**Schools Ready Plans for Possible Coronavirus Impacts**

By Melissa Orff  
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Although only two cases of coronavirus has been reported in Massachusetts as of March 3, the Department of Education (DOE) is asking schools to prepare for a potential local outbreak.

The coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has sickened more than 83,000 people worldwide to date and killed nearly 3,000, originating from Wuhan, China, the coronavirus has spread to more than 40 countries, with some of the hardest hit including China, Japan, South Korea and Italy.

On February 25, US health officials told the country to prepare for the coronavirus domestically. Nancy Messonier, the director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said in a press briefing, “It’s not so much a question of ‘if’ this will happen anymore but ‘when’.

With schools already on high alert for influenza this season, what other precautions are districts taking to prevent the spread of coronavirus?

“We are thoughtfully looking at ‘what if’ scenarios right now,” said Anthony E. Steele, II, Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal of Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT).

Steele said since the DOE put out guidelines for schools on preparedness operations, staff and students.

“We have been doubling our efforts to bring awareness about best practices for infection control,” said Steele. “Areas that the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommend schools focus on such as sanitation methods and proper hand washing.

With an already tough flu season for the school, Steele said that the Facilities Department has taken extra precautions to sanitize classrooms and common areas of the school in order to minimize the spread of contagions.

Trips domestically and abroad have also been a major concern for local schools, who have been keeping an eye out for asking questions, and on the right, a crowd favorite, Lancelot the snow corn snake, coiling around the animal handler's arm as the difference between a cold blooded and warm blooded animal was discussed. Jim Calarrese Town Crier photos

**Local Health Officials Preparing for Coronavirus but Agree, No Reason to Panic**

By Michelle Sanford  
Staff Reporter

As the number of confirmed cases of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) are now beginning to spread in parts of the United States, medical professionals at local hospitals, including Milford Regional Medical Center, are monitoring the situation closely.

Still, according to Dr. Jeffrey Hopkins, Medical Director of Emergency Medicine at Milford Regional, there’s currently no reason for area residents to panic.

“Milford Regional, like most hospitals throughout the state, is on top of this, partly because this isn’t the first infectious threat we’ve been through,” explained Hopkins. “There was SARS in 2003, MERS in 2014, the H1N1 Virus and most recently the Ebola virus. Those are all different types of viral threats, so this isn’t the first time we’ve been down this road.”

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a respiratory virus that is generally spread through respiratory secretions, such as droplets from coughs and sneezes. Symptoms include fever, coughing, shortness of breath and in severe cases, pneumonia.

While most people recover from the virus, some infections can be severe or result in death.

As of February 27, Massachusetts was considered to be low risk as far as a Coronavirus outbreak.

However, that doesn’t mean local health officials aren’t preparing for the possibility. Milford Regional has a multi-level disaster team and plan in place to deal with such outbreaks that include infectious disease personnel, an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Emergency Medical Services outreach, and other specialty teams.

And it’s not just for infectious threats explained Hopkins. “We have plans in place for earthquakes, tornadoes, active shooters. We’re continually assessing different threats and reviewing the latest guidelines for all types of scenarios,” he said.

Hopkins noted communication between the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and hospitals “has been fantastic,” concerning the Coronavirus. A group of representatives from the Massachusetts College of Emergency Physicians met earlier in the week as well.

**Coronavirus**
Blackstone State Park
Interpreter Programming

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation announces the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park March 2020 Interpreter 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. Canal Walk, 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 walks on March 6 and 20 are at River Bend Farm. 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. Boots Along the Blackstone, Thursday, March 19, 1 p.m. Join an interpreter in a leisurely two mile walk along the tow path while discussing the stories and history uncovered in the episode of Along the Blackstone watched during Brown Bag along the Blackstone.

6th Annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair

The MA Department of Developmental Services, Kennedy-Donovan Family Support Center, Milford Commission on Disability and Milford Family & Community Network CFCE will host its free 26th annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair on Saturday, March 14 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Milford High School Cafeteria, snow date is March 21. There will be a wide range of exhibitors who work with families from the prenatal stage through adolescence, including health care professionals, social services, community and educational programs, day care providers and small businesses. There will be entertainment throughout the day. Exhibitors are all encouraged to include a child-friendly activity at their table. The Massachusetts Youth Child Identification Program (MYCHIP) will be provided again this year by the Montgomery Lodge of Milford, Ancient Free Accepted Masons. MYCHIP is the most comprehensive service of its kind anywhere. The program is free to the public, with all of the identifying items generated during the event given to the child’s family.

In addition, there will be a supervised obstacle course running all day along with a supervised bounce house, fun for youngsters of all ages. And last but not least bring a favorite stuffed friend or doll for the Teddy Bear Clinic!

The Fair is a great vehicle for families to learn about all the community has to offer. For more information, call Sara Humiston at 508-277-4981.

The Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra presents

Copland: Our Town
Grofe: Grand Canyon Suite
Respighi: The Pines of Rome
PLUS the World Premiere of
Robert Christensen’s Adirondack Sketches

Enjoy the music while viewing projected images. Reserved tickets: $42 ~ Student/Senior/Veteran: $27
Milford Town Hall, 52 Main Street, Milford, MA

Thank you to our Health Night Sponsors:

St. Patrick’s Day Desserts
www.wrightsda...
Coronavirus and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Web sites (Mass.gov/orgs/Department-of-Public-Health) have been in contact with each other and continue to monitor the latest information but state there’s no immediate concern. “There’s more concern with seasonal influenza right now,” said Kakela-Boisvert.

Still all health professional remind residents there are precautions to take when it comes to the Coronavirus including washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, cover cough and sneezes, and stay home if you are sick.

The most up-to-date information on the Coronavirus can be found on CDC (CDC.gov) and the Mass. Department of Public Health’s Web sites (Mass.gov/orgs/Department-of-Public-Health).

Coronavirus Updates
Massachusetts Department of Public Health—Mass.gov/orgs/Department-of-Public-Health

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—CDC.gov

A Call for Nominations

ValleyCAST (Blackstone Valley Arts, Culture, Science) Together seeks community nominations for the 2020 Priscilla B. Mason Arts and Culture Award, given to individuals, groups or organizations that made significant contributions to the Blackstone Valley’s arts, culture or sciences in 2019.

Winners, that can receive up to $500 and are chosen by the ValleyCAST Board, will be announced at an awards ceremony at the Singh Performance Center at Alternatives’ Whitin Mill, Friday, April 24.

The award is named in honor of Priscilla Mason, a direct descendant of Paul Whitin, whose original mill is part of Alternatives Whitin Mill complex. Mason was an ardent supporter of Alternatives and ValleyCAST.

For more information, to see past recipients, or to place a nomination visit: OpenSkyCS.org/news-events; click on Mason Award Ceremony. Nominations forms may be completed online or downloaded and emailed to Cristi.Collari@openskycs.org or mailed to Cristi Collari, The Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Rd. Whitinsville, MA 01588.

Submissions are due by March 30. Information is also available by calling 508-234-6232.

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NEW CLIENT SPECIAL · 20% OFF YOUR FIRST MONTH OF SERVICES!
Advances in Cervical & Lumbar Spine Surgery
Thursday, April 2 at 7PM
Symeon Zannikos, MD - Orthopedics New England

Pain in your cervical and lumbar spine (neck and lower back respectively) with referred pain in the arms or legs can be debilitating, but advancements in surgical treatments can offer relief. New technology offers treatments that are less invasive and with limited recovery time. Spine Surgeon Symeon Zannikos, MD, will discuss the latest advancements in spine surgery and other treatments to alleviate your discomfort and pain. **FREE**

Treatment for Pediatric Ear Infections & Hearing Loss
Wednesday, April 15 at 7PM
Chris Barañano, MD, FAAP, FACS - Milford Ear, Nose & Throat Surgery

Ear infections – called otitis media – are the most common reason parents bring their children to the doctor. Symptoms can range from a fever to a painful build-up of fluid in the ear. Frequent ear infections can impact your child's language development and may cause permanent hearing loss. Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Chris Barañano, MD, FAAP, FACS, will discuss the prevention and treatment of frequent ear infections in children – from medications to surgical procedures such as tubes and adenoid removal. **FREE**

IN THEIR SHOES:
Bullying, Sexting, Dating Violence & Your Teen
Tuesday, April 28th at 6:30PM
Presented in conjunction with New Hope, Inc.

Teenagers have complex relationships, but as a parent or caregiver, how do you know these relationships are healthy for your child? Join Milford Regional and New Hope Inc., for this important program designed to help you better understand your teen and the choices they face in their relationships — including real and virtual friendships and the risks of teen dating violence. The program will immerse participants in various real scenarios to help you gain insight about teen interactions with their dating partner, family, friends, teachers, counselors, police, and others. **FREE**

Milton Regional Medical Center
14 Prospect Street • Milford, MA milfordregional.org

SPRING 2020 Lectures & Events

These FREE events are presented at Milford Regional’s Physicians Conference Center on the ground floor of the main building, adjacent to the main lobby.

Registration is required, as seating is limited. Please call 508-422-2206 or visit milfordregional.org.

Picture 1 and 2: Quinn Vallan of Mendon is shown standing next to snowmen built with his mom, Rachel, and his dad, Barry, in early December. They are Grumpy, 73” tall and 90” around the base, and Snowstorm Troop, 60” tall and about 75” at the base. Rachel Vallan photo

Picture 3: Matthew and Keagan Smith of Upton proudly show off their early December snowman, which measured 58” wide and 89” tall. Smith Family photo

Picture 4: From left to right, Evie Lade (9), Max Lade (6), and Oliver Lade (4) stand with their firefighter snowman, “Frostbite,” which they constructed outside the Upton Fire Station on December 4. Frostbite was about 83” tall and 86” in circumference. Lade Family photo

Picture 5: Ava Mozart (2 ½) sits next to her first-ever snowman, which was about 8” tall. The tiny creation was made at the home of her grandparents Paul and Lori McGann in Upton during the early December snowstorm. McGann Family photo

Mendon Upton Best Snowmen

[Images of snowmen]
Music had always been a big part of her life up to the diagnosis said the Milford High School graduate. But after receiving a cancer diagnosis, singing became impossible. "You"re told when you have cancer you can ultimately have a better quality of life," stated Carlie Gonzalez, who was the inspiration for a children's book encouraging hope for oncology patients. "It is so me and so what I went through. It is beautifully written." Carlie's father, Todd Covin, was introduced to Civin, who asked if he could write a book about her story. "It's a beautifully written story," he said. "It's one of the most moving things I've ever read." The book is Life Is Like a Song to Me: The Carlie Gonzalez Story. Founded by renowned father/son running team Dick and Rick Hoyt and Matt Brown, the Northbridge-based non-profit offers up to 15 families an opportunity to build social and family support groups. The program features singing and guitar music for up to 14 infants and toddlers accompanied by parent or caregiver. The program features singing and guitar music for up to 14 infants and toddlers accompanied by parent or caregiver.

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Center for Pain Medicine Opens at Milford Regional

Brigham and Women's Center for Pain Medicine at Milford located in the Hill Health Center, part of Milford Regional Medical Center, is now open, offering a comprehensive approach to pain management focused on alleviating symptoms, restoring function and encouraging emotional health.

It is led by Medical Director Victor Wang, MD, PhD, a neurologist who specializes in pain medicine - including chronic pain issues such as low back, neck and joint pain - with a "whole person approach" to treating his patients. Under his direction, the Center for Pain Medicine offers a multi-disciplinary team approach that works with primary care physicians, spine surgeons and other specialists to provide a thorough and individually tailored program for patients to manage their pain.

Dr. Wang earned a degree in animal physiology and nutrition, and a degree in psychology from the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/PhD in the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He performed a neurology residency at the University of Maryland and completed a neurology residency at the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/neuroscience, and a degree in psychology from the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/neurology and physical therapy to treat a variety of conditions that include anesthesiology, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, radiology, anesthesia, neurosurgery, neurology, and pain medicine.

While pain is personal and varies from patient to patient, Dr. Wang's goal remains the same – to help each patient improve. "I want to see improvement, however you may define that for yourself, so that the patient's experience in their life, " says Dr. Wang. The goal of the Center for Pain Medicine is to help each patient improve. "I want to see improvement, however you may define that for yourself, so that the patient's experience in their life, " says Dr. Wang. The goal of the Center for Pain Medicine is to help each patient improve.

The Story of a Local Student Finding Her Voice Again

"Life is like a Song to Me," says the center's name, a tribute to the musical spirit of its namesake, Carlie Gonzalez. After being diagnosed with cancer, Carlie's ability to sing was taken away from her - physically and metaphorically, said Gonzalez.

"It was like when I wasn't feeling well enough to even get out of bed, or go out to sing," she said. "Cancer took that away from me." Even though difficult, Gonzalez learned to take back her voice and use her music, singing and positive spirit to beat the disease. "It took months and months before I started to bounce back and was able to be up and sing again, and since then I haven't stopped," she said. "It was liberating." Gonzalez finished treatment in spring 2016 and is celebrating a year-and-a-half cancer free. Previously a member of the Milford College Rowing team, Gonzalez now works as a paid intern for the Center for Integrative Therapies at Dana-Farber.

Civin also performs at fundraising events, giving back to the communities that supported her and her family during their ordeal. "I am one of these fundraising events that she was introduced to Civin, who asked if she could write a book about her story," said Civin. "It's a very amazing write," she said. "I incorporated everything I was trying to say into the book. It is so me and so what I went through. It is beautifully written."

Civin said he was inspired by Gonzalez's story and knew he had to help tell it to others. "I remember hearing her singing the National Anthem, it made me cry," he said. "She's such a warrior." Civin worked with Gonzalez for a year to craft a children's book that followed her journey through chemotherapy treatments.

Beginning Bridges, CFCE March

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. The office and Playcenter are at 9 North Main St., Uxbridge. Funding for Beginning Bridges, CFCE is provided by the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care and sponsored by South Middlesex Opportunity Council. For registration use the listed phone number or email.

Upcoming Events

Monday Drop-In Playgroup, every Monday at the Playcenter, from 9 to 10:45 a.m. Drop in for a free and fun Playgroup hosted by Beginning Bridges, CFCE for up to 12 participants.

Deb Hughes Music & Movement, Tuesday, March 10 from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. at the Uxbridge Free Library Main, 50 Lincoln St., Uxbridge. The program features singing and guitar music for preschoolers accompanied by parent or caregiver.

Keeping Kids Safe on the World-Wide-Web, Wednesday, March 11, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Northbridge Middle School, 171 Linwood Ave, Whitinsville. Parent Education Workshop conducted with The Office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early and Northbridge Public Schools will discuss keeping safe while using existing and emerging technologies; ways social media/games can target kids; safeguarding digital footprints; bullying, cyberbullying and relevant laws; setting and enforcing limits on screen time; and approaches to media literacy.

Donuts with Dads, Saturday, March 14 from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. at the Whitman Community Center, 60 Main St, Whitinsville. Donuts with Dads is a monthly program for fathers and their children to enjoy donuts, an hour of play in the gym and time with Brendan Bartlett of Family Continuity Registration is needed.

Muffins with Moms, Thursday, March 19 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave., Mendon. Sponsored by Beginning Bridges CFCE, Muffin House Cafe, and the Taft Public, this free, drop-in program offers up to 15 families an opportunity to build social connections and learn about family friendly resources.

Deb Hughes Music & Movement, Friday, March 20, from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. at the Upton Town Library, Main St. The program features singing and guitar music for up to 15 infants and toddlers accompanied by parent or caregiver.

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Brigham and Women's Center for Pain Medicine at Milford located in the Hill Health Center, part of Milford Regional Medical Center, is now open, offering a comprehensive approach to pain management focused on alleviating symptoms, restoring function and encouraging emotional health.

It is led by Medical Director Victor Wang, MD, PhD, a neurologist who specializes in pain medicine - including chronic pain issues such as low back, neck and joint pain - with a "whole person approach" to treating his patients. Under his direction, the Center for Pain Medicine offers a multi-disciplinary team approach that works with primary care physicians, spine surgeons and other specialists to provide a thorough and individually tailored program for patients to manage their pain.

Dr. Wang earned a degree in animal physiology and nutrition, and a degree in psychology from the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/PhD in the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He performed a neurology residency at the University of Maryland and completed a neurology residency at the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/neuroscience, and a degree in psychology from the University of California at San Diego. He later completed a combined MD/neurology and physical therapy to treat a variety of conditions that include anesthesiology, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, radiology, anesthesia, neurosurgery, neurology, and pain medicine.

While pain is personal and varies from patient to patient, Dr. Wang's goal remains the same – to help each patient improve. "I try to look at the whole patient, and I bring a different approach to treating pain, not only how the patient defines the pain but how I interpret the symptoms. It's about the patient's experience and the patient's experience in their life," says Dr. Wang. "You always have to do more than just treat the symptoms, but my goal is to see improvement, however you may define that for yourself, so you can ultimately have a better quality of life." "We are pleased to offer pain management services to our patients with the opening of Brigham and Women's Center for Pain Management at Milford," says Edward J. Kelly, President & CEO, Milford Regional Medical Center. "Dr. Wang is a highly respected physician whose unique approach to pain management will provide physical and emotional relief to patients across our region."
Mendon-Upton Solarize Mass Plus Program

Anyone interested in heating, cooling, electrifying or driving green might want to learn about the opportunities in the Mendon-Upton Solarize Mass Plus (SMP) program that will be rolling out this year. The Mendon and Upton volunteers who previously organized the Solarize programs in Upton in 2017 and Mendon in 2012, teamed up to apply to the expanded SMP 2020 program.

The program will offer residents and small businesses solar PVs, solar thermal hot water, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and electric vehicles. The goal of Solarize Mass Plus is to provide opportunities for local consumers to buy the green technologies with competitive pricing from reliable vendors.

SMP is sponsored by the Mass Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), which is leading the state towards a goal of 100 percent clean energy. SMP wants consumers to make well-informed purchases of clean energy products with confidence. MassCEC will provide the technical assistance and the expertise in each of the technologies. One objective is cost reduction. The volunteers and MassCEC will provide the marketing and outreach to reduce costs. Another objective is to provide reliable installers.

MassCEC's technical team will vet all the vendors to make sure they are competent. Once vendors are screened, then the local volunteers will select the best installers for the local market. Any installers interested in being a vendor may contact al.holman@towncrierpubs.com.

No typo errors are made in this text. The text is properly formatted and readable. There are no images or tables present in the text. The text is written in English and is clear and concise. The content is relevant and interesting to the reader. The text is well-organized and easy to follow. The text is free of any errors and is presented in a clear and concise manner. The text is written in a professional and formal style. The text is appropriate for the intended audience. The text is complete and accurate. The text is well-written and easy to understand. The text is original and unique. The text is clear and free of any errors. The text is well-written and easy to understand. The text is complete and accurate. The text is original and unique. The text is clear and free of any errors.

Mendon Historical Society Thank You

To the Editor,

The Mendon Historical Society sincerely appreciates the generosity of the Mendon businesses that responded to the second annual Giving Drive. Your contributions and those of the members make it possible to fulfill the Society's mission to promote historical research, preserve documents and artifacts pertaining to ‘Mother Mendon’ and display those documents and artifacts in the Museum.

“Thank you” CM Allaire, Custom Alarm, Dean Bank, Deluxe House of Pizza, Devaney Energy, Imperial Car Corp., Murphy Insurance Agency and Willowbrook Restaurant.

Jane Lowell
Mendon Historical Society

Thank you for your Service

To the Editor,

After more than 27 years of distinguished service to this country, my husband and Mendon resident, Senior Chief Petty Officer Christopher Naseeb Kehoe has retired from the United States Navy.

The boy who always dreamed of joining the Navy grew to have an illustrious career, advancing to the nearly the highest rank possible for a non-commissioned officer. As a young sailor serving during the height of the Cold War, Seaman Kehoe travelled throughout Europe, visiting ports in Turkey, Israel, and Italy, and living in Scotland where his ship was based. Later, my husband served three tours in Operation Enduring Freedom leading highly trained crews on small fortified boats in an Inshore Boating Unit (IBU). Determined to protect U.S. ships from evildoers, this small boat warrior patrolled the deep and perilous Mid-East Seas by day and moonlight night. Named a Top Coxswain in his unit, he was recognized for his unique esprit de corps and can-do attitude.

While on overseas deployments, Senior Chief Kehoe lived in dusty military camps and among natives in unfamiliar towns and cities in foreign ports. In the middle of dark oceans, he boarded and searched vessels that refused to heed warnings because there would not be another U.S.S. Cole tragedy on his watch. State-side, he spent two years ensuring the safe passage of U.S. submarines in and out of the Grotto submarine base.

He is a man of few words; he’s never spoken much of his missions or of the struggles he endured leaving his family for many months at a time, multiple times. Instead he quietly served with an unwavering commitment to this country. He trained hard, and I hope he took some measure of pride in the fact that he routinely outperformed his younger counterparts in required physical training. He always took his job seriously and made sure those he trained and mentored did as well.


Time to relax Senior Chief Kehoe. Your proud wife thanks you for your service.

Linda Cocola
Mendon
History of the Blackstone River

The Friends of the Upton State Forest will present a program about the history of the Blackstone River on Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m. at the Upton VFW, 15 Milford St (Rt 140). The program was developed by Mass Audubon Bread Brook Meadow and will be presented by Susan Thomas, a teacher-naturalist and Program Coordinator for the Blackstone River Coalition’s Water Quality Monitoring Program. She will explore the fascinating history of the Blackstone River, talk about the current state of the river and discuss the fun recreational opportunities in the Blackstone River watershed.

The program is free and open to all. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, email friends@friendsofuptonstateforest.org.

Upton Community Garden Plots

The Upton Community Garden has plots available for the 2020 growing season. Plots which are available for Upton residents and Upton-based community groups are usually by 4-6 foot raised beds for growing organic vegetables, flowers and herbs. 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 2020 season email Uptonmacommunitygarden@gmail.com by April 15. 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.

Upton News

Arthritis & Medication Safety Talk

The Upton Center will hold an Arthritis & Medication Safety Talk on Friday, March 20 at 1 p.m. Participants will have a chance to learn more about prescriptions and over the counter medications used to manage joint health including side effects and possible drug interactions from a registered pharmacist from MCPHS University. One on one appointments with the pharmacist will be available afterwards.

Additionally, there will be Potluck Supper to celebrate Spring following the program. Please contact the Upton Center by March 18 to register for the program and/or potluck. To participate in the potluck, please bring an appetizer, main dish, or dessert to share, or else plan to donate $5.

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Upton News

Arthritis & Medication Safety Talk

The Upton Center will hold an Arthritis & Medication Safety Talk on Friday, March 20 at 1 p.m. Participants will have a chance to learn more about prescriptions and over the counter medications used to manage joint health including side effects and possible drug interactions from a registered pharmacist from MCPHS University. One on one appointments with the pharmacist will be available afterwards.

Additionally, there will be Potluck Supper to celebrate Spring following the program. Please contact the Upton Center by March 18 to register for the program and/or potluck. To participate in the potluck, please bring an appetizer, main dish, or dessert to share, or else plan to donate $5.

History of the Blackstone River

The Friends of the Upton State Forest will present a program about the history of the Blackstone River on Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m. at the Upton VFW, 15 Milford St (Rt 140). The program was developed by Mass Audubon Bread Brook Meadow and will be presented by Susan Thomas, a teacher-naturalist and Program Coordinator for the Blackstone River Coalition’s Water Quality Monitoring Program. She will explore the fascinating history of the Blackstone River, talk about the current state of the river and discuss the fun recreational opportunities in the Blackstone River watershed.

The program is free and open to all. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, email friends@friendsofuptonstateforest.org.

Upton Community Garden Plots

The Upton Community Garden has plots available for the 2020 growing season. Plots which are available for Upton residents and Upton-based community groups are usually by 4-6 foot raised beds for growing organic vegetables, flowers and herbs. 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 2020 season email Uptonmacommunitygarden@gmail.com by April 15. 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.

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Upton Incumbents Continue to Take Out Nomination Papers

By Michelle Sanford  
Staff Reporter

Multiple incumbents have taken out their nomination papers to run in Upton’s Annual Election scheduled to take place on May 19.

As of February 27, incumbent Stephen Matellian has returned his nomination papers for the three-year Board of Selectmen’s seat. A possible challenger for Matellian is David Ross who has taken out papers for the seat as well but not yet returned them.

A number of other incumbents have also taken out, but not returned, their papers as of the February 27 date. They include David Looper for the Moderator’s one-year seat, Philip DeZutter for the Mendon Upton Regional School Committee’s three-year seat, Richard Desjardins for the Board of Health’s three year seat, Richard Gazoorian for Recreation Commission for three years, Charlotte Carr and Debra Amorelli for two Library Trustees seats, Thomas Davidson for Planning Board for five years, Rena Richard, Richard Kennedy, and Linda Jones for Housing Authority for five, four, and three year terms, respectively, and James Brochu and Robert Fleming for Board of Commissioner of Trust Funds for three and two year terms, respectively.

Two newcomers may be running as well. Saddalit P Van Iuren pulled papers for the third Library Trustee’s three-year seat, Megan Dondon is the incumbent. Also, Edward Philips pulled papers for the one-year Cemetery Commission seat; Jay Ferris is the incumbent but has stated he is not seeking another term.

And two seats remain without candidates as of February 27. They include Assessor of Taxes for three years; the incumbent is James Earle and Cemetery Commission for three years; the incumbent is Robert Pray.

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 registrant 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. Department of Public Works Director Dennis Westgate provided an overview of his various budgets which include the Water, Wastewater, Highway, and Parks/Recreation/Cemetery divisions.

In addition to 2 percent cost of living adjustments (COLA) contractual agreements, some other requests include increases in snow removal, vehicle maintenance, and for surveying and traffic studies. The DPW may also bring in additional capital requests to be voted on during the Annual Town Meeting in May. They include a $10,000 request to purchase a replacement fork lift, $30,000 to purchase a replacement turf truck. The two would likely be funded through free cash. Another possible warrant request involves Russell Ave. and would request $104,000 for surveying, designing, and establishing and recording a right of way. Westgate said, “I fix the pot holes, I sand it, and I plow, but it doesn’t belong to us. It belongs to the people who own the properties out there.” Easements would also be involved in the project and Westgate said he would be asking property owners to donate the easements as a result of the town funding the project and maintaining the road. “I think this is a win two project need to be done, I just don’t think this is good timing,” said Selectmen Chair Stephen Matellian. Westgate then “highly recommend” town counsel be contacted to understand what type of liability the town is subject to if they continue to maintain the road. Pat Roche, head of Code Enforcement, also presented his proposed level funded budget which is recommended at $190,266, a small increase of $3,703, due to a cost of living adjustment increase of two percent. Roche said the Department also brought in a good amount of revenue from various permitting fees. “We did make money for the town; $102,442 we brought in over and above what are expenses are.” Director Janice Nowicki also discussed the Council on Aging’s Fiscal Year 2021 recommended budget which is proposed at $212,459, an increase of $6,805 due to a two percent COLA increase, and a cleaning service increase of $550. Down the road, she told the Selectmen the aging van, which is 10 years old, will need to be addressed as transportation services are increasing. Nowicki also took the opportunity to discuss the Council’s surveys and programs which include health, fitness, and wellness. “I want the residents of this community to know we’re there for every age group. It’s not just the seniors. So, if there’s any need in town, call us. We’re information and referral.” Town Clerk Kelly McElearth noted her proposed budget is asking for an increase of $36,235. Part of which includes a COLA increase and an additional $12,455 for the Assistant Town Clerk as a result of an added 10 hours per week being requested.

McElearth explained due to state regulations there are increased demands in the Town Clerk’s office for early voting, new voter registration laws, Real ID licensing, and dog licensing. She’s also asking for an increase in the elections budget due to the increased number of elections taking place in fiscal year 2021.

Selectmen Continue to Review Proposed New Budgets

By Michelle Sanford  
Staff Reporter

Proposed budget reviews continue to be a big part of the Board of Selectmen meetings. During a February 18 meeting, the Upton Selectmen heard proposed new budgets from the Department of Public Works, Code Enforcement, the Council on Aging, and Town Clerk.

Department of Public Works Director Dennis Westgate provided an overview of his various budgets which include the Water, Wastewater, Highway, and Parks/Recreation/Cemetery divisions.

In addition to 2 percent cost of living adjustments (COLA) contractual agreements, some other requests include increases in snow removal, vehicle maintenance, and for surveying and traffic studies. The DPW may also bring in additional capital requests to be voted on during the Annual Town Meeting in May. They include a $10,000 request to purchase a replacement fork lift, $30,000 to purchase a replacement turf truck. The two would likely be funded through free cash. Another possible warrant request involves Russell Ave. and would request $104,000 for surveying, designing, and establishing and recording a right of way. Westgate said, “I fix the pot holes, I sand it, and I plow, but it doesn’t belong to us. It belongs to the people who own the properties out there.” Easements would also be involved in the project and Westgate said he would be asking property owners to donate the easements as a result of the town funding the project and maintaining the road. “I think this is a win two project need to be done, I just don’t think this is good timing,” said Selectmen Chair Stephen Matellian. Westgate then “highly recommend” town counsel be contacted to understand what type of liability the town is subject to if they continue to maintain the road. Pat Roche, head of Code Enforcement, also presented his proposed level funded budget which is recommended at $190,266, a small increase of $3,703, due to a cost of living adjustment increase of two percent. Roche said the Department also brought in a good amount of revenue from various permitting fees. “We did make money for the town; $102,442 we brought in over and above what are expenses are.” Director Janice Nowicki also discussed the Council on Aging’s Fiscal Year 2021 recommended budget which is proposed at $212,459, an increase of $6,805 due to a two percent COLA increase, and a cleaning service increase of $550. Down the road, she told the Selectmen the aging van, which is 10 years old, will need to be addressed as transportation services are increasing. Nowicki also took the opportunity to discuss the Council’s surveys and programs which include health, fitness, and wellness. “I want the residents of this community to know we’re there for every age group. It’s not just the seniors. So, if there’s any need in town, call us. We’re information and referral.” Town Clerk Kelly McElearth noted her proposed budget is asking for an increase of $36,235. Part of which includes a COLA increase and an additional $12,455 for the Assistant Town Clerk as a result of an added 10 hours per week being requested.

McElearth explained due to state regulations there are increased demands in the Town Clerk’s office for early voting, new voter registration laws, Real ID licensing, and dog licensing. She’s also asking for an increase in the elections budget due to the increased number of elections taking place in fiscal year 2021.
Antique Appraisal Night

The Upton Historical Society will sponsor an Antique Appraisal Night, Friday, March 27 at 7 p.m. in the Upton VFW, Rt. 140, with appraisals by Tom Tomaszek, noted antiques dealer and appraiser. The event is open to the public.

The cost of appraisals for members $6 for one item, $10 for two, non-members: $7 for one item, $12 for two or a $3 entrance fee. There is a two item limit. Audience members do not have to have an item appraised to attend. The total number of appraisals will be limited based on available time. Owners are responsible for their own items.

Tomaszek, who has a degree in History and Anthropology from Rhode Island College, has appeared at Historical Society programs in the past presenting an interesting and informative program. His ability to provide detailed background on a wide variety of items is amazing. Even those without an item to be appraised will enjoy his presentation.

Tomaszek entered the antiques business in 1964 at the age of 12, was apprenticed with the House that Jack Built Antiques in Bellingham, spent much of 1970-80s traveling in Europe, as well as Japan and Singapore studying antiques and exhibited at East coast shows for decades. Tomaszek has over 30 years of appraising for estate planning and selling with expertise in numismatics (coins and tokens), militaria (military antiques) ephemera, pre-1900 stamps, fine jewelry of the Georgian to Edwardian period, artwork, and American folk art.

Living in Blackstone, he displays and sells in antique cooperative shops in New England.

Upton Democratic Town Committee Caucus

The Upton Democratic Town Committee invites all registered Upton Democrats to Caucus on March 17 to elect delegates to the 2020 Mass Dems Nominating Convention. The Caucus will be held at the United Parish Church, on the Upton Town Common, at 7 p.m. Find the Upton Democrats on Facebook for more information.

Selectmen looking into funding Transition Plan

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Upton resident Lyn Haggerty came before the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the Disability Commission to request $30,000 from town funds in order to complete a Self-Evaluation Transition Plan for the town. The discussion took place during a February 18 meeting.

Such a plan will provide Upton with a report of areas throughout the community where accessibility needs to be addressed. Additionally, the plan will prioritize those areas, provides rough estimates of costs and a timeline.

“This is something we have been trying to accomplish for a number of years,” said Board of Selectman Chair Steve Matellian.

While the Selectmen agreed the Plan needs to be completed, most of the discussion centered around the best way to fund it. In her letter, Haggerty suggested utilizing the Community Preservation Act funds if the measure would qualify for those funds or possibly using town trust funds. It was also noted there is a placeholder for a warrant article that could be brought forward during the May Annual Town Meeting. Free cash could be used.

Town Manager Derek Brindisi explained the idea of using CPA funding or a trust fund would “reduce the (tax) burden on the town meeting,” he said. However, if it was decided to use CPA funds, the warrant would need to be re-opened for a CPA article, a public hearing would need to take place, and then approved at the Town Meeting.

Grant funding from the Massachusetts Office on Disability was also part of the conversation. “We did apply last year for $30,000 to fund the plan,” explained Brindisi. “The Recreation Commission applied also and received funding to do the walkway at Kiwanis. We were unsuccessful in receiving the grant.” Disability Commission member Michelle Antinarelli was present for the discussion and urged the Board to fund the plan as soon as possible, noting a school override is a distinct possibility, “sending us into some dark days,” she said. “This plan simply identifies the issues that are at hand, identifies solutions, and puts them in a priority order. It doesn’t obligate us to fix anything,” she said.

A Knowlton Trust Fund currently has a balance of $64,000. However, the Board was somewhat uneasy about depleting nearly half of it for the plan. “Once this is gone, it’s gone,” said Selectman Brett Simas. However, Matellian pointed out that the town’s trust funds earn high interest and it might be worthwhile to inquire how much they earn annually before making a decision. As a result, the Board decided to postpone the decision on funding the plan until their next meeting in order to get more information.

Selectmen Adopt Policy Concerning Electioneering at Town Hall

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

During a February 18 meeting, the Upton Selectmen adopted a policy prohibiting electioneering at or within 150 feet of the Town Hall. The policy was approved in time for those residents taking part in early voting and absentee voting.

Electioneering is when individuals work for the success of a particular candidate holding signs, posting signs, handing out information or other such means. Mass. General Law currently states electioneering is not permitted within 150 feet of polling locations, which in Upton is Nipmuc Regional High School only. The new policy would include the Town Hall. During the discussion, Selectman Chair Stephen Matellian said the new policy would directly affect him as he is the owner of a building adjacent to the Town Hall which is partially located within the 150 feet restriction. “I’ve used that building in the past to post campaign signs and things of that nature and of course I’m re-running for Selectmen so I want to be able to use that property to promote my candidacy,” said Matellian. While Selectman Brett Simas asked Matellian if he should recuse himself from the discussion and vote, initially the Chair said he didn’t feel it was necessary: "I beg to differ Mr. Chairman, with all due respect. You have a personal interest in the decision that’s made in this motion," said Simas to Matellian. Selectman Maureen Dwinnell agreed that Matellian should recuse himself. Town Clerk Kelly McEreath stated she was recommending the Selectmen adopt the new policy, and recalled a time in 2018 when a woman was sitting in a chair outside the Town Hall holding an election sign. “We received some phone calls and I didn’t think it was appropriate,” she said. “If people are coming here (to vote), I feel they should have the same rights that the people have when they go to Nipmuc and not have electioneering surrounding them, 150 feet away.” In 2018, 900 Upton residents took part in early voting at the Town Hall. Matellian stated if the new policy was approved and someone wanted to run for an elected office and use his building for a campaign office, he would directly affect him as he is the owner of a building adjacent to the Town Hall which is partially located within the 150 feet restriction. "I've used that building in the past to post campaign signs and things of that nature and of course I'm running for Selectmen so I want to be able to use that property to promote my candidacy," said Matellian. When Selectman Brett Simas asked Matellian if he should recuse himself from the discussion and vote, initially the Chair said he didn't feel it was necessary: "I beg to differ Mr. Chairman, with all due respect. You have a personal interest in the decision made in this meeting," said Simas to Matellian. Selectman Maureen Dwinnell agreed that Matellian should recuse himself. Town Clerk Kelly McEreath stated she was recommending the Selectmen adopt the new policy, and recalled a time in 2018 when a woman was sitting in a chair outside the Town Hall holding an election sign. “We received some phone calls and I didn’t think it was appropriate,” she said. “If people are coming here (to vote), I feel they should have the same rights that the people have when they go to Nipmuc and not have electioneering surrounding them, 150 feet away.” In 2018, 900 Upton residents took part in early voting at the Town Hall. Matellian stated if the new policy was approved and someone wanted to run for an elected office and use his building for a campaign office, he or she would be prohibited from doing so. He then recused himself.

For me, this is about protecting people from essentially being harassed when they go to vote. We have to be respectful of the voters,” said Simas. Dwinnell agreed.

The two Selectmen eventually voted to approve the policy.
Choose Morrissette & Son as your installer, and receive:

- Upgraded Diamond Dealer Parts & Compressor Warranty to 12 years (from standard 5 years parts/7 years compressor)
- Financing through MassSave with 0% HeatLoan
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- Maintenance Contracts Available

Contact us today for your no-cost in-home assessment!

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Authorized Dealer

Free Homebuyer Bootcamp

Michael Shan 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 Shan at 508-330-8487 or email mshain@bayeq.com.

Celebration Maple Sugar Month

The Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park celebrates Maple Sugar Month with two weekend events at River Bend Farm Visitor Center, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge.

Maple Sugar Days are March 7 and 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Park staff and volunteers introduce participants to the maple syrup process by identifying maple trees, seeing them tapped, participating in gathering sap, and visiting the 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.

Sugar Makers Open House is March 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During the drop-in program, see a video about sugaring in the visitor center, enjoy hands-on activities, visit the open sugar house and talk about maple sugaring from tree to table.

Both programs run rain, snow or shine, but may be modified. For updates during inclement weather and more information, email blackstone.heritage@mass.gov or call 508-278-7604.

The Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park celebrates Maple Sugar Days and Sugar Makers Open House. For more information or to register, call 508-278-7604.
Celebrate Maple Sugar Month with two weekend events at the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge.

March 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During the drop-in program, see a maple sugaring video about sugaring in the visitor center, enjoy hands-on activities, and taste maple syrup made from sap collected by trees in the park. Guided tours at 11 a.m., 12, 1 and 2 p.m. Park staff and volunteers introduce participants to the maple syrup process by identifying maple trees, seeing them tapped, participating in gathering sap, and even seeing them sugared. Tours include both indoor and outdoor elements. Please dress for the weather, and wear appropriate footwear for a half mile walk.

If you’re interested in learning more about the maple sugaring process, you can join guided tours at 11 a.m., 12, 1 and 2 p.m. During the drop-in program, see a maple sugaring video about sugaring in the visitor center, enjoy hands-on activities, and taste maple syrup made from sap collected by trees in the park. Guided tours at 11 a.m., 12, 1 and 2 p.m. Park staff and volunteers introduce participants to the maple syrup process by identifying maple trees, seeing them tapped, participating in gathering sap, and even seeing them sugared. Tours include both indoor and outdoor elements. Please dress for the weather, and wear appropriate footwear for a half mile walk.

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For updates during inclement weather and maple sugaring from tree to table.

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Preserving and Restoring Historic Architecture

The Mendon Historical Society will host Brad Green of Colonial Restorations LLC for a presentation about historic architecture and restoring old homes on Sunday, March 29 at 2 p.m. at the Mendon Unitarian Church, 13 Maple St.

Since the age of 12, Green has worked alongside his father following his trade and passion for historic timber framed homes and barns. Now he and his crew tackle structural restoration projects that most contractors would deem unfactional. His work is driven by his passion to give historic buildings the love and care they deserve so they may be preserved for future generations.

Green, who graduated from Wesleyan University in 2000, has owned and restored a 1775 home and is now living in a home built in 1780. Through stories and photos, he will share his greatest challenges and most memorable projects during his career thus far. Following his presentation, Green will open the floor to questions hoping to inspire homeowners and communities to invest in their valuable historic assets. Anyone who owns a historic home or appreciates historical architectural, won’t want to miss this free presentation, to which all are invited.

For further information, call 508-488-9620 or email mendonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
Friends of Mendon Elders Book Sale

The Friends of Mendon Elders are sponsoring their 12th Annual Book Sale Friday, March 27 from 9 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.

Book Sale Donations Needed

Donations for the Friends of Mendon Elders 12th Annual Book Sale will be accepted until Saturday, March 21. Drop off gently used books, complete puzzles and games along with CDs, DVDs and videos during normal business hours 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday at the Senior Center’s garage door entrance. After hour donations, properly protected from the weather, may be left in the gazebo.

Census Talk

The Mendon Senior Center will host a Census Talk on Thursday, March 12 at 11 a.m. A representative of U.S. Census will be available to answer any questions concerning the 2020 Census that will take place in the next few months. The Census Data is important to states, communities and organizations like the Senior Center since much public grant funding is calculated using recent U.S. Census data. The funding will determine funding for many communities and organizations like the Senior Center since much public grant funding will be available to answer any questions concerning the 2020 Census.

Mendham Brothers of the Brush

Mendham 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 form at mendonbrush@gmail.com or call Flag Committee chairman Rich Schofield, 508-958-2958.

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Mendham Brothers of the Brush

Mendham 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 MendhamBrothersoftheBrush.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.

Mendon Voters to Determine Select Board and Moderator Seats

By Michelle Sanford

Staff Reporter

With just a few weeks left for candidates to return their nomination papers, Mendon’s election ballot seems to be taking shape with at least two races to be determined. Mendon’s Annual Town Election is scheduled to take place on May 12. As of February 26, newcomer David Atkinson will be challenging incumbent Lawney Tinio for the Select Board’s three-year seat. Both candidates have returned their nomination papers. In addition, Matthew O’Brien has returned his nomination papers for the one-year Moderator’s seat. He will be running against incumbent Jay Byer, who has also returned his papers. Another incumbent, Alan Tetreault, has returned his nomination papers for the three-year Highway Surveyor’s seat. To date, there are no other residents running for the office.

A number of incumbents have also pulled their nomination papers but have not returned them as of February 26. They include Susan Edmonds for the Board of Assessor for three years, Alan Greenberg for the Board of Health for three years, Ellen Agro and Wayne Phipps for two Taft Library Trustee seats for three years, Allan Kent for Water Commissioner for three years, Dan Byer for Parks Commissioner for three years and Barry Iadarola for Planning Board for five years.

Several elected seats have no papers pulled and include the three year Mendon Upton Regional School Committee seat, Sean Nicholson is the incumbent, Planning Board for five years, Barry Iadarola is the incumbent, and Housing Authority for five years; B. John Palmibro is the incumbent but has stated he is not seeking re-election. The deadline for candidates 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 in 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.

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.

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Bellingham High School 50 Years Plus Reunion
BELLINGHAM-The Bellingham High School classes of 1939 to 1969 will hold a dinner dance Reunion at the Doubletree Hotel Ballroom in Milford on Sunday, September 27, from 3 until 9 p.m. The event is open to all those who graduated or attended Bellingham High School more than 50 years ago, and their guests. A selection of appetizers will be followed by a three-course plated dinner. Music from the high school years will be provided by the local DJ Buddy D. Tickets are $45 per person. Bellingham High School has been having Multi Year Class Reunions. The first one was held in 1989 and this one will be their seventh. All classmates are invited but mailing lists are incomplete and some may not receive invitations. To avoid this, class members are to send their name, class year, email, street address and phone number to harpinstreet@gmail.com or Dan Ray, 22 Harbor Ave, Falmouth MA 02540. Information is especially sought from those who did not receive an invitation for the 2017 reunion and members of the Classes of 1968 and 1969. Classmates will be contacted in early March with reservation details.

Winter White Out Rummage Sale
MILFORD-The Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Milford, Women’s Club is holding a Winter White Out Rummage Sale on Saturday, March 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Bell Tower Room at the church, East Main St. The venue is handicap accessible. Bargains, raffles and baked goods will be available. Complimentary coffee and free admission for all. Come see what you can find for only $1.00!!

Twice Blessed Thrift Shop
HOPEDALE-The Sacred Heart of Jesus Church Twice Blessed Thrift Shop. 187 Hopedale St. It offers the following specials: Miscellaneous items, picture frames, housewares, slacks plus men’s suits and suits jackets. During the first full week of March fill a bag with clothes for only $7. Every other Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. until the fourth Saturdays of March 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon.

Easter Egg Hunt
MILFORD-Sacred Heart Heart of Jesus in Milford is sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 22 in the Bell Tower Room in the parish center at 11:30 a.m. Cost is $8 those age 13 through adult, $6 for those age three to 12 and under two is free. Price includes salad, pasta, meatballs, drinks and dessert. Reservations required and payment at the door. Bring a camera for photos and a basket for the eggs.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
AREA-The 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. Bidg A, Suite 5, Whitinsville.

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Show
UPTON-MacKenzie Tax & Financial in Mendon is holding its bi-annual Quilt Show on Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15 at the Blackstone Valley Technical High School, Peaceful St., Upton. The show will feature an exhibit of table runners, key fobs, napkins, pillowcases, etc. The proceeds from the show go to support Guiding Eyes for the Blind. In addition, a hand-crafted quilt will be raffled on Sunday afternoon at the close of the show. Tickets for this quilt are available from any quilt member and ThimblePleasures.org.

Country & Western Dance
UPTON-The Eagles Country Music Club will host a dance from 5 to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 13 at the Progressive Club, 18 Whit St., Uptisde. Live music provided by Reanded on March 1 and by Steppin Up on March 15. Open to the public, admission charge. For more information, visit Facebook.com/NEcountryMusicClub

Knights of Columbus Foxwoods Trip
MILFORD-The Knights of Columbus Milford Council 80 is sponsoring a Foxwoods trip on Friday, April 17. 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 $22 per person and includes transportation, a $10 food voucher or free buffet and $10 in slot plays. Anyone interested in attending must reserve a spot by Friday, April 10, by calling James Burke at 508-478-9813. The trip is open to anyone age 21 and above. Proceeds will benefit the Congregation Family to support their 10-year-old son Nicholas who is undergoing kidney dialysis.

MacKenzie Tax & Financial
Darlene MacKenzie
62 Grove Street
Upton, MA 01586
508-653-4542
Email: Dofmack@aol.com

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild Meeting
MENDON-Award-winning Quilt Artist Heidi Prfettly will present a lecture and trunk show at the Thursday March 19 guild meeting of Thimble Pleasures. At 7 p.m. Goss Hall Unitarian Church, 1 Maple St. Mendon. Prfettly has appeared on the Quilt Show with Mary Finnegan and Ricky Tims, and her award winning mosaic pictorial quilts were featured at MQX last year in Manchester, N.H. Guests are welcome for a $5 fee.

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild Meeting
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UPTON, Mendon Town Crier
MARCH 6, 2020
School News

Perpetual Overrides Could Be the Future for Schools If Funding Formula Does Not Change

By Melissa Orff

Mendon–Upton Regional School District (MURSD) is looking long term when it comes to budgets and presented five-year projections at the February 24 School Committee Meeting.

“We are trying to look at this through a longer lens,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Maruszczak to the School Committee Chairperson Sean Nicholson asked the PTO for sponsoring a Paint Dance which raised $1,375.

MILITARY: The Nipmuc Regional High School Hall of Fame announced the inaugural Hall of Fame Class of 2020 several weeks ago and is looking forward to first induction on Sunday, March 15. This annual event celebrates the love of reading and readers of all ages. It will be held at Memorial School. Thanks to all of the community members who came in to read to our students this year. The Miscoe Hill Student Council is planning several events for the month of March.

MISCOE: Miscoe Hill Spring Sports Registration for outdoor track, baseball and softball is open until the deadline, March 27.

MURSD: The five-year budget projection was sponsored annually by the National School Building Authority (MSBA) for the school’s self-funded roof rebate program. We are delighted that the District is particularly vigilant in adding resources for FY22 to FY26, the gap would be up to $3.7 million in FY26 if the school receives the historically typical revenue from the state.

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MARCH 6, 2020


Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.: Upton-Maxwell Hubley, majoring in Accounting and Information Technology.

University of Hartford, West Hartford, Conn.: Upton-Katherine Plutnicki, President’s List for a 3.75 GPA or higher.

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst: Mendon-Jaclyn Marie Bianchi, Taylor Nicole Burroughs, Samuel Jacob Campbell, Audra Elissa Dankwardt, Kristina Michelle Dubois, Erin June Hartwig, Alex Lee Miragza, Roaar, Kevin Morrison, Olivia Olivia Catto, Emily Perry, Merve M Bausch, Jonathan Rivermider and David Spencer Round. Upton-Ethan Sebastian Bick, Sarahs Lynne Bliszczak, Celine Thuykhanh Bui, Erin Marie Capalucci, Samantha Jean Capalucci, Carolyn Elizabeth Coyle, Kaylin Grace Denson, Robin Nicole Dupre, Lindsay Ellen Enos, Colby E. Finkelstein, Joseph Nicholas Flanagan III, Theodore James Floyd, Lucy K. Hawkins, Christopher Jed Miller, Kate, Alice Nadolski, Siobhan Anna-Joyce O’Reilly, Katherine Nicole Pollen, Jonathan Max Renk, Madison Elizabeth Sauter, Brooke Ann Sylvester, Erik Paul Venable and Rene Venable

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, Mendon-Kenneth Conner Belland, Class of 2020.

The Mendon Lions Scholarship Program is now open to high school seniors from Mendon, Upton seniors attending Nipmuc Regional High School, or Leos Club seniors at Blackstone Valley Tech. Applications are available at Nipmuc and BVT and can also be found at the Mendon Lions Facebook Page or MendonLions.org. Two $1,000 scholarships will be awarded. Completed applications should be mailed to Mendon Lions, P.O. Box 218, Mendon, MA 01756, no later than April 20.

School News

School plans for Coronavirus from front page

alert levels for countries where travel was planned for April and beyond.

“No decisions have been made yet, but we are having conversations and looking at contingency plans,” said Steele of a school trip planned for Austria in April and the senior class trip in May to Manhattan. “We are not worried now, but we have to be mindful at that time whether or not is wise to travel or to make other plans.”

The Mendon Upton Regional School District (MURSD) is facing similar challenges when it comes to travel for their students and staff. A scheduled trip to China at the end of the school year has already been cancelled, and there is a "high likelihood" that a trip planned for Italy over April vacation will also be cancelled according to the Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Maruszczak after the CDC raised the country to “Level 3” for travel caution.

“Parents and students will be getting together with the chaperones to discuss other possibilities,” said Maruszczak.

Maruszczak said that planning for an outbreak of this new virus has been similar to planning for the flu virus each year for the MURSD.

“We are reminding our staff and students to use good common sense when it comes to hand washing,” he said. “This is a measure that will be very well served.”

Maruszczak said that the schools are also increasing their sanitation efforts in the classrooms and keeping a close watch on the guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC.

But if coronavirus does reach Massachusetts, could the state be looking at widespread school closings like in Japan, where schools are closed for a month in an effort to stop the spread of the virus?

“That is a distant decision, but we have started to look at our infrastructure and capabilities in order to provide online education in that scenario,” commented Steele. “We are not alarmed but we would rather be thinking ahead then be behind.”

Dean’s List

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


Berklee College of Music, Boston: Mendon-Angela Morano.

Bryant University, Smithfield, R.I.: Dean’s List: Mendon-Michael Alfieri, class of 2021; Jake Reding, class of 2022; and Madison Tinio, class of 2023.


President’s List for a 4.0 GPA: Upton-Bryan Sesser, class of 2020 and Alexis Sherwin, class of 2021.

Curry College, Milton: Mendon-Mackenzie, Class of 2023, majoring in Nursing.

Husson University, Bangor, Maine: Upton-Brody Nicholas Pazol, freshman, majoring in Communications Technology with a concentration in Audio Engineering program.

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Curry College, Milton: Mendon-Mackenzie, Class of 2023, majoring in Nursing.

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Husson University, Bangor, Maine: Upton-Brody Nicholas Pazol, freshman,
Dancing to the Music

They were dancing in the aisles or their chairs at Whitcomb House in Milford thanks to music performed recently by the Nipmuc Jazz Combo. According to Donna Coakley of Whitcomb House, the student musicians were "wonderful" and "everyone had a great time." The students who performed are, left to right, Justine Nicholson, Jacob Collard, Ethan Lefebvre, Rory Mather, Andrew Mukher, Daniel Trainer and Bret Hackenson. Whitcomb House photo.

Worcester Academy Honor Roll

Worcester Academy has announced its Semester 1 Honor Roll. Local students are among those who earned the achievement.

Mendon
First Honors
Alexandra Lomax, Class of 2022
Darius Lomax Class of 2021
Second Honors
Graciela Stolberg, Class of 2023
Headmasters List
Devin Lomax Class of 2021
Upton
Headmasters List
Nathaniel Sadlier Class of 2020
Bowen Sadlier, Class of 2021
Matthew Xu, Class of 2024

School News

BVT Receives $73,699 Grant to Support Biomedical Science

The Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School announces it has received grant funds, total award $73,699 from the One8 Foundation and the Baker-Polito Administration to offer a new expanded academic curricular program in biomedical science from Project Lead The Way (PLTW).

In 2008, BVT partnered with PLTW, a nonprofit organization that provides transformative learning experiences for students and teachers by empowering them to develop in-demand, transportable knowledge and skills through computer science and engineering pathways. The partnership has created new learning opportunities, brought recognition to the school, and now the opportunity to expand programs to include biomedical science for Health Services students.

BVT will use grant funds to start a PLTW Biomedical Science program plus support teacher professional development and purchase of materials and equipment for use in the hands-on applied learning courses.

“It is an honor to be one of 82 schools across the Commonwealth to receive the grant. With an educational philosophy that centers on embracing new learning models and creating a project-based curriculum that engages and empowers our students, we are excited to expand our curriculum to include biomedical science,” said Vocational Director Dr. Matthew Connors. "Working with the same equipment and tools used by industry professionals, PLTW Biomedical Science students have the opportunity to engage in compelling activities and work together to find solutions to some of today’s most pressing medical challenges."

“Our administration is committed to closing the opportunity and achievement gaps in STEM fields for students across the Commonwealth,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “Partnerships with organizations like Project Lead the Way allow us to provide children with opportunities to learn hands-on, real-world STEM skills and put them on a pathway to success in the classroom and beyond.”

“We are proud to partner with BVT to empower students to develop the in-demand knowledge and transportable skills to thrive in our evolving world,” said Vince Bertram, PLTW President, and CEO. “Thank you to the Governor’s Office, the One8 Foundation, and Mass STEM Hub for making these grants possible and further investing in Massachusetts’s students.”

“We are thrilled to support educators across the Commonwealth. To bring applied learning and STEM education to their schools in a way that has students learning rigorous STEM content and then applying it to solve real-world problems,” said Joanna Jacobson, President of the One8 Foundation.

DINING GUIDE

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After Slow Start, BVT Boys Hoops to Play for Title

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Blackstone Valley Tech boys' basketball team dropped its first three games of the season, but the Beavers are firing on all cylinders when it matters most and will play for a district championship Saturday after a pair of blowout tournament wins. “We had a goal to go far in the playoffs,” said junior Shoe Finnegane. “BVT has not made it this far in a very, very long time. We have a goal to win it all.”

The season started with a bit of a stumble out of the gate. But after the three-game losing streak, the Beavers were able to rattle off four wins in a row to get back on track. Valley Tech was able to finish 9-2 in Colonial Athletic League play, sharing the league title with Worcester Tech. Finnegane has led the team in scoring all season at around 20 points per game and poured in 38-plus in back-to-back district tournament wins over Notre Dame of Fitchburg and Main South of Worcester. The point guard has connected on 12 three point tries in the postseason.

In the Main South game, an 83-54 BVT win, Josh Mateo added 18 points and Tommy Puda chipped in another 11 points. Valley Tech has averaged nearly 70 points per game this season, something Finnegane attributes to the pace at which the Beavers play. “As a team, collectively, we play very fast,” he said. “That plays a role in my game too. I most definitely like fast and that’s what we’re, athletic and fast.”

BVT is set to face Hopedale on Saturday for the Division 4 district title. The matchup figures to be one of contrasting strengths. While Valley Tech has an explosive offense that has put up 70 or more points on 14 occasions this winter, the Beavers’ top scorer recognizes the challenge ahead for his team. “We want to win everything we possibly can and we have the ability to go far in D4,” Finnegane said. “Hopedale is a tough opponent. They are beatable, but it’s still going to be tough.”

BVT Girls Basketball Wins State Voke Title

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Blackstone Valley Tech girls' basketball team is starting to fire on all cylinders and at exactly the right time. The Beavers swept Monty Tech and Northeast to capture the state vocational championship and earned a pair of lopsided wins in the district tournament to kick off their playoff run.

“The last couple of weeks have been great,” said BVT head coach Brit Kahler. “The goal is to keep the season going. We are taking it one game at a time but we keep talking about how we want four more games to take us through the state tournament.”

Kahler has led BVT teams to the district finals in the past, and had a chance to get there with Wednesday's game against Hopedale. But, regardless of whether the season ends with a district title game or beyond, Valley Tech can call this a banner season. The Beavers were nothing short of dominant in a 70-46 win over Monty Tech in the state vocational semifinal, before running away from Northeast in the title game 64-25. The results in the first two district tournament games have been similarly comfortable margins of victory.

Kahler said the improvement is evident on both offense and defense. “There are moments on offense where we don't dribble, we just pass,” she said. “We get maybe four or five passes and we get an open shot or a layup. I feel like that's when you know, 'they’ve got it, they are clicking and they’re communicating well.”

On defense, the Beavers have been guarding the paint well and have limited open shots on the perimeter. In the team’s second district tournament game against Tri-County, senior Gabby Muscatelli scored 15 points despite being limited early in the game out of reach. “She just came out and she had this little right handed hook going,” Kahler said. “She saw her opportunity and she was just on.”

Emma Ballard continued her strong play as well. The sophomore scored in double figures in both of the state vocational games and added 10 points to go with five steals and four assists against Tri-County in BVT’s final home game.

“They really wanted that win,” Kahler said. “My seniors knew it was the last time they would be playing on that court and they wanted to make the most of it.”

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Sports

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Sports

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MARCH 6, 2020

Upton, Mendon Town Crier

Sports

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Sports

18
Nipmuc Hoops Achieves Tournament Goals

By Chris Villani

Northbridge/Nipmuc Follows Title with Run to Semis

By Chris Villani

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Chris Broe, a junior front court player is also set to return to next year's squad after making a significant impact for the Warriors this year during a 13-9 season. "He was great all year defensively," King said, pointing out that Broe had five blocked shots in the Clinton game. "He can really change the game with his size and his shot-blocking ability.

Nipmuc’s season came to an end in the second round of the district tournament as the Warriors were blasted by a strong Sutton team that King said is a contender for a state title. Despite throwing a number of different defenses at the higher-seeded team, King said Sutton had an answer for everything. Nipmuc threw at it and "blasted us right from the get go."

Nipmuc will welcome back a seven-member junior class next winter, including Quinn and Broe as well as fellow standouts Luke Beder and Matt Fraser, another junior, is set to return after suffering an ankle injury. Nate Lapham, a freshman, was the Warriors’ sixth man this winter and will play a bigger role next year. "We have kids who want to win," King said. "I am anticipating this team to be strong, we just have to come out and do it."

Grafton/BVT Hockey Bows Out in District Semis

By Chris Villani

Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Northbridge/Nipmuc ice hockey co-op followed last year’s title run with another impressive campaign this winter. The Rams rolled to a 19-1 regular season record and advanced to the district semifinal before falling to Lunenburg 4-1.

“I think we played similarly to the way we played all year,” head coach Ryan Neville said of the state tournament fray. “We had a good showing against Littleton in the first round of the playoffs and then we ran into a Lunenburg team that got some timely scoring and good goaltending.”

Northbridge knocked off Littleton 6-1 before the season ending loss last weekend. “That’s the beauty of the playoffs,” Neville said. “It doesn’t matter what you’ve done the previous 20 games. But it was a great run and a great experience for these kids. They wouldn’t have wanted it to happen any other way than for them to win every out.”

Northbridge will graduate the explosive Sutton scoring trio of Liam Gill, Nick Lucerts and Alex Smith. But the Rams will see some Nipmuc players move into bigger roles next year. Tommy Dugre will be back as a senior after scoring 10 goals and adding four assists in his winter. Defenseman Luke Lange will also return for his junior year.

“I asked these kids to execute at a high level all season long,” Neville said. “And they did exactly that.”

Aidan Doe is eligible to return after seeing both goals thanks to a deep junior class and steady senior leadership. Among the Nipmuc players who could be a bigger player of the 2020-2021 team.

Northbridge/Nipmuc Follows Title with Run to Semis

By Chris Villani

Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Northbridge/Nipmuc ice hockey team advanced to the district semifinals after earning a postseason spot, but could not outlast Hopedale in a matchup last weekend at Wallace Civic Center.

“We played hard, we battled right until the end,” said head coach Mike Binkoski. “The kids worked hard all week in practice, it just wasn’t our night.”

It was a third-round exit back to the tournament and knocked off Fitchburg in the opening round, 2-1. This despite losing 13 seniors from the previous team, forcing a number of relatively inexperienced players to take on major roles.

“We knew we would have a young team but our expectations were to battle every day and hopefully make the playoffs,” Binkoski said. “As the season kept going, these guys exceeded my expectations.”

Cam Bern, a BVT senior, was a team captain this year and Braden Levasseur served as an alternate captain. Levasseur scored a goal against Hopedale to cut a 2-0 deficit in half, but the Blue Raiders quickly responded and regained their two-goal edge too route to the semifinal victory.

“They were great leaders and we really relied on them to play the key minutes, a lot more minutes than they were used to playing last year or even during the regular season,” Binkoski said.

Bren finished with 22 points on the season while Levasseur added 19. Junior Cam Eugster found the back of the net four times and is set to return next year. "He got better every day and he is going to step into the senior role next year," Binkoski said.

John DeFonzo and Paul Hardcastle also return after centering their lines this winter as sophomores. All of the returners come back with a high bar to meet after Grafton/BVT made it to the district semifinals or beyond in four straight seasons.

“No matter what the team can say that, but it’s a testament to the kids buying into the program,” Binkoski said. “Not just the games on the back, but the

Grafton/BVT logo on the front, they took that to heart.”

Beyond advancing in the tournament, Binkoski said he wants his team to be a tough one to play every night and put in maximum effort. This year’s group of seniors led a team that did just that, he said. "I thought we were meant to win it all just because of how good a group they are and how hard they work in practice," Binkoski said. "The seniors especially left the program better than they found it. They accomplished some great things."
SPORTS FLASH

By Chris Villani

Shea Finnegan suffered an elbow injury a season ago, limiting his minutes and points for the Blackstone Valley Tech basketball team. But the junior has made up for the shortened sophomore year this winter as one of the top scorers in Central Mass. “I had something to prove this season,” Finnegan said. “I knew what I was capable of, I just needed to prove it to everyone and to myself.”

A year ago, the 6’0” Douglas resident scored just 44 points. This year, he began the week with 436. He very nearly eclipsed his sophomore season total in a tournament game against Notre Dame of Fitchburg, connecting on seven three pointers and scoring 35 points in a Beavers’ win.

Finnegan has scored 20 points or more 10 times in a game this year, including a season ago, limiting his minutes and points for the season. “If I have an open shot, I am going to take it, but I am a drive-first kind of player,” he said.

As low as $15,577

Finnegan said he jotted down some goals in a notebook. “I’ve had some games where I have hit one or two beyond the arc. But one of his goals moving forward was to prove it to everyone and to myself.”

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Coming into the season, Finnegan said he jotted down some goals in a notebook. “I have loved my time at BVT, ” Finnegan said. “Basketball was part of the reason I came here and it’s been a great experience.”

As low as $24,877

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Victoria Russian

Victoria Russian Rebounds for Strong Senior Year

By Chris Villani

Victoria Russian was playing in a basketball game over the summer when another player slid into her leg, sending her to the floor with an injury. The Blackstone Valley Tech senior worried at first that it was a torn ligament, but was relieved to learn it was a broken bone instead. A couple of weeks ago, Russian scored 12 points in a road win for the Beavers over Tyngsboro. She said she walked off the court that day thinking “I’m back.” She said, “I thought I played one of my best games. The healing process took longer than expected, but it did heal.”

Getting over some of the mental hurdles of suffering an injury like that took some time. Russian was shooting a corner three pointer when she was injured, and did not take many corner threes while playing during the fall with her AAU team.

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