Spring Has Sprung

With the intent of protecting the well-being of townspeople due to the public health threat of COVID-19, the Mendon Select Board and Board of Health announced, “effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 all Town of Mendon buildings will be closed to the public until further notice.” These buildings include the Mendon Town Hall, Mendon Senior Center, Taft Public Library and town parks.

The decision was made, March 16, in consultation other town officials. The statement continues, “We highly encourage all residents to utilize the town’s website MendonMA.gov as well as email, and phones during this time. Appointments in person can be held only by necessity.” A complete listing of phone numbers and email addresses is available on the town’s website. A partial listing follows this article. Additionally, the statement said, “We encourage all Boards and Commission to meet virtually and to postpone non-urgent matters.” Remote participation was authorized by Governor Charlie Baker on March 12 with an Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. That authorization is found on page 5 of this issue. All programing at the Taft Public Library and statewide deliveries of library materials is suspended. The book drop has been closed, loan periods for borrowed materials is extended and no fines will be collected. Visit TaftPublicLibrary.org for electronic borrowing options.

Mendon's official statement ended, “We understand that this situation is evolving daily and we will make our best efforts to continue to provide service to the residents of Mendon while also keeping everyone safe.” Town officials encourage residents to practice recommended hygiene and practice social distancing. For more information, visit websites for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, mass.gov/orge/department-of-public-health, and the Centers for Disease Control, CDC.gov. Also visit MendonMA.gov for town updates regarding COVID-19.

Mendon contacts:
• Town Website, MendonMA.gov
• Town Administrator Office, 508-478-8863, KNesnew@mendonma.gov
• Board of Health, 508-634-2656, BOH@mendonma.gov
• Emergencies Police/Fire/EMS, 911
• Police, general business/non-emergency, 508-478-2737
• Fire, general business/non-emergency, 508-478-2007, 508-478-5330
• Highway Department, 508-473-0737, HwyDpt@mendonma.gov
• Building Department, 508-473-2679, Building@mendonma.gov
• Library, 508-473-3259, LibraryDirector@mendonma.gov and TaftKids@mendonma.gov
• Parks, 508-473-9600, ParkComm@mendonma.gov
• Senior Center, 508-478-6175, ASwaimKent@mendonma.gov
• Town Clerk Office, 508-473-1085, TownClerk@mendonma.gov
• Mendon/Upot Regional Schools, 508-634-1585, MURSD.org
• Blackstone Valley Tech, 508-529-7758, ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/Page/1472

COVID-19 State of Emergency in Upton

In response to national and state declarations of emergency to the public health threat of COVID-19, the Upton Board of Selectmen in consultation with the Board of Health on March 16 have declared a local state of emergency. The Board of Selectmen at an emergency meeting announced that Upton Town Hall, Upton Town Library and Upton Center, Farm St. will be closed to the public for the same amount of time that schools are closed, March 17 through April 6. With staff working, practicing social distancing and the like, all residents are requested to “call ahead” for any matter for which they need assistance as staff will be available during normal working hours.

This decision will allow Upton to maintain continuity of government and ensure that the Town can meet the needs of the public in the most protective manner for the Town employee and the public generally. Additionally, the Board of Selectmen have authorized the use of remote participation in accordance with the requirements of 940 CMR 29.10 for all boards and committees; and approved all boards and committees to utilize remote participation in the manner authorized by the Governor in the March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. As a reminder, to protect individuals and families from the spread of the virus, residents must practice caution: wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol; avoid shaking hands; cover your coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you think you might be symptomatic, call your doctor. Residents are also reminded to practice social distancing, keep your distance from others (six feet apart), do not take public transportation, taxis or ride shares during this period, avoid crowded places. Please visit UptonMA.gov for current and previous announcements regarding COVID-19.

Upton contacts:
• Town Website, UptonMA.gov
• Town Manager Office, 508-529-6891, dbrendt@uptonma.gov
• Board of Health Office, 508-529-6813, dmcewen@uptonma.gov
• Emergencies Police/Fire/EMS, 911
• Police, general business/non-emergency, 508-529-3200
• Fire, general business/non-emergency, 508-529-3421
• DPW, 508-529-5600, DPW@uptonma.gov
• Code Enforcement, 508-529-2633, code@uptonma.gov
• Library, 508-529-6272, mbatlh@uptonma.gov
• Recreation, 774-216-1438, atrio@uptonma.gov
• Senior Center, 508-529-4558, jngwicz@uptonma.gov
• Town Clerk Office, 508-529-3566, kmcelreath@uptonma.gov
• Mendon/Upot Regional Schools, 508-634-1585, MURSD.org
• Blackstone Valley Tech, 508-529-7758, ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/Page/1472

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• Police, general business/non-emergency, 508-529-3200
• Fire, general business/non-emergency, 508-529-3421
• DPW, 508-529-5600, DPW@uptonma.gov
• Code Enforcement, 508-529-2633, code@uptonma.gov
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• Senior Center, 508-529-4558, jngwicz@uptonma.gov
• Town Clerk Office, 508-529-3566, kmcelreath@uptonma.gov
• Mendon/Upot Regional Schools, 508-634-1585, MURSD.org
• Blackstone Valley Tech, 508-529-7758, ValleyTech.k12.ma.us/Page/1472
Women in the VFW 2020 and Beyond

The Upton VFW is reaching out to women veterans. Ingrid Centurion, LTC US Army Retired and VFW, MA Women’s Liaison, will be hosting monthly Zoom calls on the last Wednesday of the month. The calls will be held at 8 p.m. on March 25, April 29, May 27 and June 24. Details about the Zoom calls, which will have guest experts sharing information, will be available soon.

In the meantime, women veterans with questions or concerns may contact Centurion at Ingrid@vetrn.org or 901-289-8158. Information is also available at the Women’s Veterans Call Center, part of the US Department of Veteran Affairs, 1-855-829-6636.

The Upton VFW is pleased to welcome back to the stage international touring artist and Worcester-area native Mark Zaleski for a night of jazz. Zaleski will be accompanied by a cast of talented and prominent “young guns” from the Boston and New York City jazz scenes.

Put simply, the show is a “must see.”

Featuring a Special 100 Year Tribute to Dave Brubeck

Tickets: Just $25
Cash bar & buffet available.

Venue: Upstairs at the Caffé Sorrento
143 Central Street, Milford, MA 01757

Thank you to Claflin Hill’s Jazz Series Lead Sponsor:

Additional support from:

SIRANATURALS

The Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra presents Homefield Credit Union's Jazz at the Sorrento Series Saturday, March 21st at 7:30 p.m.

Thanks To Yanks Supplies a Taste of Home

Michael Shain, the founder and president of Thanks To Yanks, is happy to report that the care packages recently shipped to deployed U.S. service men and women have been joyfully received. Frank Licursi is one of those soldiers who was happy to receive a taste of home. Thanks To yanks is a local 501c3 Charity that is dedicated to serve those who serve and the families who love and support them. For more information, visit ThanksToYanks.org or like them on Facebook. Contributed photo

Hospital Patient Advisory Council Needs New Members

Milford Regional Medical Center is seeking community members from their 19 town service area to serve on the hospital’s Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Now in its 10th year of operation, the PFAC is dedicated to promoting a partnership between the patients, families, and working professionals affiliated with the Medical Center to promote and foster patient-centered care.

The PFAC at Milford Regional, which meets monthly, includes staff from the Medical Center's administration and departments, and former patients or those who have had family members receive care at the hospital. Community members must reside within Milford Regional’s service area which includes Milford, Hopedale, Mendon and Upton. Members commit to a two-year term and have the opportunity to participate on various committees, task forces and advisory boards.

Those interested in becoming a member of Milford Regional’s Patient Family Advisory Council must complete and submit an application form by Friday, March 27. For more information on the PFAC at Milford Regional and/or to obtain an application, MilfordRegional.org and click on “About MRMC” (in the upper right corner), then click on the Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Or contact Michelle Barry 508-422-2648 or michbarry@milreg.org

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Upton, Mendon Town Crier

MARCH 20, 2020

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MARCH 20, 2020

Upton, Mendon Town Crier
Life is Changing in Massachusetts Due to COVID-19

According to a press release of the state, on Sunday, March 15, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a wide range of actions that will affect every facet of life in the Commonwealth in response to COVID-19, the coronavirus outbreak. More information and the latest update about each action is available at MASS.gov/COVID-19. The actions are:

**Education**
Every elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth, public and private, was ordered to suspend educational operations from March 17 until April 6. The earlier closing of locals schools in the Mendon Upton Regional School District was ordered to suspend educational services beginning on March 17 and effective until April 6. Drive up and take out services can continue or be established at these businesses.

**Health Care**
The Department of Public Health issued various new guidance.
All commercial insurers and the Group Insurance Commission are required to cover medically necessary telehealth services in the same manner they cover in-person services. Insurers must cover COVID-19 related treatment and testing without requiring cost-sharing of any kind — such as copays and coinsurance — for testing and treatment. No prior authorization is required for these services. All assisted living residences are to ban visitors to protect the health of residents and staff. This is in addition to the federal guidance issued on March 13 that bans visitors to nursing homes and rest homes. All hospitals operated or licensed by the Department of Public Health or the Department of Mental Health are to screen all visitors and restrict visitation if individuals show any indication of illness. Hospitals must cancel non-essential elective procedures effective Wednesday, March 18.
Licensed pharmacies are authorized to create and sell hand sanitizer over the counter.

**RMV**
The Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) will extend the renewal timeline of certain credentials to reduce the need for customers to physically visit an RMV service center for in-person transactions.

**Unemployment**
For current unemployment claims, all requirements regarding attending seminars at the MassHire career centers have been suspended, missing deadlines due to effects of COVID-19 will be excused under the good cause provision, and all appeal hearings will be held by telephone only. The Department of Labor (DOL) issued guidance to the states instructing state agencies to apply existing law flexibly. Specifics of new unemployment regulations are being worked on and will be available at the state website.

**Municipalities**
Governor Baker announced a package of legislation to help address challenges to municipal governance resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The legislation would authorize Moderators to postpone Town Meetings by 30 days, permit Select Boards to postpone Town Meetings beyond the statutory June 30 deadline and allow local Select Boards to temporarily adopt lower quorum rules. A variety of measures also allow towns to keep running as FY21 starts and until new budgets are adopted by continuing use their approved FY20 budget to determine spending on a month to month basis, allow towns to access their free cash balance spending with approval of the Division of Local Services and to spend from revolving funds. The legislation would also authorize a three-year amortization period for deficit spending incurred as a result of COVID-19 crisis. The default rule would require an FY21 tax rate to provide for one-year amortization and this change would follow the 2015 precedent for snow removal costs.

**COVID-19 Information Resources**
Keep yourself informed using reputable sources. Don’t just troll the internet and believe everything you read. Reputable sources include:

- World Health Organization (WHO) – WHO.int
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – CDC.gov/coronavirus
- State of Massachusetts – MASS.gov/Covid19
- Massachusetts Department of Health (DPH) – Mass.gov/orgs/Department-of-Public-Health
- DPH COVID19, real-time COVID19 information, resources and referrals hotline – 211
- Town websites – Mendon, MendonMA.gov; Upton, UptonMA.gov
- John Hopkins University, latest outbreak statistics on an interactive map – Coronavirus.jhu.edu
- New York Times – NYtimes.com, free access during the epidemic

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Milford Regional Takes Steps to Protect Patients From COVID-19 Exposure

In order to protect patients and staff from the risk of potential exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19), Milford Regional Medical Center has instituted precautions to limit traffic and the possible spread of the virus within the hospital. Until further notice, the following restrictions are now in effect:

**VISITOR RESTRICTIONS**
Visitors Not Allowed:
- Those who are ill or show signs of respiratory symptoms
- Those who have had close contact with someone who has tested POSITIVE for COVID-19, those who traveled within the past 14 days to China, Macau, Hong Kong, South Korea, Italy, Iran or Japan; or those who work with or have had contact with employees of Biogen within the past 14 days.

Visitors Allowed:
- One visitor per patient is allowed in all areas, including the emergency department and maternity.
- No maternity, only the birthing partner is allowed.

**COMMUNITY AND CHILDBIRTH PROGRAMS**
- All community education programs including wellness programs, lectures, classes and support groups are canceled.
- All childbirth education programs are canceled.

“We at Milford Regional recognize how disruptive these restrictions will be and it is our hope that they will be short lived,” says Edward J. Kelly, president and CEO of Milford Regional Medical Center. “However, any precautions we take to evade the spread of COVID-19 is our responsibility as both healthcare providers and good stewards to the communities we serve. I ask for everyone’s support and patience as we do everything in our power to protect our patients, their families and our staff.”

Milford Regional is monitoring the progression of COVID-19 and will reassess these restrictions as new information and circumstances present themselves.
COVID-19 Coronavirus Temporarily Closes Senior Centers; Some Essential Services Continue

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

As Coronavirus updates continue to be extremely fluid with information changing daily, town officials are doing their due diligence to provide residents with the latest information. And because residents over age 60 are deemed one of the more vulnerable populations, senior center directors and their staff continue to utilize best practices to keep residents as safe as possible.

With the Coronavirus continuing to spread in the United States, legislators and local officials are recommending many senior centers close indefinitely but also try to provide certain essential services that seniors rely on.

On March 16, the Boards of Selectmen in both Mendon and Upton formally announced the closures of senior centers in each town. Upton's Center will be closed to the public the same amount of time the schools are closed. As a result, the Center's group programs, such as exercise classes, bingo, and other group activities have been canceled, as have all AARP tax appointments. However, the Center will continue to provide transportation to medical appointments and shopping trips. The Center's Food Pantry is available by appointment only and Meals on Wheels are still being delivered. "If anyone knows of a neighbor who might need a meal delivered, please call us," said Upton Center Director James Nowicki.

Staff is still available by phone and residents in need of services or who have concerns are encouraged to call the Upton Center at 508-529-4586. During an interview on March 13, Town Manager Derek Brindsi explained town officials were preparing for the Coronavirus. "We have what is called a Continuity of Operations Plan, or COOP," he explained. "We identify each department in town, such as police, fire, the senior center, and identify their essential services and essential staff."

Nowicki added, "We want folks to know we're still here. We want to encourage those with concerns that we're still here to provide emotional support too."

Residents are encouraged to check the town's web site or email for other openings, as well as the latest information on the virus. At Mendon's Senior Center, Director Amy Wilson Kent stated she continues to heed the advice of the town's Board of Health and Emergency Management. The Mendon Senior Center is closed to the public until further notice.

As of March 16, Wilson Kent stated all of Mendon's Senior Center programs and activities have been canceled or postponed. However, as of that date, the Senior Center's Meals on Wheels services were still being offered. All van transportation services have been cancelled.

Mendon's Food Pantry, at the Senior Center, continues to be available. "We will be changing procedures by filling boxes for our clients rather than having them come fill their own," explained Wilson Kent.

The Mendon Senior Center continues to be staffed. Staff has been checking in by phone on those seniors who are deemed frail. Residents are asked to call the Senior Center at 508-478-6175 with questions on services or concerns. In addition, visit Mendon.gov for the latest information on closings, postponements and the coronavirus.

Antique Appraisal Night
UPTON: Due to concerns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Upton Historical Society Antique Appraisal Night, Friday, March 27 has been canceled. The organizers do not plan to reschedule the event at this time.

History of the Blackstone Postponed
UPTON: The Friends of Upton State Forest are cancelling the program scheduled for Friday, March 20. The Historic Blackstone River: The Friends plan on rescheduling it for another time and will provide those details when they are available.

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild Show and Raffle to be Rescheduled
MARLBOROUGH: Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild will reschedule their 2020 Quilt Show, originally dated for the weekend of March 14 and 15. Anyone who purchased tickets for the Raffle Quilt, should hold onto them. The drawing will be held on the new date. Announcements of when the drawing will be held and other information from the guild will be published in future issues of the Town Crier and on their blog, https://thimblepleasuresquiltguild.blogspot.com/p/quilt-show-2020.html.

Blackstone River Valley Heritage Facilities Closed
Administrators of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor have written the following statement for the public.

"The Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor is actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation. The safety and well-being of our visitors, staff, and volunteers is our top priority. Acting with an abundance of caution, the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester, and our administrative office in Whitinsville will be closed to the public until April 1. We are doing this as a proactive effort to help slow the spread of COVID-19 for the health of our community. We will continue to assess the situation.

We thank you for your support during this unprecedented time. Continue to follow us on social media or visit BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org for further details and the most up-to-date information. You can also contact us at mail@blackstoneheritagecorridor.org."

COVID-19 Open Meeting Law Update
On March 11, the Baker-Polito Administration announced an emergency order temporarily modifying the state's open meeting law in order to allow state, quasi and local governments to continue to carry out essential functions and operations during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

This emergency order suspends the requirement for public access to the physical location where a public meeting is taking place, provided there are other means of access available. This includes the use of a phone conference line for members of the public, social media or other internet streaming services, on-line meeting services, or methods of access.

Both the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) have advised residents to take extra measures to put distance between themselves and other people to further reduce the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, the CDC and DPH have advised high-risk individuals, including people over the age of 60, anyone with underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system, and pregnant women, to avoid large gatherings.

Additionally, the order relieves the requirement that a quorum of members be physically present at a public meeting. During this period, members may all participate by remote or virtual means. This order is applicable to meetings of public bodies including commissions, boards, and committees that engage in policy making at the state, quasi and local level, and it does not apply to Town Meetings or judicial and quasi-judicial hearings.

It follows Governor Baker's declaration of a State of Emergency on Wednesday, March 11, and it will remain in place until rescinded or the State of Emergency is terminated.

Coronavirus Changes at Charles River Bank

• Bellingham: 508-966-2857
• Mendon: 508-422-9792

A complete Coronavirus Statement that outlines Charles River Bank's strategies related to this outbreak is available online at CharlesRiverBank.com/COVID-19. The page will be updated as warranted.

The Advertiser's Club Directory

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

Business Name Ad on Page

Amazing Cleaners .............................................next
American Climbers ............................................next
Bright Insurance Agency ..................................7
Boston Bay & Law .............................................next
C.I. Cilley Construction ....................................next
Cancero Mexican Restaurant ................................15
Center for Orthopedics & Wellness ..................next
Centerpoint Driving Academy ..........................next
Cork Company ..................................................10
CPK Etc. .............................................................next
Frank's Appliance ..............................................next
Galloola Restaurant ..........................................15
Gibson Natural Pet Resort ..............................next
Ikeahl's Plumbing & Heating ..........................next
Imperial Care ...................................................next
J.C. Parmentier ................................................next
Joclerose Overhead Door .....................................next
Joy's thai .............................................................next
Koopman Paint & Lumber ...............................next
Liquor Hus .......................................................next
Little Coffee Bean ...........................................next
Meadowbrook ...............................................next
Marlborough Electric .....................................next
Medway Oil & Propane Company ....................next
McComb Properties .........................................next
Mendon Motors ...............................................next
MetroWest Oral Surgical Associates .................next
Milford Federal ..................................................next
Muffin House Call .............................................next
Nathan's Jewelers ..........................................next
New England Steak & Seafood .........................next
P.A. W. Bud & Research ....................................next
Phipps Insurance Agency .................................next
Reliable Pet Sitting ..........................................next
Ritterwe Power Equipment Company ..............next
Rob's Aussiedale, RealRail Group .................next
Ross Garden Restaurant & Lounge .................next
Rutland Insurance ............................................next
Sabin's Electric ...............................................next
Templeman Tree Service ................................next
UPS Store Milford & Franklin .........................next
Upton Foreign Motters ....................................next
Worcester Japanese Restaurant .........................next
Wayne Center Electric ......................................next
Williams-Podrinal Funeral Home .................next
Wolf, DDS .........................................................next
Women's Aid Body Wellness / Snap Up .........next
Wright's Dairy Farm .........................................next

The Advertiser's Club Introduces

A special feature offered to those businesses that contract to advertise at least 12 times in a year (1/16 page and larger) in the Upton & Mendon Town Crier. For more information contact:

Lori Tate: 508-529-0301 loritatetowncrier@gmail.com

Collette Rooney: 508-922-9674 cerooney@charter.net

Susanne Odell Farber: 508-954-8148 sue@soddellcounsel.com

MARCH 20, 2020
Upton, Mendon Town Crier 5
Opinion

Encounters of a legal alien

By Chritstine Barnett

Calm in the Chaos

The world lost its marbles a long time ago. I generally refuse to listen to society, the news, or follow any trend or panic.

Last Friday I went out to do my normal weekly shopping trip to get our supplies for the week. What an adventure that was.

I went to eight stores only to find empty shelves in each one. Panicked people ran down the aisles with a look of deadly determination in their eyes, ready to push anything in their way of the out and threw random bits of canned goods in their carts to merely buy what was left over. Grammas shuffled past in horror, muttering “I haven’t even seen this in the war”.

I just thought to myself “Well, I have”. As a hybrid child with Eastern and Western Germany those scenes were feeling of nostalgia, not fear. I had seen this last in the mid-1980s, the glorious time of my childhood adventures. The difference is that there was no fear in anyone’s eyes. Instead people laughed, said hello with a look of deadpan and made jokes while they queued to get in and out stores, and exchanged ideas as to what to do with this odd canned good they had scored.

So I walked through the stores last week smiling broadly, engulled in a feeling of calm, remembering dishes like Soljanka (a spicy soup), Zitterpudding (something like Jell-O), and Malzkaffee (a replacement for coffee made from malt). Those weren’t bad, they were glorious. Yes, the newspaper squad did hurt when used as toilet paper, but it wasn’t the end of the world.

The queues at the checkout were so long on Friday that it took roughly one hour to get out of the store. People were looking gloomy to the floor.

So I decided to do shopping Eastern German style. I turned around to the granny next to me, smiled, and said “Look what I scored! I have some black eyed peas. And a liquid hand soap!” She laughed and said she had a tin of pineapple she was rather happy with, sharing that she’d make “Look what I scored! I have some black eyed peas. And a liquid hand soap!” She laughed and said she had a tin of pineapple she was rather happy with, sharing that she’d make a pineapple upside down cake with it. The gloom on her face disappeared. I said I’d spend this lockdown at her house then and bring the coffee. The people around us joined into the conversation and the hour of waiting in line went way too fast.

Attitude is a choice. Choose to have a positive one. Life is so much more fun.

Still, no one likes wholewheat pasta. Photo Christine Barnett

This Too, Shall Pass

“These too, shall pass.” These are the words that my mother has said to me in my life when things seemed bleak. When I was a little heartbroken or anxious, this was the phrase that she used to comfort. Words that I have always clung to like a life raft.

These words have been my mantra these past few days. I heard a new email come cancelling an event, every time I quickly peek at the stock market (I advise against that!) or every time a new case of confirmed Coronavirus is announced in Massachusetts. When the fear starts creeping in after watching the news about Italy’s total lockdown and the US is looking at a declaration of national emergency.

These are the words that I have used to calm my worried children. To remind them that the world has faced crises before, and that this too, shall pass. That a little boredom from staying inside and not seeing their friends for a few weeks is the LEAST we could do to help the fight against spreading this virus.

We are a strong and resilient society. Together, we have gotten through 9/11, the Boston Marathon Bombing, the Ebola scare, and not one, but most likely two, Mendon Upton school overides!

We have even seen the stock market crash before, and although everyone is careful with their money for a little while, eventually – like the pain of childbirth – we forget and are back out spending our money on luxuries because, hey, we deserve it, right?

We have rebuilt, reformulated, invented and persevered through dark times, only to come out stronger on the other side when the sun comes out again.

So Town Crier readers, as you go to bed at night and lie awake with your mind spinning from all that is going on in the world right now (as I have these past few weeks), I ask you to consider the words my wise mother still says to me to this day: ‘This too, shall pass’. Because it always does.

Calm in the Chaos

The world lost its marbles a long time ago. I generally refuse to listen to society, the news, or follow any trend or panic.

Last Friday I went out to do my normal weekly shopping trip to get our supplies for the week. What an adventure that was.

I went to eight stores only to find empty shelves in each one. Panicked people ran down the aisles with a look of deadly determination in their eyes, ready to push anything in their way of the out and threw random bits of canned goods in their carts to merely buy what was left over. Grammas shuffled past in horror, muttering “I haven’t even seen this in the war”.

I just thought to myself “Well, I have”. As a hybrid child with Eastern and Western Germany those scenes were feeling of nostalgia, not fear. I had seen this last in the mid-1980s, the glorious time of my childhood adventures. The difference is that there was no fear in anyone’s eyes. Instead people laughed, said hello with a look of deadpan and made jokes while they queued to get in and out stores, and exchanged ideas as to what to do with this odd canned good they had scored.

So I walked through the stores last week smiling broadly, engulled in a feeling of calm, remembering dishes like Soljanka (a spicy soup), Zitterpudding (something like Jell-O), and Malzkaffee (a replacement for coffee made from malt). Those weren’t bad, they were glorious. Yes, the newspaper squad did hurt when used as toilet paper, but it wasn’t the end of the world.

The queues at the checkout were so long on Friday that it took roughly one hour to get out of the store. People were looking gloomy to the floor.

So I decided to do shopping Eastern German style. I turned around to the granny next to me, smiled, and said “Look what I scored! I have some black eyed peas. And a liquid hand soap!” She laughed and said she had a tin of pineapple she was rather happy with, sharing that she’d make a pineapple upside down cake with it. The gloom on her face disappeared. I said I’d spend this lockdown at her house then and bring the coffee. The people around us joined into the conversation and the hour of waiting in line went way too fast.

Attitude is a choice. Choose to have a positive one. Life is so much more fun.

Still, no one likes wholewheat pasta. Photo Christine Barnett

This Too, Shall Pass

“These too, shall pass.” These are the words that my mother has said to me in my life when things seemed bleak. When I was a little heartbroken or anxious, this was the phrase that she used to comfort. Words that I have always clung to like a life raft.

These words have been my mantra these past few days. I heard a new email come cancelling an event, every time I quickly peek at the stock market (I advise against that!) or every time a new case of confirmed Coronavirus is announced in Massachusetts. When the fear starts creeping in after watching the news about Italy’s total lockdown and the US is looking at a declaration of national emergency.

These are the words that I have used to calm my worried children. To remind them that the world has faced crises before, and that this too, shall pass. That a little boredom from staying inside and not seeing their friends for a few weeks is the LEAST we could do to help the fight against spreading this virus.

We are a strong and resilient society. Together, we have gotten through 9/11, the Boston Marathon Bombing, the Ebola scare, and not one, but most likely two, Mendon Upton school overides!

We have even seen the stock market crash before, and although everyone is careful with their money for a little while, eventually – like the pain of childbirth – we forget and are back out spending our money on luxuries because, hey, we deserve it, right?

We have rebuilt, reformulated, invented and persevered through dark times, only to come out stronger on the other side when the sun comes out again.

So Town Crier readers, as you go to bed at night and lie awake with your mind spinning from all that is going on in the world right now (as I have these past few weeks), I ask you to consider the words my wise mother still says to me to this day: ‘This too, shall pass’. Because it always does.

Read the Town Crier Online

To read the March 20, 2020 Upton Mendon Town Crier online visit, TownCrier.us. Click Online Newspapers in the left-hand column, scroll down to Mendon/Upton Town Crier PDF Archive, and click on UTC 20.03.20.pdf

The Mendon Upton Town Crier was established over 25 years ago. We are the good news newspaper. We know our readers and advertisers. Advertising with us means supporting the community and recognizing the strength of a smalltown USA.

Town Crier Reporter Needed

The Town Crier is looking for a part-time, freelance reporter to cover education in Mendon, Milford and Upton, Massachusetts. A typical assignment might include covering a school committee meeting or event in the evening or afternoon, following up on a news tip, or interviewing and writing a profile of a local resident. Strong writing and research skills, computer access (including Internet) and ability to file stories by weekly deadline required. The ability to take and send photos from an event is also needed. Familiarity with the communities of Mendon, Milford and Upton preferred. Submit writing samples and resumes to Jane Bigla, TownCrier Editor, via email: TownCrierEditor@gmail.com.

Town Crier

Upton, Mendon Town Crier

MARCH 20, 2020
Looks Like Upton’s Ballot Will Have One Race

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

On March 18, Upton will be holding its Annual Town Election during which voters will determine who will sit on the Board of Selectmen for the next three years. Incumbent Selectmen Stephen Matellian, who is finishing up his first term on the Board and previously served on the Finance Committee, is being challenged by David Ross. Ross currently sits on Upton’s Economic Development Committee and previously served as a Selectmen and on the Finance Committee in Grafton. Both candidates turned in their completed nomination papers.

Other incumbents have also turned in their nomination papers and remain unchallenged as of March 12. They include David Loepfer for the one-year Moderator’s position, and Richard Desjardins for the three-year Board of Health seat, Thomas Davidson for the five year Planning Board seat, Robert Fleming for two years for the Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds, Rena Richard for Housing Authority for five years, Richard Kennedy for Housing Authority for four years and newcomer Edward Philips for Cemetery Commission for one year.

Other incumbents who have taken out their nomination papers but have not yet returned them as of March 12 include James Earle for Assessor of Taxes for three years, Philip DeZutter for School Committee for three years, Robert Pray for Cemetery Commission for three years, Richard Gannon for Recreation Commission for three years, Charlotte Carr and Debra Amorelli for two Library Trustees for three years, James Brochu for the Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds for three years, and Linda Jones for Housing Authority for three years. Newcomer Saddalit Van Buren has also taken out but not returned papers for the other three-year Library Trustee seat.

As of the March 12, no papers have been taken out for the Finance Committee’s three-year seat, Richard McGuire 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 508-529-3565 or info@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.

Upton Selectmen Review Draft Warrant With Possible School Override in Mind

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

With an impending school override of approximately $2.5 million becoming more of a reality, the Upton Board of Selectmen continue to be economically prudent as the Annual Town Meeting warrant begins to take shape.

During a March 10 meeting, the Selectmen reviewed and debated articles on the latest draft warrant and voted to delete several articles as the override hangs over both Upton and Mendon. Upton’s share of the override could be nearly $1.5 million it should move forward.

One of the articles included a provision placing $280,000 into the town’s stabilization account. Selectman Maureen O’sullivan wanted to keep the article on the warrant feeling it could be passed over at the Town Meeting if need be. However, Selectmen Stephen Matellian and Brett Simas voted to remove it due to concerns with the override.

“I’ve supported it when I thought that it made sense,” said Simas. “I’m very much in favor of saving money; I’m not sure this is the year we’re going to be able to do it.”

Matellian agreed. “We’re going to have an override question. And another article will change the bylaws regarding how the warrant is posted and if passed, is meant to modernize posting requirements and provide easier public access and transparency.

Upton’s Annual Town Meeting is scheduled to take place May 7 at Nipmuc Regional High School and begin at 7 p.m.

Upton’s share of the override could be nearly $1.5 million should it move forward.

Collector’s position from elected to appointed. In 2014, the Board of Selectmen brought the change to voters at the Annual Town Meeting but it was defeated.

And another article will change the bylaws regarding how the warrant is posted and if passed, is meant to modernize posting requirements and provide easier public access and transparency.

Upton’s Annual Town Meeting is scheduled to take place May 7 at Nipmuc Regional High School and begin at 7 p.m.

Upton Center Helps Animals

The Upton Center is collecting items for the Central Massachusetts Disaster Animal Response Team (CMDART) through April 23. CMDART is a non-profit organization that provides training, support, supplies and personnel to help plan, prepare and respond to aid animals affected by disasters such as fires, ice storms and hurricanes. They are in need of gift cards to Ocean State Job Lot, Big Lots or Amazon to help purchase pet supplies when and where they are needed along with gas cards for their travel. They are also seeking volunteers to help at their public education events.

Please contact the Center, 508-529-4558, for a list of additional items which can be donated for use in their emergency “Pet Go Kit”. A CMDART presentation is scheduled for late April at the Upton Center.

The Dentist at Hopkinton is a full service dental office serving both adults and children in an elegant, comfortable and relaxed setting.

Jill A. Tanz, DDS Gina M. Belviso, DMD Maria C. Mesquita, DMD

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Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area Forest Harvest

Submitted by the Upton Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is proposing to conduct a forest harvest on the town-owned Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area off Grafton Rd. This would be the first harvest on any Town of Upton conservation land in about 40 years. The cutting plan is consistent with a Land Stewardship Plan prepared for the area in 2018. The Commission has hired a licensed forester to prepare the cutting plan, which also must be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Forest cutting would occur on approximately 91 acres of the 203-acre Conservation Area. The cutting plan is designed to create a more resilient forest as well as improve growing conditions for retained trees and for young hardwood and white pine saplings. The plan includes creation of two, five-acre patches of early successional habitat where all trees greater than four inches in diameter would be cut. These patches of young forest and shrubland will benefit a variety of browsing birds and other wildlife, many of which are experiencing significant declining populations within Massachusetts.

The harvest is expected to net about 166 thousand board feet of lumber and 750 cords of firewood. If approved, the harvest will likely occur in the fall or winter of 2020. Proceeds from the harvest will go into the town’s Land Stewardship Revolving Fund. Preserving and properly managing forests is important to mitigate climate change. Although, harvesting trees at Warren Brook will likely reduce the amount of carbon stored by the forest (e.g. tons carbon/acre) for several decades, the rate the forest absorbs carbon from the atmosphere (e.g. tons carbon/acre/year) will increase. Healthy forests are also more likely to be resilient in a warming world. The Warren Brook harvest will also support the local economy and provide a source of sustainable, locally produced firewood and building materials. Approximately 30 percent of wood used in the United States is imported from Canada. This demand for forest products places Canada’s valuable boreal forests at risk.

The Commission’s 2013 Forest Management Policy requires a public hearing prior to approval of all cutting plans for town conservation land. The public hearing will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, at Upton Town Hall, 1 Main St - Room 203. All interested parties are invited to attend. The 2018 Stewardship Plan and the proposed cutting plan are available to view or download on the town website, UptonMA.gov/conservation-commission/pages/forest-management. Copies are also available at the Commission’s office in town hall.

Christine Scott
Chair, Conservation Commission

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the Upton Forest Management Policy that the Upton Conservation Commission will hold the following public hearing on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, Upton Town Hall, 1 Main St - Room 203:

8:00 pm – Forest Cutting Plan filed by the Upton Conservation Commission for the Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area located at 0 Grafton Rd. All interested parties are invited to attend. A complete copy of the filing may be inspected at the office of the Conservation Commission, Town Hall – Room 202.

Biden and Trump Win in Upton

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Former Vice President Joe Biden and President Donald Trump were the big winners in Upton’s presidential primary, which took place on March 3. A total of 2,250 registered voters in town cast their vote, or 38 percent.

A number of Democratic candidates had dropped out of the race prior to the primary but still received votes. Results of the Democratic Presidential Preference in Upton are as follows: Biden won receiving 648 votes with Bernie Sanders following with a total of 473 votes. Elizabeth Warren received 310 votes, Michael Bloomberg received 212 votes, and Pete Buttigieg had 67 votes. Amy Klobuchar received 21 votes, Tulsi Gabbard 17 votes, Tom Steyer eight votes, Deval Patrick four, Cory Booker had one as did Andrew Yang, Michael Bennet, Julian Castro, John Delaney, and Marianne Williamson received no votes. As of March 10, Biden, Sanders, and Gabbard remain in the Democratic race.

For the Republican Presidential Preference, Trump was by large the favored candidate receiving 362 votes followed by William Weld who received 67 votes. Others on the Republican primary ballot included Joe Walsh, who received nine votes, and Roque De La Fuente who received three votes.

On the Green Party Primary ballot, Sedimam Kinamo Christin Moyowaisa-Currie received one vote, with the remaining candidates, Dario Hunter, Kent Mesplay, and Howard Hawkins receiving zero votes. On the Libertarian ballot, Kimberly Ruff received three votes, while Dan Behmam received two votes, and Kenneth Armstrong, Adam Kokesh, Arvin Vohra, Vermin Love Supreme, Jacob George Hornberger each received one vote. Samuel Robb, Jo Jorgensen, and Max Abramson received zero votes.

On the Democratic ballot for State Committee Man and Town Committee there were no candidates. For Democratic State Committee Woman, Mary Anne Dubre received 1,110 votes.

On the Republican ballot, Paul Frost received 244 votes for State Committee Man and James Knowlton received 53 votes. Candidate Wendy McKenzie received 234 votes for State Committee Woman and Brenda Brown received 154 votes. There were no candidates for Town Committee on the Republican ballot in Upton.

On the Green Party and Libertarian Party ballots, there were no candidates for State Committee Man, State Committee Woman or Town Committee.

Town Election

Also concerning voting, 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 508-529-3565 or KMcElreath@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 Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton Scholarship

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton 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 members. 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.

Upton Community Garden Plots

The Upton Community Garden has plots available for the 2020 growing season, which are open to all Upton residents. Participation plots which are available for Upton residents and Upton-based community groups are usually 4 by 16 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 Uptoncommunitygarden@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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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Greenleaf Garden Club Presents Raised Bed Gardening

The Greenleaf Garden Club of Mendon will host Kate Donovan, a garden coach, at their Monday, April 13 meeting, at the Ruth Anne Bleakney Senior Center, 60 North Row St., Milford, which starts refreshments at 6:30 p.m. Donovan of Blackstone Valley Vegetable Gardening will teach techniques to make gardening easier. Her presentation on raised bed gardening encourage everyone to grow their own and the media event will teach everyonewho wanted to know about raised bed gardening. This event will start the Greenleaf Garden Club spring season. The Garden Club will soon be planting the new middle garden at the Library and setting up new plants throughout the downtown. The Annual Plant Sale will be held at Louisa Lake on Saturday, May 16.

The Greenleaf Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Garden Club Federation of MA, Inc. For information, email greenleafgardenclub@gmail.com.

Electronics Recycling Day

The First Congregational Church of Milford Electronics Recycling Day on Saturday, May 2, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon in the church parking lot, 4 Congress St. Milford. All computer monitors, computers, parts and accessories, faxes, copiers, printers, scanners and TV’s can be recycled. Recycling fees range from $5 to $35 per item, cash payments only. Cell phones can be recycled at no charge and will be donated to charities that recycle and reuse them. The recycling vendor will erase and shred all hard drives at no additional cost. A drive through process will allow those donating to quickly drop off their items where help will be available.

For more information, contact Martha at 508-904-4471.

Greenleaf Garden Club Presents Raised Bed Gardening

The Greenleaf Garden Club of Mendon will host Kate Donovan, a garden coach, at their Monday, April 13 meeting, at the Ruth Anne Bleakney Senior Center, 60 North Row St., Milford, which starts refreshments at 6:30 p.m. Donovan of Blackstone Valley Vegetable Gardening will teach techniques to make gardening easier. Her presentation on raised bed gardening encourage everyone to grow their own and the multi-media event will teach “everything you ever wanted to know about raised bed gardening.” This event will start the Greenleaf Garden Club spring season. The Garden Club will soon be planting the new middle garden at the Library and setting up new plants throughout the downtown. The Annual Plant Sale will be held at Louisa Lake on Saturday, May 16.

The Greenleaf Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Garden Club Federation of MA, Inc. For information, email greenleafgardenclub@gmail.com.

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For more information, contact Martha at 508-904-4471.
**ATHA Quiet Corner Hook-In**

WOODSTOCK- ATHA Quiet Corner will hold a Hook-In on Saturday, June 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Woodstock Fairgound, Rt 169 and 171, Woodstock, Conn. Traditional hooked rugs will be on display along with good times. Admission is $15 for the entire day at the Hook-In and $5 for vendor shopping only. Pre-registration by Saturday, May 30 by contacting gretchb@verizon.net

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**Red Cross Blood Donations Needed**

MILFORD- The American Red Cross strongly urges healthy, eligible individuals who are feeling well to give blood or platelets to help maintain a sufficient blood supply and prevent shortages as the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19, rise in the U.S.

Please make an appointment to donate blood now by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-BEC-RIBBON, 1-800-733-2767 or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Blood donors with type O blood and all platelet donors are especially needed right now.

Donating blood is a safe process and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood. There are no data or evidence that this coronavirus can be transmitted by blood transfusion, and there have been no reported cases worldwide of transmissions for any respiratory virus, including this coronavirus, from a transfusion.

Blood may be donated at Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford, Connecticut. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge.

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**Calendrier**

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**Country & Western Dance**

UXBRIDGE-New England Country Music Club will hold a dances on Wednesday, May 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Live music will be provided by Mountaineer Family & Friends on April 5 and 19 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge.

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**Knights of Columbus Foxwoods Trip**

MILFORD- The Knights of Columbus Valencia 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 Corapi Family to support their 10-year-old son Nicholas who is undergoing kidney dialysis.
Nomination Papers Due March 24 for Mendon Seats

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

The clock is ticking for Mendon residents to take out and return their nomination papers for various town offices up for re-election. The deadline to return papers to the Town Clerk’s office is Tuesday, March 24. Mendon’s Annual Town Election is scheduled to take place on May 12 at Miscoe Hill School. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

As of March 12, the majority of candidates running have returned their papers. As a result, there will be a race for the three year Select Board seat between incumbent Lawney Tinio and David Atkinson. Tinio was elected to the Select Board last year. Prior to that, Tinio served as a Selectmen for three terms. He will be running against long time Mendon resident David Atkinson, who previously served on Mendon’s Board of Health and was also a Selectmen in other New England communities.

In addition, a race for Moderator will take place between incumbent Jay Byer and Matthew O’Brien. Byer has been the Town Moderator since 2012 and sits on the Capital Planning Committee. O’Brien currently sits on the Water Commission and the Capital Planning Committee too.

A number of other incumbents have returned their nomination papers and as of March 12 remain unchallenged. They include Alan Tetreault for Highway Surveyor for three years, Alan Greenberg for Board of Health for three years, Daniel Byer for Parks Commission for three years, Allan Kent for Water Commission for three years, and Barry Iadarola for Planning Board for five years.

Candidates who have not returned their papers as of March 12 include Susan Edmonds for Assessor for three years, Ellen Agro and Wayne Phipps for two Library Trustees for three years, and Sean Nicholson for the Regional School Committee for three years. No papers have been pulled for the Housing Authority’s five-year seat. R. John Palumbo is the incumbent and is not seeking re-election.

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. 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.

Mendon Select Board Takes First Pass at May Warrant

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

During a March 10 meeting, the Mendon Select Board took a first pass at the May Annual Town Meeting warrant. The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 1 at Miscoe Hill School and begin at 7 p.m.

With the exception of the new budget, many of the initial articles on the draft document include those that are voted on annually through the consent calendar. As a result, the Board began their review with articles pertaining to the Land Use Committee and Community Preservation Act funds.

One article discussed a request to add another member to the Land Use Committee, making it six members versus the current five. Committee Chair Anne Mazar explained the sixth member would be an alternate who could fill in should a member be unable to attend a meeting.

A Community Preservation Act funding request concerned repairing a drainage issue at the High School as well as another CPA request for funding concerning the historic records rooms and water problems in the basement. “It’s in dire straits,” said Historic Commission member Kathy Schofield. Other CPA funding requests include paying off the annual Fino property debt and the new police station.

Select Board member Mark Reil inquired if there was a CPA article on the warrant to paint the Town Hall. Town Administrator Kim Newman stated it will likely be requested next year and the town will also apply for grants next fall for the project.

Another placeholder article could amend language in the Demo Delay Bylaw by extending hold on the demo process from six months to 12 months.

“You want to extend it six months? You want to hold somebody up a year?” questioned Select Board member Lawney Tinio concerning the possible 12 month wait period before a demo can occur.

According to Kathy Schofield, “We’re losing much of Mendon’s history. We’ve dropped 10 houses this year,” she said.

Committee member Dan Byer added, “The goal is to find an alternative, to try and find options for adaptive re-use.”

A citizen’s petition will also be the warrant again asking to increase the number of Select Board members from three to five.

The last day to register to vote at the May 1 Annual Town Meeting is April 10 at 8 p.m.

Mendham Brothers of the Brush Memorial Flag Program

The 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. 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.

More than 1,500 Mendon Residents Vote in Primary

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Out of 4,463 registered voters, total of 1,533 Mendon residents, or 34.3 percent, voted in the March 3 Primary. Following national voting trends, Mendon voters favored Former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden and Republican President Donald Trump during the Super Tuesday vote.

On the Democratic primary ballot, Mendon residents gave Biden 383 votes followed by Bernie Sanders who received 314 votes. Elizabeth Warren received 202 votes, Michael Bloomberg had 114 votes, and Pete Buttigieg had 47. Amy Klobuchar had 19 votes, Tulsi Gabbard 13, Tom Steyer 11, Deval Patrick four, and both Andrew Yang and Marianne Williamson each received one vote. Michael Bennett, Cory Booker, Julian Castro, and John Delaney received zero votes. As of March 10, only Biden, Sanders, and Gabbard remain in the race for the Democratic nomination.

On the Presidential Republican primary ballot, Mendon voters gave the vast majority of votes to President Donald Trump with 721 votes. Michael Bloomberg had 51 votes, and Joe Walsh and Roque De La Fuente each received one vote. For Town Committee, Deborah Jean Perro received 234 votes, Michael Merolli 645 votes, Peggy Veal 614 votes, and Carolyn Crosby Barthel 619 votes.

The Libertarian ballot showed two votes for both Jacob George Hornberger and Kenneth Reed Armstrong, and Vermin Love Supreme and Samuel Joseph Robb each had one vote.

The Green Rainbow ballot had no votes cast for candidates in Mendon.

Also on the ballot, votes were cast for State Committee Man, State Committee Woman, and Town Committee.

On the Democratic ballot, Kevin Tagliafierri received 789 votes for the State Committee Man seat and Lisa Moscynski received 800 votes for State Committee Woman. For Town Committee, Thomas Meroli received 721 votes, Albert Crisfield had 600 votes, Leigh Martin had 624 votes, Rand Barthel 603 votes, Alejna Brugos 612 votes, Amy Fahey 653 votes, Michael Merolli 645 votes, Peggy Veal 614 votes, and Carolyn Crosby Barthel 619 votes.

On the Republican ballot for State Committee Man, Ryan Chamberlin received 220 votes and Kevin Powers had 133 votes. For the State Committee Woman Maureen Maloney received 289 votes. On the ballot for Town Committee Deborah Jean Perro received 234 votes, Tina Jankauskas had 196 votes, Michael Montoya had 201, Justine Southwick Brewer had 96 votes, and Mark Reil had 256 votes.

There were no candidates for State Committee Man, State Committee Woman or Town Committee on the Green Rainbow ballot.

In other election news, 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. 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.

Mendon Lions Club Scholarship

The Mendon Lions Scholarship Program is now open to high school seniors from Mendon, Upton residents attending Nipmuc Regional High School, or Less Club members 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.
Ballot Question to Determine Repeal of Mendon’s Farm Tax

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

The Annual meeting of the Swandale Cemetery Association will be held on Monday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the conference room of Charles River Bank, Hastings St., Mendon. The purpose of the meeting is to listen to reports, elect officers and discusses any business which will come before the association. This meeting is open to all lot owners and family members.

Swandale Cemetery Cleaning

The Swandale Trustees notify all plot owners in the Swandale and Quaker Cemeteries in Mendon that graves should be cleared of decorations. Any old plants or decorations left on the graves after April 15 will be discarded and disposed of as cemetery cleaning will be taking place. The cooperation of plot owners and family members is appreciated.

Mendon Police Station Hoping for May Opening

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

The Select Board, a number of other town boards and committees support ending the tax, including the Board of Assessors, the Agricultural Commission, and the Economic Development Committee.

"Mendon is a right to farm community, we appreciate our farms. Yet being one of the only area communities that continues to collect this tax, I think we're sending a mixed message," said Economic Development Committee Chair Tom Merolli, “Usbridge got rid of this tax and I think Milford did too.”

The ballot question will be brought forward during the Town Election which is scheduled to take place on May 12 at Miscony Hill School. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Residents will also determine a race for Select Board between Lawney Tinio and David Atkinson, a race between Jay Byer and Matthew O’Brien for Moderator, as well as a number of uncontested races.

"When this was done, an additional 30 days was added to the schedule as they were getting a late start on that part of the project. This moved the substantial completion date to April 30," said Committee Member Don Morin.

That completion date still stands with some additional close-out items scheduled for May including moving furniture in, landscaping, and the completion of close-out documents. "The certificate of occupancy is planned for some time in mid-May," said Morin.

The Building Committee is now hoping for a Memorial Day ceremony to dedicate the new station in honor of former Mendon Police Chief Matthew Mantoni, who was shot and killed while responding to a disturbance at a restaurant in town. Although the tragic death of Mantoni happened nearly 70 years ago, it was decided to name the new police station to honor the fallen hero.

The Memorial Day ceremony is tentative and will be confirmed in the coming weeks. A web site was created to keep residents updated on the progress of the police station, which also includes photos. The web site address is MendonPolice.com/StationProject and can also be found on the Police Station Building Committee’s page at MendonMa.gov.
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Schools Approve $39 Million FY21 Budget Triggering Town Overrides

By Melissa Orff Staff Reporter

The Mendon Upton Regional School Committee has certified a $38,961,161 operational budget for FY21, a budget that is a 6.99 percent, or $2,546,229, increase over this current year.

The School Committee approved the preliminary budget during their March 9 Open Budget Hearing. The proposed budget is for level services - keeping existing programs and services in place - while adding some "critical needs" in the budget is for level services - keeping with our priority district. "We are very cognizant that this is a significant ask of our two communities," said Maruszczak.

The largest drivers of this year's budget are increases in salaries of $636,692 (3.17 percent), health care insurance of $574,597 (11.66 percent), regular transportation of $11,440 (6.54 percent), charter school assessments of $92,615 (86.72 percent), and $77,050 (9.9 percent) in the Worcester County Retirement assessment.

The budget also includes adding two school psychologists to the staff of the Mendon Upton Regional School District, and to hire an additional Elementary Special Education Title I Chair. With only a $30/student increase in Chapter 70 funding (translates to an additional $46,310) and only $19,012 in additional Regional Transportation reimbursement, the district will be well short of its budgetary needs for next year without the override.

"This district is at a significant inflection point," said Maruszczak. "The solution to our issues has to be a local solution." Maruszczak said that if the district only receives 2 ½ plus of new growth that it traditionally receives, they could be looking at layoffs of 40-45 staff members, an increase in sports fees of hundreds of dollars per student, and a "significant" increases in class sizes.

"I think this [budget] reflects a balancing act between what the towns can responsibly contribute and what we have to do in the best interest of our students," commented School Committee Member Leigh Martin. The Committee voted unanimously to certify the $38,961,161 budget.

The certified budget will now be in the town halls to determine if they will put it forth to the voters of Mendon and Upton as an override.

Local Schools Shut Down Until at Least April

By Melissa Orff Staff Reporter/Columnist

All Massachusetts schools will be closed until at least April 7 while the state tries to control the spread of the COVID-19. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced, March 15 that all schools will be closed for three weeks, a measure they hope will mitigate the number of people contracting the coronavirus which has sickened more than 180,000 and killed over 7,000 people worldwide as of March 16.

In the Mendon Upton Regional School District (MURSD) and the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), school officials remind students and parents that this school closure is not like a typical snow day closure.

"The point of measures as drastic as school closures is to limit social interactions among kids," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Maruszczak in an email to MURSD parents on Sunday night.

"Please heed all of the warnings of all of the health professionals. Nothing is more important than the health of our students and their families."

School officials have spent the past week determining what online school will look like for students who will be out of school for what could be the foreseeable future and working with teachers and staff to provide supports to students remotely.

"We are currently trying to determine if there are students that need high speed internet or a device in their homes while school is shut down," said Maruszczak in an interview with The Crier on March 16. "We are working with our Charter and Verizon and Comcast to make sure that all students have access and are up and running." Maruszczak said teachers will be reaching out to students daily giving them online resources and practice materials to review while home. At BVT, an email to parents and students stated that staff will be in touch with students via email to provide enrichment resources "to maintain as much connectivity to school as possible."

As far as MCAS exams, Maruszczak said no decisions have been made, but it is a high likelihood that the exam will not go on as scheduled.

"There will likely be a minimum of a delay of three weeks," he said. "If not a moratorium for the exam all together."

But more important than tests and homework right now for administrators is ensuring that the students and families of the towns they serve are safe and well.

"Our focus is on checking in on our kids and their families and making sure they are ok," said Maruszczak. "We are making sure that core values of health, family, and community comes first drive how we act."

With 12 percent of the MURSD student on free and reduced lunch, there was a need in the community to ensure that no students went hungry during the forced time out of school.

"Any student or family who is in need can have a meal readily available to them," said Maruszczak. "Grab and Go lunches will be given out at the Nipmuc Regional High School parking lot weekdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

"Students at BVT who utilize free and reduced lunch should visit the BVT website under School Year Information for information about available food services."

Along with ensuring students are fed, Maruszczak said school officials are all concerned about the mental health of their students and their families during this crisis.

"We are trying to find ways to have our support staff available to students online in order to adhere to the guidelines of social distancing while we can help as much as we can virtually," he said.
BVT Secures $2 Million in Reimbursements and Grants

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, working with state legislators, secured $2,084,321 in reimbursements and grants during its recent FY20 budget cycle with more approved toward future years. The FY20 awards ranged from $751,188, reimbursement funds from the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the District’s self-funded roof repair project, to $375,000 Workforce Skills Capital Grant to create a series of engineering innovation labs and $500 for an American Revolutionary re-enactment, subsidised by the New England School Development Council.

BVT also was awarded a $380,106 multi-year Skills Capital Grant by the Baker-Polito Administration. The competitive Governor’s Capital Skills Program will add multiple learning opportunities for students by creating two biotechnical laboratories that will respond to the anticipated growth of STEM-related occupations. The labs will feature state-of-the-art equipment designed to serve both academic and vocational instruction. The program will begin as a core science offering to a $375,000 Workforce Skills Capital Grant to create a series of engineering innovation labs and $500 for an American Revolutionary re-enactment, subsidised by the New England School Development Council. The competitive Governor’s Capital Skills Program will add multiple learning opportunities for students by creating two biotechnical laboratories that will respond to the anticipated growth of STEM-related occupations. The labs will feature state-of-the-art equipment designed to serve both academic and vocational instruction. The program will begin as a core science offering.

MURSD Shredding Health Records

Mendon Upton Regional School District will be shredding unclaimed school health records dated prior to 2013. Please contact the school nurse at the last school you attended to see if you have a record on file. These records will be shredded after May 15, 2020.

MISCOE: Miscoe’s Friends of Rachel members, Annalise Welbe, Maria Ceruti, Reed Dunster, Ella Calvey, Kyle Bodzinski, Sabrina Cassano, Elizabeth Lange, Ben Joseph, Ava Smith, Leah Kirby, Robert Poiter, Sydney Casamento, and Leah Merrill attending a field trip to ALS Treatment Development Institute in Cambridge. They learned about the very serious illness, which has been called Lou Gerhig’s disease since the famous baseball player died of it. The students were informed about how complicated this disease is to diagnose, the research that is done to fight it, and how passionate TDI is to find a cure. After this educating day, The Miscoe Hill Friends of Rachel Club wants to help. They will be raising money by selling CURE ALS bracelets in school and out of school events for Further information, will be available soon. Miscoe’s Expo night will be held on April 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. During the expo night, parents will be able to see their students’ artwork, CrossFit workouts, world language music, and wellness displays. Miscoe’s 6th-grade social studies classes created exhibits for an Ancient Egyptian Museum, which will be showcased in their classrooms on Friday, March 13. Many classes attended and learned many interesting facts about Ancient Egypt.

NIPMUC: MCAS Testing is as follows: Grade 10: E (session 2); Mathematics May 19 (session 1) and May 20 (session 2). Grade 9 Biology June 2 (session 1) and June 3 (session 2) Prom is only a few months away and 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. If you are interested in volunteering for the event or have questions please email Nicole O’Brien, After Prom Party Committee Chair at nipmucapp@nmsd.org. If you are interested in donating, please visit bit.ly/NipmucAPP.

MARCH 20, 2020
Upton, Mendon Town Crier
Nipmuc Hall of Fame Spotlight: Suzie Yanovitch

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Academic opportunities brought Suzie Yanovitch from Hopedale to Nipmuc for her high school career, but the newly-inducted member of the Nipmuc Hall of Fame left an indelible mark in three different sports during her time with the Warriors. “I was very excited when I found out about the Hall of Fame,” Yanovitch said. “It’s always been a dream to be honored that way.”

Yanovitch helped Nipmuc to a total of six league championships in field hockey and softball during the three years she attended the school. During her junior and senior year, she was an All-Dual Valley Conference selection in field hockey and was player of the year in that sport.

She also garnered all-league recognition in both softball and basketball. Among her highlights on the basketball court was scoring 1,000 points. She remembers the milestone bucket, which came in a tournament game against Sutton at WPI. Coaching, she said it out because, as a right handed, she went to her left hand and finished to reach the 1,000-point mark. “I don’t know what I was thinking,” she said. Yanovitch remains the fourth-highest scorer in school history.

Of all her fond memories, the sense of community within Nipmuc athletics is something that still stands out to the 2002 graduate today. “The way everybody treated each other, it was like a big family,” she said. “You played with a lot of the same people in all three sports and it was always very happy, you always wanted to play.” It was a great atmosphere.

Yanovitch recalled team dinners and hanging out with her teammates away from the field, developing lifelong bonds. She also said she had the benefit of excellent coaches, including field hockey coach Brenda Quinlan, later Brenda Webster. “She was a great coach,” Yanovitch said. “She always kept us together.”

Rolf Rhodes and Mike Clemons Sr. were also great influences on Yanovitch’s athletic career, which continued at the collegiate level after her time at Nipmuc. She went to Anna Maria College and played the same three sports she played in high school. Her parents, Paul and Josephine, never missed a game of her high school and college careers.

Yanovitch, who now lives in Arizona, said she is excited for the induction ceremony and the chance to visit her alma matter. “Going to Nipmuc worked out well from a sports perspective,” she said. “It was a good school, a beautiful school, and it was a great choice.”
BVT Girls Hoops Sets High Bar After Finals Run

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Blackstone Valley Tech girls’ basketball team has set high standards for the program and this year, which featured Colonial Athletic League and state vocational titles, is no different. And with several talent players returning next season, head coach Britt Kahler sees no reason why things should change going forward.

“I have kids who are really competitive and they set the bar high,” Kahler said. “I ask them every year what their goals are and it’s their job to determine how high they want to set the bar. They set some big goals this year and they achieved them.”

The Beavers saw their season come to an end in the district final against Maynard. BVT entered halftime in that game tied with the Tigers at 22 each, but Maynard pulled away with 30 second-half points to capture the title.

Valley Tech won 20 games this year, a feat that will not be easy to repeat. Senior Victoria Russian and Gabby Muscatell are both fourth-year members of the varsity program who will be moving on.

“Losing Victoria is huge, she has been huge for us all four years,” Kahler said. “She is somebody we can go to if we need a bucket, she would be the one to get it for us. She is a huge loss.”

Muscatell’s work ethic will also be hard to replace, Kahler said, as well as the guidance provided by graduating senior Mackenzie Vollmer.

“She is a tall guard and defensively she was awesome this year,” the coach said. “She also stepped up as a vocal leader and we are going to miss that leadership for sure.”

But the Beavers return a significant group of players who saw major minutes this winter. Sophomore Emma Ballard will be back for her third year as the starting point guard.

“We saw her step in and really start taking over games and acting more like an experienced point guard this year,” Kahler said. “I feel like we have kids that are ready to step up for next year.”

Next year’s group will also look to maintain the close-knit feeling of this year’s squad.

Kahler said she is hopefully Valley Tech can match the depth of this year’s team during the 2020-2021 season. The goal will once again be to get back to the district final and hopefully bring home a championship.

“I am excited about next year,” Kahler said. “I think it’s going to be a great year.”

BVT Boys Hoops Makes History with Title Game Trip

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

After 13 wins and a trip to the district final, the Blackstone Valley Tech boys’ basketball team can step back and appreciate all it accomplished this winter.

“I think we did very well,” said senior Drew Galicki. “Especially coming into a season where we graduated nine seniors the year before. It was hard to get a gauge on what this team can step back and appreciate all it accomplished this winter.

The Beavers showcased their firepower in the tournament, blowing out Notre Dame and Main South in the tournament before falling to Hopedale in the district final by an 86-47 score.

“Hopedale is a strong team” Finnegan said. “They had a plan for me, I was face guarded the whole game. They were definitely the best team, offensively and defensively, we have played all season.”

Finnegan and sophomore Josh Mateo, who also averaged double-digits in the scoring column, are two of four starters returning to the team next year.

Galicki, the lone senior starter, scored around seven points per game. He will be heading off to college next year to study engineering, he said, but his competitive basketball days may have come to an end in last weekend's district final. He was able to take stock in the program's growth during his time at BVT.

“It’s really awesome coming from where the team was my freshman year to where the team is now,” Galicki said. “We have set the foundation for what is going to be a long run of BVT getting to the playoffs and going deep into the playoffs.”

Before looking ahead to his senior season, Finnegan also took a moment to take stock in what he and his teammates were able to do this winter.

“It was the farthest BVT has made it in history,” he said. “It was a great achievement for all of us.”

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Sports

Virus Leaves Us Waiting
Hope to Spring

Last fall, athletic directors around the state dealt with numerous scheduling issues due to eastern equine encephalitis. The EEE concerns had officials trying to balance the safety of student athletes with the teams’ desire to compete and the goal of a minimal impact on the fall season. But those were the good old days.

The coronavirus is a lot different. This is not a disease the world has seen before. There is uncertainty, anxiety, anger and fear. Life has completely changed over the past several days. By the time anyone reads this, there is a good chance it will be a lot different than the day when the words were written. College sports have ended for the year. Professional sports are all on hold.

Organizations are already making plans for a light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. On Monday, the MIAA announced it would plan to start the season April 27. Whether that proves to be too optimistic, time will tell. Local athletics, especially seniors, will likely miss out on at least part of their final season on the field or the court. But whenever they do return, it will bring a welcome sense of normalcy to cheer on the Beavers and the Warriors as well as a wonderful sense of community. We might all be reaching for the Purell a little more than we once did, but we’ll still be able to come together.

As they have during difficult times in the past, sports will provide a welcome distraction and a comfort. Their absence now is being felt, but when they return, I hope they will still evoke the same feelings of excitement.

The coronavirus is changing the sports landscape in the United States. But those were the good old days.

Mike Penner
Sports Editor/Columnist

There was a brief time in his young life when Jim Grant considered going to school somewhere other than Nipmuc, but a brand new building and an inspirational young coach set Grant on a course to make an indelible mark on the program. That success at numerous levels of Warrior athletics is enough to earn him a spot in the inaugural class of the Nipmuc Hall of Fame.

“As a player, as a coach, as an athletic director, as a teacher, and now as a fan, I’m very much honored to be selected,” Grant said.

Nipmuc fans would agree. Grant fits the bill as a no-brainer, first ballot selection. He was young, he was a good athlete and he brought something to the Mendon and Upton athletic arena, if you will, that hadn’t been there.”

But those were the good old days.

Grant said the biggest thing he misses from his time as a coach is practice and preparation. A coach of that ilk, Al Byrne, is the person who first inspired Grant as a young athlete. As a player, as a coach, as an athletic director, as a teacher, and now as a fan, I’m very much honored to be selected,” Grant said.

“Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the town, not a creature was stirring, not even the town’s head coach, Jim Grant. The phone rang and the only sound that could be heard was the jingle of Grant’s keys as he opened the door.

“Hi, Jim, it’s Chris Villani from the Town Crier. We’ve heard some wonderful things about your coaching career and I’d love to interview you for a story. What do you say? Can we set up an interview?”

“I’d love to do that, Chris,” Grant said. “I appreciate the opportunity. I’ve been coaching for a long time and I’ve had the privilege of working with some great players and some great teams. I’ve learned a lot from them and I’ve tried to pass that knowledge on to others.”

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Most of all, Grant considers himself lucky to have played and coached at Nipmuc. “I was always surrounded by some very good people,” he said.