to 8 p.m.
Meet the faculty, tour the Health Services
classroom, and participate in a Q&A during
the nationwide celebration of Youth Art
Month.
One of the highlights of the exhibit is the family day which this year will be on March
1 from 12 to 4 p.m. according to Gentili.
“Why not come out and see what all the families have put together…there is this sense of excitement,”
she said. “It brings me back to the days of
when a child did something great and the
whole family gathered around to celebrate it.”
The students chosen to have their artwork displayed at the 2020 Youth Art Month are as follows: Clough Elementary
School (Art Teacher Chelsea Stone) - Joseph Pokornicki (Grade 2), Meriam Wight (Grade 4), Chloe Antonio (Grade 3),
Jacob Comforiti (Kindergarten), and Briella
Fritz (Grade 1); Memorial Elementary School
(Art Teacher Jessica Fowler) - Lily Hamed (Grade 2), Owen Downing (Grade 1), Charlotte Bowe (Kindergarten), Lucas
Wang (Grade 3) and Madison Denise
(Grade 4); Miscon Hill School Grades 5 and 6 (Art Teacher and Art Department Head Alice Gentili) Brynn DiAnni, Molly
Dishington, Connor Downing, Andrew
Head Alice Gentili) Brynn DiAnni, Molly
Dishington, Connor Downing, Andrew
Hamed (Grade 2), Owen Downing (Grade 1), Charlotte Bowe (Kindergarten), Lucas
Wang (Grade 3) and Madison Denise
(Grade 4); Miscon Hill School Grades 5 and 6 (Art Teacher and Art Department Head Alice Gentili) Brynn DiAnni, Molly
Dishington, Connor Downing, Andrew
Brown, Kaycie Gardner, Jayden Liburn, Ella
Martin, Emerson Boissonneault, and
Owen Kerr; Miscon grades 7 and 8 (Art
Teacher Jonathan Hansen) - Ashleigh
Lupien, Mira Romano, Hayley Gibson
Bottom: Amelia Cahill, Maddie LaCortiglia,
and Maxwell Beveryino, Nipmuc Regional
High School (Art Teachers Alison Clush and
Kevin Campbell) - David MacRae (Grade
12), Penelope Brodeur (Grade 9), Jenna
Meleody (Grade 11), Avery Quinn (Grade
9), Nicole Ernst (Grade 9), Claire Mental (Grade 10), Ashley Porter (Grade 12),
Olivia Skiba (Grade 9), Emily Kirby (Grade
10), Alex Cummings (Grade 11), Jason
Lazarz (Grade 11), and Andrew Murphy
(Grade 12).
The students and teachers were also
recognized at the February 10 School
Committee Meeting.
“It speaks to the strength of the
Kindergarten through 12th grade Fine Arts program that 30 students’ artwork
was chosen to be displayed at the festival,”
commented Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Maruszczak.
To see the artwork that will be displayed at the Youth Art Month exhibit, visit the
website created by Gentili at https://tinyurl.
.com/MURSDYAM.

"I love seeing all of the families here
together…there is this sense of excitement,
" said Miscoe Hill Art Teacher and
Regional School District pieces will join
close to 900 others at the “Journey Through
Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza,
Massachusetts on display in observance of
The multi-media exhibit is sponsored by the Massachusetts Art Education Association in conjunction with Youth
Art Month, a national celebration that “emphasizes the value of art education for all children and encourages support for
the quality art programs in Massachusetts’
schools.”
"This is a nationwide celebration of the
arts,” said Miscoe Hill Art Teacher and
Pre-K-12 Visual Arts Department Head
Alice Gentili.
A record number of Mendon Upton
Regional School District pieces will join
close to 900 others at the “Journey Through
Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza,
Boston. Viewing hours are from 9 a.m. to
5 p.m. Monday through Friday. There will be
hundreds of pieces of artwork from across
Massachusetts on display in observance of
...
The Blackstone Valley Tech Boys Basketball team shown in a game earlier this season is postseason bound winning nine of its 11 Colonial Athletic League contests. BVT photo

Junior Shea Finnegan has paced the Beavers offensively. The top scorer in the CAL, Finnegan entered the week averaging just under 20 points per game. He has been in double digits in the scoring column in all but two games this year, been north of 20 points on nine occasions, and poured in 31 points in a win over Assabet. Finnegan's scoring prowess has placed him among the top point totals in all of Central Mass, but other players have also been able to supplement and provide BVT with crucial balance.

Josh Mateo is scoring around 13 points per game in his sophomore season. Seniors Drew Galicki and Ryan Braun and sophomore Alex McKay have averaged between six and seven points per game, adding to the Beavers' overall depth.

Following a win Monday night against Parker Charter, the Beavers' overall record stood at 12-7 heading into the regular season finale Wednesday at Leicester.

In the CAL's large school division, the 9-2 league mark is tied for the top record in the league with Worcester Tech.

Valley Tech has been far and away the most prolific scoring team in the area, averaging more than 70 points per game, 11 points clear of their closest competition in that category.

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Northbridge/Nipmuc Hockey Rolls into Playoffs
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

After a run through the state tournament a year ago, the Northbridge/Nipmuc hockey co-op is poised to repeat, entering the week with an 18-1 record and riding a 16-game winning streak. Head coach Ryan Neville said his team's success has not dampened its will to keep going.

"What has exceeded my expectations is their ability to just focus on every game," Neville said. "We checked off a lot of little goals along the way, but it never reduced the motivation for these guys to win the next game."

"The Rams are undoubtedly eyeing a state title, a goal Neville has been open about. "If the goal isn't to make a run at a state title there is something wrong," he said.

Several Nipmuc players have been aiding the team in that pursuit. Junior forward Thomas Degureu has put up double-digit points on the season and scored crucial goals for Northbridge in recent wins over Littleton and Longmeadow. "He gets the team kick-started, " Neville said.

"After dropping its first three games, the Beavers were able to turn the tide and run off four consecutive wins. BVT had won seven of its last nine games heading into this week's games against Parker Charter and Leicester."

BVT Boys Hoops Earns Turnover Spot
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Blackstone Valley Tech boys' basketball team is postseason bound and solidified its position as one of the top teams in the Colonial Athletic League, posting wins in nine of its 11 league contests and a double-digit win total overall.

"After dropping its first three games, the Beavers were able to turn the tide and run off four consecutive wins. BVT had won seven of its last nine games heading into this week's games against Parker Charter and Leicester."

BVT makes Its Mark at State Track Meet
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Blackstone Valley Tech boys' and girls' track and field teams put together strong campaigns this year and both had several standout performances at the Division 5 state meet, including a pair of new school records.

For Justin Townsend, the head coach of the girls' team and the program's sprinting coach, the new program marks for Nico LaCortiglia and the girls 4x200 relay team were especially satisfying.

"We started the season with a lot of weight lifting and acceleration work and I think the kids were getting frustrated because their times weren't moving down," Townsend said. "I had to assure them that the work they put in was going to pay off eventually."

LaCortiglia, a junior, ran a 37:52 to set a new program record and finish ninth in the state. The quartet of Kali Comer, Gianna Yordanopoulos, Elizabeth Lange and Michelle Cote finished in 3:54.88, breaking their own school mark by a second.

"I was really proud of the way they worked," Townsend said. "They worked on handoffs all season. At the beginning of the year I said 'these four kids will break the record' and they did. They did it two weeks in a row."

Yordanopoulos lowered her personal best time in the 300 and Lange, an eighth grader, turned in a top-20 finish in the 55-meter dash. Ben Skiba also put together his best run in the hurdles, clocking in at 8.78 seconds.

The distance crew was not to be outdone. Dan DeZutter finished third in the two-mile with a personal best time. Tomas Brockett-Delagto set a new personal best in the 1,000-meter run, and Emma Nadoliski earned a sixth place finish in the girls' two-mile.

In the boys' 4x800 relay, DeZutter, Brockett-Delagto and Skiba teamed up with Christian Moss to place eighth in the state.

"We tapered off a little more toward the end of the season and it totally paid off. Everything just came together," Townsend said. "As a coach, you hold your breath in these moments that everything is going to work out and the kids are going to go out the right way and they did."

Townsend said this was the best season he has had working with the sprinters since he joined the staff with boys' head coach Dick Auger.

"To have this good of a sprint season was really good to see," Townsend said. "And it was all because of the kids."

BVT Cheering Improving ‘Leaps & Bounds’
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

In its third year and sixth cheerleading season at the helm of the Blackstone Valley Tech program, head coach Nicole Boucher is starting to see vast improvement in her squad and the Beavers have been checking off multiple goals this season, along the way.

This fall, for the first time, BVT advanced past the regional competition and made it to the state meet at Worcester State University. "That was a huge accomplishment for the team," Boucher said.

Valley Tech has managed a strong year despite being a relatively young team. Co-captain Jordyn Newcombe is the team's only senior and has worked with fellow captains Tesha Houston and Ella Yaroshkef to lead the program.

"The three of them are very talented in their own ways and they each bring a little something different to the table," Boucher said. "The one thing across the board they do well is being able to teach the other cheerleaders different things they have learned through the years."

"They have the patience and guidance to really help the younger cheerleaders, which is unusual in 16 or 17-year-old girls," the coach added. "I am really lucky to have captains like that."

"Valley Tech has never advanced past the regional competition," Boucher said. "This year, we have managed a strong year despite being a relatively young team." The Beavers have been able to improve every season and both had several standout performances at the Division 5 state meet, including a pair of new school records.

For Justin Townsend, the head coach of the girls' team and the program's sprinting coach, the new program marks for Nico LaCortiglia and the girls 4x200 relay team were especially satisfying.

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BVT Girls Basketball Peaking for Playoff Time

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Valley Tech Girls basketball team is peaking when it matters most at tournament season begins. The team has a 15-4 record and enters the Vocational Tournament on Thursday. BVT photo

Maspenock Rod and Gun Club
Team Results

Maspenock Rod and Gun Club from Milford defeated TAG Team of Traer, Iowa, 2171 to 1628 in the National Air Pistol League. With the win, Maspenock Rod and Gun Club is in second place overall with a 1-0 record. Maspenock was led by, Michael Gentile who shot a 563. Other team were Manuel Snyderman, Peter Ashley, and Ross Bradley. The team is coached by Snyderman.

Maspenock will compete next against Cowley 4-H Shooting Sports, Winfield, Kan. Cowley 4-H Shooting Sports currently has a 0-0 record.

The teams are competing in the National Air Pistol League, which is sponsored by the Orion Scoring System for clubs nationwide. Over 10 weeks each team competes in eight games. Each week, each team is paired with another team with a near equal win-loss record. In each game the teams compete in a 60 shot air pistol match. This competition is identical to the Air Pistol events in the Olympic games. Each athlete will shoot 60 shots, with each shot worth a maximum of 10 points. The sum of points scored in the 60 shots is the athlete’s total. The team score is comprised of the best four athletes from each team.

For more information on the league, including complete standings, visit National-Leagues.com/air-pistol. The Maspenock team page is OrionResults.com/team/LeagueTeam.aspx?TeamID=1365.

Nipmuc Boys Hoops Returns to Clark Tournament

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Nipmuc boys’ basketball team checked off one of its significant preseason goals by making it back to the prestigious Clark Tournament, making an appearance at the annual showcase for the first time under current head coach Paul King.

“It’s huge when you look at what we are trying to accomplish and the program we are trying to build,” King said. “We want to be like Hopedale or Sutton, one of those teams who is always in the Clark and always in the districts. This team is setting the tone for how I want this program to play in the future.”

The Warriors lost their first-round Clark contest against Grafton, but will still be moving on to the districts. Nipmuc has been tested through the season, particularly in Dual Valley Conference play, and King is hopeful that experience will pay off when the tournament begins later this month.

“I think this is a team that could make a run,” he said. “We are pretty big and our league is extremely tough in the DVC. If you look at our losses, we were competitive in most of them. We played a tough schedule in and out of our league.”

Nipmuc finished the regular season with a win over Blackstone Valley Tech and was far more competitive the second time around against a tough Hopedale team. Junior forward Chris Broe has been a difference maker for the Warriors, King said, and when he fouled out of the Clark Tournament game, it was a tough blow for the team.

The six-foot-six Broe has been pulling down 12 to 13 rebounds per night and blocking several shots per game as he guards the interior. “He changes the game with the way he protects the rim,” King said.

Nate Gould and Andrew Griswold, both seniors, have been leading the way all winter.

“Nate is probably the toughest kid I have ever coached,” King said of the UNH-bound football prospect. “When kids see someone who plays that hard and refuses to lose, it really translates.”

The same can be said for Griswold, who leads through his actions and play on the court rather than vocally. Michael Quinn, a junior, has been a top scorer for Nipmuc all season.

“We closed out the year on a high note,” King said. “Ours kids are extremely tough and they are buying in. They know they have to play hard wire-to-wire and one minute can change the course of a game.”

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FEBRUARY 21, 2020
Upton, Mendon Town Crier 19
The best way to prepare for the postseason is to play tournament-level competition during the regular campaign, and that is what the Grafton/Blackstone Valley Tech hockey co-op has done in recent weeks. Four of the last five opponents for the team have been from a higher division, and head coach Mike Binkoski said his team has been battling each and every night and showing the potential to make this a banner season.

“We could win it all, we could definitely win it all,” Binkoski said. “Not to sound too confident, but we have the potential to do that. We are taking it a game at a time with that playoff mentality right now in the regular season, one game at a time, one period at a time.”

BVT athletes Cam Bern and Braden Levavasseur have done well to produce this year also sets a solid foundation for next year and the seasons to come. Showing them how to lead and get the job done the right way. The way the Warriors came together said. “And Taylor is a force in the paint, and a selfless player.”

“Cam is healthy now and he is playing the best hockey I have seen him play,” Binkoski said. “It’s been amazing to see him flourish in that role and show the young guys how we want everything done and what we expect of them,” the coach said. “They support each other, they never get down on each other and when complaining or going through the motions. “

“Things don’t go well, they are still positive. We are really building something. We have the potential to do that. We are taking it a game at a time with that playoff mentality right now in the regular season, one game at a time, one period at a time.”

The Warriors dropped their final six games of the season, three of them by single digits. Grafton finished the year 7-13 overall, just out of playoff contention. Rhodes said she was pleased with the way her captains and seniors, Ashley Porter, Sophie Sullivan, Jenny Capalucci and Taylor Johnson, lead the team all year.

“They brought energy to every game,” Rhodes said. “Their heads were always in the right place and they lead the underclassmen on and off the floor.”

“Ashley has been in our program since the 8th grade and really stepped up this year directing our team on the floor, she also plays great defense,” Rhodes said. “And Taylor is a force in the paint, and a selfless player.”

“Levasseur, Binkoski added, has embraced the role of a leader that comes with his assistant captain position.

“The girls knew they could hang in there with any team on our schedule based on our work ethic and competitiveness through that stretch. Our defense continued to be our strength but we found ourselves missing a few more shots than we would’ve liked.”

“All four of them will be tough to replace, Rhodes said, noting Porter and Sullivan are five and four-year players, respectively.

“The coach also had high praise for Capalucci and Johnson, both of whom had strong senior seasons. “Jenny was our vocal leader and one of the hardest workers I’ve ever coached;” Rhodes said. “And Taylor is a force in the paint, and a selfless player.”

“The seniors set good examples for the returning junior and sophomore class, Rhodes added, showing them how to lead and get the job done the right way. The way the Warriors came together this year also sets a solid foundation for next year and the seasons to come.

“The girls knew they could hang in there with any team on our schedule based on our work ethic and how we played as a team,” Rhodes said. “This year’s team was dedicated, united, committed to growing, and so hard working. All great things to build future success.”