No Milford Cops Make Chief Search Semi-final List

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Police Chief Selection Committee last month narrowed the number of people seeking to be the town’s new Police Chief from 11 to six. None of them is a member of the Milford Police Department, according to committee chair Dino DeBartolomeis.

The Town Crier has learned that Milford’s Deputy Chief James Fabry was one of the 11 candidates, but was not selected by the search committee to be one of the six semi-finalists.

In an interview with the Town Crier, DeBartolomeis said the six semi-final candidates were “outstanding, very exemplary candidates” and “really qualified people” who live in New England and other parts of the country. He did not know the total number of people originally applying for the position.

Town Counsel Charles Boddily advised the search committee, at its November 19 meeting, not to disclose the names of any of the candidates publicly until a final, recommended list of three to five candidates is presented to the Board of Selectmen.

The committee opened that meeting with consultants Sheldon Cohen and Charles Hale of Resource Management Associates, Inc. (RMA) reminding members their task was to narrow the list of 11 candidates to six who next would be undergoing physical and psychological exams and a multi-day training program before the conclusion of the first round of interviews.

Hale of Resource Management Associates, Inc. (RMA) reminding members their task was to narrow the list of 11 candidates to six who next would be undergoing physical and psychological exams and a multi-day “Assessment Center” challenge in mid-December.

After deducting RMA’s contractually agreed-to fees and the costs of advertising the position, committee members learned that their $50,000 budget limit would not cover the six semi-finalists.

DeBartolomeis told members that the expense for the six semi-finalists was $73,500.

He said the search committee’s challenge now was to fund the remaining $23,500 of its semi-finalists’ costs, he said.

“No matter who you end up with, the person you hire is going to be at the helm of a department that today has under 60 officers,” DeBartolomeis said. “So the impact of the person you hire is huge. Anybody who is going to be a good fit for this position is going to be very difficult to find.”

When questioned by DeBartolomeis, Finance Committee Chair Christopher DeBartolomeis said the six semi-finalists were “outstanding, very exemplary candidates” and “really qualified people” who live in New England and other parts of the country. He did not know the total number of people originally applying for the position.

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Property Tax Rates Dropping Again This Year

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The property tax rates for Fiscal Year 2020 have been set at $15.96 per thousand dollars of valuation for residential property and $29.64 per thousand dollars of valuation for commercial, industrial and personal property (C/I/P). By a 2-1 vote, the Board of Selectmen maintained the rate shift for C/I/P at 1.58 at the November 18 tax classification hearing – the final local step needed before property tax rates for the current fiscal year could be finalized.

As certified later that week by the state Department of Revenue, the new rates are a $0.58 drop in the residential tax rate and a $1.24 drop in the C/I/P rate. However, rising values in all classes of property means property owners will likely not see a decrease in their tax bills. Tax rates also dropped in the previous fiscal year.

“Noteworthy new growth – that is, property taxed for the first time – included 18 single-family homes, 16 new condo units, seven new residential lots, the Goldfish Swim School on East Main Street; the redevelopment of the Milford Crossing shopping center on Medway Road; Garrett’s Family Market and gas station on Cedar Street, Restaurant Depot off Cedar Street; 82 new personal property accounts; and, a $10.8 million increase in the personal property values for utilities, Assessor/Administrator Jennifer Sclar said.

Overall, residential growth over the past year is valued at $16.7 million and C/I/P growth at $24.4 million, she explained. Together, that translated into just over $1 million in new tax revenues, Sclar said.

If the town had a single tax rate, it would be $18.75 per thousand dollars of valuation, Sclar said.

Her presentation to selectmen focus on a 1.5962 rate shift for C/I/P, which Sclar said would have resulted in a 3.96 percent increase in both the average residential and C/I/P classes of property.

However, Selectwoman William Kingkade noted that members of the Downtown Revitalization Committee and the two companies

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After deducting RMA’s contractually agreed-to fees and the costs of advertising the position, committee members learned that their $50,000 budget limit would not cover the full costs for the six candidates’ testing and travel expenses. Hale explained that is not typical in police chief searches. Rather, communities typically pay 100 percent of finalists’ costs, he said.

When questioned by DeBartolomeis, Finance Committee Chair Christopher DeBartolomeis said – a member of the search committee – said his board could release some of its reserve funds to increase the search committee’s budget and cover all of its expenses. The search committee then voted...
Fill the Cruiser Collects 20 Tons of Food

The Milford Auxiliary Police’s annual “Fill the Cruiser” food donation drive collected about 20 tons of food and about $2,670 in cash and gift card donations for the Milford Daily Bread Food Pantry. The November 23-24 collection was held at the Stop & Shop on Medway Rd. (Rt. 109), Target on Fortune Blvd., Big Y on Medway Rd., and Aldi’s on East Main St. (Rt 16). Seen collecting donations at Target (left to right) are: Officer Jacob Campbell, Sergeant Michael Jones, Special Sergeant Christopher Pilla, Auxiliary Officer Scott Bruno, Special Sergeant Keith Gattozzi, Bob Weisenhorn, Special Sergeant Carlos Benjamin, Garret Hayes and Special Officer Patrick Hayes. Kevin Ruddin photo

Trinity Episcopal Bids Farewell to Father Mac

Trinity Episcopal Church parishioners, local clergy and friends last month held a Celebration of Ministry to say their official farewell to the Rev. William McDonald Murray – known to all as “Father Mac” – who will be retiring at the end of December after serving as Trinity’s rector since 2006. Citations were presented to Father Mac from the state Senate and House of Representatives and from the Milford Board of Selectmen. “Father Mac looked to make a difference in parts of the community that some people don’t even recognize,” said State Representative Brian Murray D. Milford. Kevin Ruddin photo

Getting to Know the Milford Police

Milford Girl Scout Daisy Troop 65017 toured the Milford Police Department on November 17. Officer Jim Woodward provided a wonderful experience for the girls, explaining 911 emergencies and showing them around the station, a cruiser, and his motorcycle. Shown with Officer Woodward are, l-r: Emma Diatalevi, Shea Gauthier, Officer Jim Woodward (back row), Selina Cales, Juliette Schwenke, Cassidy Knapp (back row), Lyla Fanulo, and Layla Tomlinson. Troop 65017 photo

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December 17th - 6:30pm

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- How Can It Benefit You
- Business Opportunity

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5 Ways to check on Mom’s well-being this holiday season.

- GIVE A HUG
  Do you notice weight changes, increased frailty?
- OBSERVE HER SOCIAL LIFE
  Are there signs of active friendships, or isolation?
- OPEN THE MEDICINE CABINET
  Is your loved one taking medications as prescribed?
- CHECK THE MAIL
  Look for unopened mail or unpaid bills.
- INSPECT THE KITCHEN
  Look for expired food, broken appliances.

Use this checklist to look for warning signs during your holiday visits. If your loved one isn’t doing well at home alone, Cornerstone at Milford may be the perfect solution. We offer an innovative enriching approach to senior care and Alzheimer’s care.

ASSISTED LIVING & COMPASS MEMORY SUPPORT
11 Birch St, Milford MA • 508.473.0035 • CornerstoneMilford.com
Town Sells Birch Street Lot for $48,000

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

At a November 19 public auction, the Town of Milford sold a 0.13-acre vacant lot on Birch St. to abutting property owner Tonia Scafuto for $48,000. The town foreclosed on the land in 2014 for non-payment of property taxes. Town Treasurer Christopher Pilla said one other person bid on the 5,802 square-foot lot. The town set a minimum price of $25,000 for the sale.

Milford Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, the activities take place at the Town Hall. Official meeting notices are posted on Town Clerk’s Bulletin Board. For additional information, contact the appropriate Board or official.

Monday, December 9
Milford Youth Commission, 24 Pearl St., 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 12
BVT FY 2021 Budget Subcommittee, BVT, 4:30 p.m.
Board of Library Trustees, Town Library, 6 p.m.

Monday, December 16
Milford Youth Commission, 24 Pearl St., 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 19
Milford Area Humanitarian Coalition, Trinity Episcopal Church, 5 p.m.
BVT FY 2021 Budget Subcommittee, BVT, 5 p.m.
ZBA Hearing, Room 3, 7 p.m.

United Parish of Upton
Corner of Main & Church Streets

HOLIDAY BAZAAR
Saturday, December 7, 10am-3pm
Shop our 40 Vendors

New This Year

Inside Fun
• Silent Auction: including Christmas Eve visit from Santa, Bruins Tickets, signed & framed Red Sox Shirt, Two Nights in Oak Bluffs, In-Home Professional Cooking Class, Massage, Spa & Restaurant Gift Cards, Railers Tickets, Weekend in NH, Interior Painting, Petal & Crumb, 110 Grille and much more
• Raffles - over 40 items
• Santa Storytime: 12:15pm-12:30pm
• Write a letter to Santa
• Face painting

Outside Fun on our Front Lawn:
• Visit the Alpacas
11am-3pm
• Roast your marshmallow over “the fire pit” for s’mores
• Sip a cup of hot chocolate by “the fire pit”

Hungry?
• Reindeer Café Menu: turkey soup or vegetable soup & cheese pizza
• Baked Goods

Visit Santa/Photographs 11am-2 p.m
Our mobile app makes banking fast and easy, giving you time to relax and enjoy the cocoa this holiday season!

Ruth Anne Bleakney Senior Center

The Ruth Anne Bleakney Senior Center, located at 60 North Bow St., is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. Contact the center by calling 508-473-8334 or emailing sclark@MilfordMA.com. Sue Trotta Clark is the director.

Wednesday, December 11
1 p.m. Super Bingo and Ice Cream Social, Raffles and Free Ice Cream Sundae

Tuesday, December 17
10 a.m. Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker by Gregory Maguire. To reserve a copy of the book, call the Library’s Information Desk at 508-473-2145

Thursday, December 19
12:30 p.m. Free Movie Friday, Christmas in Connecticut, Bring Own Lunch, Free Popcorn

Tuesday, December 24
Senior Center Closing at 1 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25
Senior Center Closing at 1 p.m.

Melindophyll Clary, the director.

Milford Senior Center

Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Different Kind of Fairytale

Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Different Kind of Fairytale

Wednesday, December 17 at 10 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center.

The Center Book Group will discuss Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker by Gregory Maguire on Tuesday, December 17 at 10 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center.

Maguire does for the Nutcracker what he did for the future Nutcracker: Wicked. With his trademark ability to delve into dark realms, Maguire takes readers on a journey for a different kind of fairytale. Newcomers are always welcome to join The Center Book Group. To reserve a copy of Hiddensee, call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145, ext. 2.

Thank you for your generosity.

Don Iacovelli is a folk art painter. His paintings are the very essence of winter in days gone by. Don’t miss this display.

Hiddensee is a tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker. Maguire does for the Nutcracker what he did for the future Nutcracker: Wicked. With his trademark ability to delve into dark realms, Maguire takes readers on a journey for a different kind of fairytale. Newcomers are always welcome to join The Center Book Group. To reserve a copy of Hiddensee, call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145, ext. 2.

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seeking tax increment financing (TIF) agreements with the town had recently told selectmen that the town's dual tax rate puts Milford at a competitive disadvantage in attracting new businesses to town, when compared with the tax rates in other communities. Keeping the shift at the current 1.58 percent would be "a chance to give our small businesses in town somewhat of a break," he said. The annual tax classification hearing would be "a good opportunity to keep the shift exactly where it is," he added.

"I would agree with that," Selectman Michael Walsh said. The town's small businesses are asking for assistance and "I think we should pay attention to that," he added.

Chairman William Buckley voted against that idea. "The shift that they voted for shifted more of the burden to the residential taxpayers, and I preferred to keep it balanced," he later told the Town Crier. Buckley said he preferred following the Board of Assessors' recommendation.

As it usually has voted, the Board of Selectmen voted not to provide an open space discount, not to provide a residential exemption and not to provide a small commercial exemption – all of which Sclar said would provide little benefit, if any, to Milford property owners.

Wishing you every happiness this Holiday Season and throughout the New Year!

Please note our special holiday hours

Christmas Eve • Tuesday, December 24th • Open 8:30 am – 12:00 pm
Christmas Day • Wednesday, December 25th • Closed
New Year's Eve • Tuesday, December 31st • Open 8:30 am – 3:00 pm
New Year's Day • Wednesday, January 1st • Closed

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11 Years of Lowering Tax Rate: Taxpayers Save Thousands

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Since Fiscal Year 2010, town officials – backed by the votes of Town Meeting Members – have been using "available funds" and applying them to lower property tax rates. For example, Assessor/Administrator Jennifer Sclar said this year's $2.8-million offset saved the average single-family homeowner $219.

While that amount may seem small, when added up across the past 11 years, the average single-family owners has not had to pay $1,121 in property taxes and the average commercial property owner has not had to pay $5,723, according to figures Sclar's office provided to the Board of Selectmen last month.

From Fiscal Year 2010 through the current fiscal year – FY2020 – the town applied a total of $15,250,000 to lower the property tax rates. Most – if not all – of that money came from "Free Cash," which is a municipal accounting term meaning more revenues coming in than forecast in the budget and less money being spent than what was appropriated for a budget.

To view more charts depicting the FY20 tax rate visit towncrier.com

The Town Crier is closed for Vacation from December 13 till January 8, 2020.

Read this

Town Crier Online

To read the December 6, 2019 Milford Town Crier online, go to TownCrier.us. In the left-hand column click Online Newspapers and scroll down to Milford Town Crier PDF Archive. Click on MTC 19.12.06.pdf
He made Milford better

His name is William MacDonald Murray, but to those who know him, he’s simply “Father Mac.” He’ll be retiring as rector of Trinity Episcopal Church at the end of the year and—during his 13 years’ tenure here—he’s had an influence way beyond the walls of his church.

While Father Mac refuses to take credit for many of the humanitarian efforts he’s helped become a reality, I hope he accepts being part of the catalyst that led and inspired others to accomplish things.

From his 2012 sabbatical—a time to study or travel—Father Mac began to focus on four issues he felt faced the Milford community: transportation, hunger/proper nutrition, homelessness and access to needed services. As State Rep. Brian Murray, D-Milford, noted at the dinner Trinity parishioners held to say ‘goodbye,’ "Father Mac looked to make a difference in parts of the community that some people don’t even recognize...He came to this community. He organized us and led the way to help them."

Among the programs that I know Father Mac has come to reality are the Milford Humanitarian Coalition, bus service, a summer lunch program, a holiday dinner program, a laundry program and a new Messiah shelter extending this winter. (And, yes, there are homeless people of all ages in our community.)

This is not a bad legacy for a man who spent 25 years as a software engineer with General Dynamics before realizing he had a greater calling in life.

And what was Mac’s response to the praises being heaped on him at his farewell dinner? “I didn’t do anything. It’s you that all do it.”

Well, I disagree. Father Mac walks the talk, especially when it comes to Matthew 25:42-45: "For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I was naked and in prison and you did not look after me. They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “

But last year he began dating a man who, along with his family loved the holidays. She said Christmas was her life and was grateful for all the activity she found her life had been made brighter and lighter by the celebrations.

And what fun, it was. Thinking about my Christmas, I agreed it had been fun. Going out of my house to see the beginning of the Menden Christmas parade was fun. You know snow started falling was fun. Shopping in stores filled bursting with presents and holiday decorations was fun. Seeing my granddaughter dance in a 45 minute, nautical-themed Nutcracker was lots of fun. Baking recipes that my grandmothers used before me was fun. Writing holiday cards and then getting messages from friends and family far away was fun. Putting up our tree and placing the ornaments made and passed on by those I love was fun. And having my children come home and be with us was fun.

So I hope each one of you can take the very best of this season of light and festivities and enjoy yourself. I hope you can look back on the holidays, and say that you were the friend and neighbor, it was fun. To one and all— Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas.

To the Editor,

In November, I attended a School Improvement Council meeting at Milford High School (MHS). The use of vaping products and e-cigarettes in the high school was discussed. Students explained how on countless occasions, when using restrooms, they had to contend with other students who were vaping or using e-cigarettes with nicotine and/or cannabis oil. These students, who simply want to use the restroom, are routinely put into unhealthy and uncomfortable situations.

Many ideas were discussed. Some including the suggestion of installing effective detection systems or hiring personnel to monitor areas where vaping is prevalent led to a discussion of funding. MHS Principal Joshua Otilan said the budget he works with makes it difficult to justify spending on those suggestions. Perhaps the perceived severity of the vaping issue doesn’t quite prove to be enough to spend funds to do something about it. It is a tough decision to make and does not sit well with Otilan.

He shouldn’t have to even bat an eye at the prospect of funding a project that makes MHS a safer and healthier place. There should be no funding problem. It’s a health and safety issue and should not have to fit into a budget.

Town government meets routinely to discuss its budget, what improvements to fund, salaries, how the taxes we pay will be utilized, etc. We see road improvements, intersections finally getting left turn arrows and downtown buildings owners receiving money. What about the school? The feeling I got from Otilan at this meeting was that he doesn’t have enough funding to run his school the way he desires to, including fixing this problem. It is both sad and pathetic.

I suggest that any right-minded Milford citizen, who cares about the nearly 1,400 students and faculty at MHS, take action. Do something. Write a letter to Milford officials or give them a call. Discuss how the school should reserve priority funding to combat this increasing health issue. Express your dissatisfaction with the budget the school has to operate with. Demand that something be done. We still are a community where people’s voices can make a difference when trying to get something accomplished that is for a good cause and for the right reasons. Let our voices be heard.

Douglas Parke
Milford

Correction

In the November 8 issue of the Town Crier, a story was written on the Memory Café, a once a month gathering at the Bellingham Senior Center for those with memory loss challenges and their caregivers. It was inadvertently left out of the story that Benchmark Senior Living at Forge Park is a sponsor of the event.

Read this Town Crier Online

To read the December 6, 2019 Milford Town Crier online, go to Town Crier. us. In the left-hand column click Online Newspapers and scroll down to Milford Town Crier PDF Archive. Click on MTC 19.12.06.pdf

Opinion

The Town Crier is closed for Vacations from November 13 to January 8, 2020. Monthly Communal Meals

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

Second Tuesday 5:30-6 p.m. Dinner, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Small Hall, 27 Pearl St., Milford. Sponsored by Food with Friends.

508-473-8446 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Last Wednesday 4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford, sponsored by First United Church of Hopedale. 508-473-3589, or fuumilford@verizon.net.

Sponsored by Sacred Heart Evangelical (based in Franklin). 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Eucharist, 61 Wood St. (Rt.135), Hopkinton. Sponsored by the Hopkinton Christian Service Connection. 508-453-4336 or paul@hopkinton.org

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

Third Thursday 9:30 p.m. Supper, United Parish, 1 Church St., Upton. Donations accepted. Reservation, three days ahead by calling 508-319-3192

Last Thursday 4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford, sponsored by First Methodist Church of Milford volunteers. 508-473-8446 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Every Sunday 4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford, sponsored by the Hopedale Churches (United, Sacred Heart and Union Evangelical). 508-473-8446 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org

Available Newsletters

December 6, 2019

Opinions expressed are solely those of the writer. Town Crier Publications is not responsible for inaccuracies. No Political Endorsements, please!
Recent Actions by Milford Town Boards

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Board of Health

• Board members reviewed and approved the job description for an Assistant Health Agent. Murphy reported that the numbers of people who received all of its new trucks to service Milford. He said, “This is a significant step in the town’s efforts to improve its service delivery.” (November 18)

• Health Officer Jacquelyn Murphy reported that the company’s facilities. (November 18)

• Murphy reported that the first year’s “Pink bag” recycling program with Simple Recycling resulted in $3,665.06 savings to the town. In addition, the town received $917.68 from Simple Recycling, or one cent per pound of clothing and other items it collected. (November 18)

• Board members were introduced to Joan Clarico, Health Officer, Personnel Board, she said. (November 18)

• Murphy reported that the numbers of people participating in seasonal flu clinics has risen steadily over the past few years: 335 in 2017, 417 in 2018 and 460 this year. (November 18)

• Murphy reported that the first year’s “Pink bag” recycling program with Simple Recycling resulted in $3,665.06 savings to the town. In addition, the town received $917.68 from Simple Recycling, or one cent per pound of clothing and other items it collected. (November 18)

• Michael Szczepan, municipal manager for the town’s trash hauler, E.L. Harvey & Sons, Inc. of Westbrook, reported that his company now has received all of its new trucks to service Milford. He and board members reviewed a recent tour of the company’s facilities. (November 18)

• Health Inspector Lisa Tamagmi said a home at 106 Hayward Street – where overcrowding was reported in early November – was being re-inspected by town officials to make sure the condition was being corrected. (November 18)

• Board members reviewed and approved the job description for an Assistant Health Agent. Murphy explained the position would enable her department to “continue to respond to health needs.” The next step is to have the job description approved by the Personnel Board, she said. (November 18)

Board of Sewer Commissioners

• Approved a revised first-half of the fiscal year sewer use commitment in the amount of $1,801,696.52. (November 19)

• Approved a sewer connection permit for a new home at 125 Congress St. (November 19)

• Voted to send the Planning Board a letter stating that a special permit request to have overhead hanging signs on a building at 208 Main St. would have no effect on the town’s sewer system. (November 18)

• Project Manager James Hoyt of Tata & Howard, the Sewer Department’s Marlborough-based engineering consultants, reported that his firm was evaluating the signs, which will each be hung over a doorway. (November 19)

Planning Board

• Continued until January 21, 2020 a public hearing on the proposed “Purchase Street Commons” planned residential development consisting of 12 detached single-family homes on land at 177 and 179 Purchase St. (November 19)

• Approved a special permit allowing Ronald Pagnini to install two additional hanging signs on his 208 Main St. building. His applications depicted double-faced signs each measuring 24 inches by 40 inches in size. “We’re trying to give downtown more of a historic look, “ Pagnini said. “It’s a nice balance to the in size. “We’re trying to give downtown more of a historic look, “ Pagnini said. “It’s a nice balance to the historic feel of the building,” board member Patrick Kennelly said about the signs, which will each be hung over a doorway. (November 19)

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• Project Manager James Hoyt of Tata & Howard, the Sewer Department’s Marlborough-based engineering consultants, reported that his firm was evaluating the addition’s construction to make sure the Sewer Department holds back enough money from contractor Hart Engineering Corporation of Cumberland, R.I. to ensure final completion of the project. (November 19)

• Continued until January 23, 2020 a public hearing on the proposed “Purchase Street Commons” planned residential development consisting of 12 detached single-family homes on land at 177 and 179 Purchase St. (November 19)

• Approved a special permit allowing Ronald Pagnini to install two additional hanging signs on his 208 Main St. building. His applications depicted double-faced signs each measuring 24 inches by 40 inches in size. “We’re trying to give downtown more of a historic look, “ Pagnini said. “It’s a nice balance to the historic feel of the building,” board member Patrick Kennelly said about the signs, which will each be hung over a doorway. (November 19)
Board Declares 72 Depot St. Property a “Nuisance”

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

DECEMBER 6, 2019

Following a public hearing, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously on November 18 to declare a building and property at 72 Depot St. owned by Contracting Yard, LLC “to be a nuisance to the neighborhood, or dangerous.” The board stipulated that the owner has until December 31 to either fix or tear down the building, or the town will take action to do so.

At its November 4 meeting, the board supported Town Counsel Charles Boddy’s request to schedule the hearing after he reviewed the town’s efforts – going back to 2015 – to get the property in compliance with town by-laws and state building codes. Boddy then described the building as fire-damaged, dilapidated and with a collapsed roof leaving it open to the weather.

At the November 18 meeting, Boddy added that about 30 tractor-trailer trucks, with many still registered, are sitting on the property in various stages of disrepair. “The property continues to be in disrepair,” he stated. As a result of a fire at the building, one side is now buckling and “it’s in imminent danger of collapse,” Boddy explained. In addition, “it’s infested with rats and mice” that now are spreading to neighboring residential properties, the Town Counsel said.

Recent contact with the property owner’s attorney has resulted in some remedial work, Boddy continued. “It’s measurably improved from what it was, but it’s far from safe,” he said. “They are actually cooperating with us” and plan to demolish the building, Boddy said.

Chairman William Buckley voiced his concern that there was no firm date set for the demolition. "The priority is to demolish the building," he said. “Time is of the essence.” Selectman William Kingkade added. “I do not expect this building to be up by year’s end,” he said. “It’s been five years.” Selectman Michael Walsh said he had visited the property in question and noted, “This building is beyond unsafe. There has to be a clear message that it is coming down by December 31.”

The board’s declaration will allow the town to demolish the property and place a lien on it to recoup the demolition costs, Boddy explained. He termed the declaration as a legal "tool" to help the owners to comply. “It’s whatever it takes to comply with the order of this hearing,” Buckley said.

Resident Jamie Wheelock attended the hearing and suggested – since the Milford Water Company is an abutting property owner – that the town wait until the state Department of Public Utilities decides a value for the utility before proceeding with any actions. He termed the December 31 “a ridiculously abbreviated schedule” for compliance.

“Time is of the essence,” Boddy replied. “If someone gets in there and gets hurt, we’ll all wish we’d done something sooner.”

72 Depot St., Milford

Sewer Commission Criticizes Plan Change

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Sewer Commissioners approved a change in the connection plans for a building being built by Eastland Partners, Inc. at 30 Birch St., but not before criticizing the company for making the change before seeking their approval.

The original approved plans showed three connected buildings, each with its own sewer pipe that connected to a service manhole and, from there, one pipe would connect to the sewer main in the street. John Mainini, the Sewer Department’s director of Operations, explained at the board’s November 19 meeting. The original plan he displayed to board members showed the three buildings connected in a Z-shaped pattern. However, Mainini continued Eastland Partners put in only one sewer pipe when it poured a concrete slab foundation for the overall project.

Chad Boardman of Eastland Partners said the project is really one building, with his company to occupy two-thirds of it. The total sewer flow from it would be equivalent to that of a five-bedroom house, he continued, noting that the town’s Plumbing Inspector has nothing to do with the sewer system. The Sewer Department wanted three separate connections because the building has the potential to house three separate tenants. Boardman said the one sewer liner would still go to a manhole and then to the street, as Mainini requested.

All three commissioners took issue with the change. Chairman Thomas Morelli noted the approved plan dictates what was supposed to be built. “You should have come before the board,” he said. Rudy Lioce also said Eastland Partners should have requested prior approval before making any changes. “After the fact, seriously?” Richard Cenedella questioned.

“We shouldn’t be at this point,” Mainini added. The board approved the change after noting the alternative was to make Eastland Partners dig up the entire slab foundation.
What is “I and I”?  

Inflow and Infiltration – called “I and I” in engineering-speak – stands for “inflow and infiltration.”

James Hoyt, project manager with Tata & Howard, the Sewer Department's Marlborough-based engineering consultants, defines the terms as follows:

- "Inflow" is primarily rainfall that enters a sewer system through various means. For example, a building's roof drains might be connected into a sewer main. Or, a basement sump pump might be connected into a home's sewer drain. Both of these types send what is basically clean rain water into the sewer system and then to the town's wastewater treatment plant.

- “Infiltration” is groundwater that seeps into sewer lines through cracks in older sewer pipes and joints.

After a 2003 study of I and I in the town's sewer system, the Milford Sewer Department aggressively began to reline and seal older sewer mains with the worst leaks and created a free program to disconnect homeowners' sump pumps from the sewer system and reconnect them to the town's stormwater drainage systems. In December, 2018, John Mainini, the department's Director of Operations, told sewer commissioners those efforts have removed an estimated 800,000 gallons of groundwater per day from Milford's sewer system.

Another report the engineering firm is focusing rehabilitation on the troubled areas and it worked. “However, Hoyt explained, "We did find a significant inflow in the system." Its amount, he said, is higher than it was 10 years ago. The engineer and John Mainini, Sewer Department's director of Operations, discussed that a 1-3 day storm event during the monitoring period saw system flows increase to eight million gallons a day, with overall system flows of 22 million gallons during an eight-day period and 30 million gallons during an 11-day period after that storm. Hoyt said Tata & Howard's report is being readied for review by the Sewer Department, with its final release expected by year-end.

Another report the engineering firm is working on involves whether sewer main sizes have adequate capacity to handle the flow going through them, he added. Also being finalized by Hoyt said, "We did see progress. It went down overall," he said. "We focused rehabilitation on the troubled areas and it worked." However, Hoyt explained, "We did find a significant inflow in the system." Its amount, he said, is higher than it was 10 years ago. The engineer and John Mainini, Sewer Department's director of Operations, discussed that a 1-3 day storm event during the monitoring period saw system flows increase to eight million gallons a day, with overall system flows of 22 million gallons during an eight-day period and 30 million gallons during an 11-day period after that storm. Hoyt said Tata & Howard's report is being readied for review by the Sewer Department, with its final release expected by year-end.

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Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Upton and Uxbridge. is free and open to the public. The ensemble project is by William Moffett is made up of student and Chapel in Uxbridge at 7 p.m. The ensemble, directed the world on present a concert of Christmas music from around UXBRIDGE—The Birch Alley Brass Ensemble will drinks and goodies. This a free event, with all welcome. Donations from 5 to 7 p.m. After the Creche display, warm up with hot Covenant Church, 2 East Elm St., Hopkinton on December Nativity with real people and animals, outdoors at Community. The program is cancelled and be prepared to walk for about an hour over a variety of terrains, will Saturday, December 7 St. Gabriel's Christmas Fair Auxiliary @milreg.org. worth of scratch tickets. The winning ticket will be drawn on December 13 in some afternoon hours, in the Atrium Cafeteria located on the first floor, 14 Prospect St., Milford. Tickets are $5 for one chance, and $20 for five. This raffle includes a small decorative Christmas tree decorated with $10 of Lottery Scratch Tickets on one drawing are available. A lunch of soup, sandwiches, hot dogs, and traditional Grapenut pudding will be served. A $450 of Lottery Scratch Tickets Raffle will be performed by the Greater Upton. Tickets are $5 for one chance, and $20 for five. This raffle includes a small decorative Christmas tree decorated with UPTON—The Trees for Hope Festival, a participants, dress for the weather and be prepared to walk for about an hour over a variety of terrains, will decorate trees in the park with packed pinecones. The program is cancelled for heavy rains or snow. Please contact Brantlem 318-8417 for additional information.

**Christmas Around the World Concert**

UPPERBROOK—The Birch Alley Brass Ensemble will present a concert of Christmas music from around the world on Friday, December 6, at the Valley Chapel in Uxbridge at 7 p.m. The ensemble, directed by William Moffett is made up of student and professional musicians from area towns. The concert is free and open to the public. The ensemble project is funded in part by the Mendon and Milford Cultural Councils. Musicians participating come from Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, and Uxbridge.

**Virtual Tyme Christmas Decorations**

The Trees for Hope Festival, a community-wide event featuring uniquely decorated Christmas trees raffled off as a fundraising effort, will be held Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8 at St. Galen Church, 151 Mendon St. Upton. Admission is free. Participants donate an artificial tree in honor of someone, a special cause, or any theme of one's choosing. Proceeds will support the 15- 40 Connection, a local non-profit promoting early cancer detection, and the ALS Therapy Development Institute, a local non-profit biotech working to end the disease.

**Decora…**

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**Decorate A Tree for Wildlife**

Do bears hibernate? What does the red fox eat in the winter? To learn the answers, join Park Ranger Viola for a Wildlife Trek on Sunday December 8 at 2 p.m. at West Hill Dam. Meet at the office, 518 East Hartford Ave, Uxbridge to make pine cone feeders packed with seeds/want to help wildlife build up fat for the cold winter days ahead. Visitors are encouraged to bring raisins, seeds, orange and apple slices or their survival items for wildlife. Accommodations are made for those with allergies. Participants, should dress for the weather and be prepared to walk for about an hour over a variety of terrains, will decorate trees in the park with packed pinecones. The program is cancelled for heavy rains or snow. Please contact Brantlem at 978-318-8417 for additional information.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Milford Town Crier

Holly Days At Home
WESTBOROUGH-The Westborough Community Chorus Inc. will be performing their 47th annual Christmas Holiday Show, Holly Days At Home, on Friday, December 6 and Saturday, December 7, at 8 p.m. and on Sunday, December 8 at 2 p.m. at the Sarah Gibbons Middle School, 20 Fisher St., Westborough. Advance tickets are on sale now from any chorus member or may be purchased at the door. A musical play, "Santa Has A Sister", will be performed in the middle section of the show starring Santa himself. The play was written by Kelly Hodge, director, and is a comedy musical geared to children. After the play, the children in the audience are invited by the Elves to come on stage and sing a tune with Santa. Formed in 1971 by the late Faith G. Newark, director, with others, they have been performing two shows each year in May and December ever since. Anyone is welcome to join in and there are no try outs. Members just need is a love for music and singing and having some fun. New singers, especially tenors, are invited to join. Tickets for the show are $ 12 for adults and $ 10 for children under 12 or senior citizens over 65. For more about the chorus check out Youtube or social media and WestboroChorus.com

Holiday Stroll

HOPKINTON-Everyone is invited to the 2019 Hopkinton Chamber of Commerce Holiday Stroll on Saturday, December 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit businesses throughout town using the new Holly Trolleys to travel around. Over 40 local businesses are participating offering sales, specials, contests, treats, raffles and promotions to make your holiday shopping easy and fun. See more information at HopChamber.com / holidaystroll2019

Bringing Holiday Wishes to America’s Troops

Nicholas and David Monroy, ages 2 and 4, members of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron #59 of Milford, help put the final touches on the holiday greetings to deployed military troops.

Thanks to help from local groups and individuals 10,701 holiday greetings will be disturbed to U.S. servicemen and women around the worlds. The local cards will be sent to Friends of Our Troops, an organization that started during the Vietnam War. The Sgt. John W. Powers Post American Legion Auxiliary Unit #59 sponsored this campaign and covers all shipping charges.

The local unit has sponsored this for 35 years under the direction of Jo-Ann Morgan, Troop Fan Mail Chairperson. The unit provides postage deployed during the holiday season. This project will help to bring joy to those who are servicemen and women are stationed.

The greetings will be distributed to over 500 locations around the world where American military troops.

Assumption School Craft Fair/Winter Carnival

MILLBURY-Crafters, vendors, games for children of all ages, raffles and homemade soup and grilled cheese sandwiches will all be available at the Assumption School Craft Fair and Winter Carnival on Sunday, December 8. The event is at Our Lady of the Assumption Church, 12 Waters St., Millbury from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It is a trolley stop on the Millbury Chain of Lights Event.

The Purple Peacock Gift Shop

The Purple Peacock Gift Shop is open for holiday shopping until December 29th! Stop by soon to find something for everyone on your list.

Mac Med Spa

Schedule an appointment today
(508) 478-9888
127 Main Street, Milford
www.macmedspa.com

20% OFF at the Purple Peacock Gift Shop
Present this coupon to save 20% on your total purchase in the Purple Peacock Gift Shop.

Valid only for merchandise purchased in-store at the Purple Peacock Gift Shop. Cannot be applied to admission tickets, gift cards, clearance items, or honey. Cannot be combined with other coupons, discounts, or offers. Valid Nov. 19, 2019 to Dec. 29, 2019.
Making the Winter Warmer for Everyone

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Christmas tree in the Children’s Room at the Milford Town Library is decorated with care and warmth this season as they once again highlight their annual Mitten Tree Drive.

An annual tradition for close to 20 years, the Mitten Tree drive collects donations of new and hand-knit mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and socks for all ages. The supplies will be given to local charitable organizations including the Daily Bread Food Pantry, the Salvation Army, and local shelters and daycares into hand out throughout the cold months.

The Mitten Tree program started many years ago after the librarians in the Children Department saw a need in the community.

“We saw children coming into the library without hats and mittens,” said Youth Services Librarian Michelle Sgammato. “And it really took off from that.”

For the past 20 years, the Milford Public Library patrons have donated thousands of items that will keep kids and adults in need warm over the winter.

This year the Children’s Department has also teamed up with a number of local charitable groups to bring supplies to those in need. Donations of household supplies such as laundry detergent, bleach, hand soap and dish washer tablets are being collected for Why Me Sherry’s House, a Worcester based non-profit organization created to help Central New England families cope with childhood cancer. Warm blankets are also being collected by Troop 314 for local veterans.

All of the donations can be brought to the Milford Library at 80 Spruce Street through December to be hung on the tree or boxed for distribution to the local charity organizations. This year’s tree is already decorated with some warm hats, mittens, scarfs, and socks, but there is still room – and a great need - for plenty more.

A great time to stop by with your donations would be on December 9, when the Young Adult Department hosts their annual Holiday Party celebrating Kwanza, Hanakkah, and Christmas. The party will feature crafts, games, and a visit with Santa for children of all ages.

“It is such a great event; last year we had over 500 people attend,” said Sgammato. “It is very festive and inclusive.”

Donations of new or hand-knitted mittens, gloves, hats, scarfs, and socks are being requested for the Mitten Tree at the Milford Town Library. Pictured is this year’s tree whose branches are waiting to be filled with warm donations. Contributed photo.

It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

Top photo: After a little glitch, the Christmas Tree in Draper Memorial Park was lit. The 5th Annual Tree Lighting, sponsored by the Citizens for Milford on November 29 helped usher in the holiday season. Jim Calarese Town Crier photo

Donations of new or hand-knitted mittens, gloves, hats, scarfs, and socks are being requested for the Mitten Tree at the Milford Town Library. Pictured is this year’s tree whose branches are waiting to be filled with warm donations. Contributed photo.

Nicholas Balentin, age 7 from Milford, got to pose with Santa. Members of the Greater Milford Community Chorus were also on hand to perform Christmas Carols. Jim Calarese Town Crier photo
Chief Search from front page

unanimously to pay for all of the finalists’ expenses.

Committee members also discussed what might happen if, for this month’s testing, there were less than the three-to-five qualified candidates a town by-law requires the search committee to forward to the Board of Selectmen. That by-law wording offers no flexibility, advised Boddy. “If the by-law says ‘three to five,’ then three to five is what you give them,” the town’s lawyer said. Boddy did note the search committee could let selectmen know if there are any issues with any of those final candidates. Cohen and Hale provided the search committee with a schedule for its December and January activities:

- December 16-17-18: Assessment Center and psychological testing of six semi-finalists
- December 18: Police Chief Selection Committee meets that evening to review testing results and narrow the six semi-finalists down to three to five finalists
- January: RMA conducts “deep background” checks on the three to five-finalist and Police Chief Selection Committee members have the opportunity to review video tapes of each candidate going through his/her Assessment Center challenges

January 26: Police Chief Selection Committee meets to review background checks results and vote on three to five final candidates to give to the Board of Selectmen. In his post-meeting interview with the Town Crier, DelBartolomeo praised his colleagues on the search committee. “The committee is working very hard and is very dedicated,” he said. “It’s going in the right direction.”

$3.4-Million Estimate to Modernize Field Pool

By Kevin Rudden Staff Reporter/Columnist

The cost to modernize the 60-plus years old Fino Field Pool is $3,377,000, Principal Architect Tom Scarlatta of Boston-based Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. said on November 20 at the first of several forums planned to educate residents about the proposed renovations. The next forum, James Asam, Parks and Recreation administrator, said, will be held late next spring to discuss the costs of staffing and maintaining the proposed modernized and expanded facility.

In his overview, Scarlatta said the current pool and bathhouse no longer comply with the state’s building and health codes, is illegal under federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The location – within the Charles River’s and Milford Pond’s flood zones – is problematic in terms of permitting, he added. Other problems Scarlatta noted include the underground filtration system not being above ground, the pool leaking and an inadequate number of toilets and showers in the bathhouse. Also, the bathhouse needs to be located before people enter the pool, not after as is currently the case, Scarlatta said.

His design showed a new entry area leading to a new                          pool and “spray deck,” with an area set aside for a possible new playground. The pool itself would have a gradual, zero-depth entry that deepens to five feet on a one-foot over 12-foot slope to provide full accessibility without the need for an ADA lift, Scarlatta explained.

Calling the design “multi-generational,” the architect pointed out a laned area for lap-swimming or swimming lessons that would let the rest of the pool still be used. The “spray deck” would have “nothing extravagant,” just a variety of water spray stations that gives an amenity for much smaller children. “The spray deck, he also noted, could be opened from May through September even if the pool is closed due to a lack of lifeguard staff.

is design called for using the current bathhouse as a storage building with a snack bar open toward an adjacent ball field. And, Scarlatta said, parts of the unheated new bathhouse could remain open for several months before and after the pool is operating as a bathroom for people going by on the Upper Charles Trail and people attending games at the ball field.

If funded, renovations could start in late August of one calendar year and be completed in time for the new facility to open in June of the following year, the architect explained. Asam and Scarlatta explained that the proposal being recommended was chosen over just a larger pool in order to satisfy the needs of many different users. “This provides different things that you can do,” Scarlatta said. And, “in terms of infrastructure, a lot of it currently exists,” the architect said.

Audience comments and questions ranged from Finance Committee members discussing the proposed budget to residents urging the town to keep alive their childhood memories of using the pool. Rose Mary Naticch recalled working as a lifeguard at the pool in 1950s and watching families have picnics in “the grove” of nearby trees. “I think the pool is one of the loveliest things in Milford,” commented Maryann O’Brien.

Recent Actions Board of Selectmen

By Kevin Rudden Staff Reporter/Columnist

- Transferred the Common Victualler license held by the Cantinho Goiano Restaurant, Inc. at 163 Main St. to Encuentro Latino Restaurant, Inc. at that address, with Maria Loja Castro of Milford as manager. The restaurant will serve Ecuadorian cuisine, she said. (November 18)
- Scheduled hearings at its December 2 meeting to determine whether three businesses holding liquor licenses but not using them should have those licenses renewed by the board or be held in reserve by the town for restaurants seeking liquor licenses. Town Counsel Charles Boddy said a license-holder could appeal its non-renewal to the state’s Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). Chairman William Buckley noted a liquor license is a privilege and – when not used – “No one is benefitting from that license.” (November 18)
- Selectman William Kingkade asked when the Purchase Street School building would be put for sale, as authorized at October’s Special Town Meeting. Boddy said he was starting to draft an invitation to bid for the building. Buckley suggested selling it by auction and working with the existing day care tenant, perhaps by waiting until the school year ends. Kingkade noted there was no “school year” for pre-schools. (November 18)
- Kingkade asked that an analysis of the town’s Information Technology (IT) department, its staffing and its budget be reviewed at the board’s December 2 meeting in light of vacancies within the department. (November 18)
- Approved a Change of [corporate] Officers and Change of Banker for the 99 Restaurant chain that affects the All-Alcoholic Beverages license held by the local restaurant located on East Main St. (November 18)
- Accepted a $2,500 gift from American National Power in
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Special Town Meeting on TIF Requests to be in January

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

A Special Town Meeting to consider the requests of two companies seeking tax incremental financing (TIF) agreements with the town will likely be held in mid-January, Selectmen Chairman William Buckley reported to his colleagues on November 18. Selectman William Kingkade, noting the meeting would be focused on economic development, requested an article also be placed on the warrant seeking the state legislature’s approval for a liquor license for the proposed Rail Trail Flatbread Restaurant on Main Street.

At the board’s November 4 meeting, Interactions, LLC of Franklin and Rentschler Biopharma SE of Germany discussed their respective business expansions at separate Maple Street locations. Selectmen then formed a task force consisting of Chairman William Buckley, Town Administrator Richard Villani, Town Counsel Charles Boddy and Finance Director Zachary Taylor – with Assessor Administrator Jennifer Sclar being brought in as needed – to negotiate with the two companies.

After “multiple back-and-forth” meetings, “We have agreements in principle as they relate to the financial structure” of the two TIF agreements, Buckley said. Boddy will be finalizing the exact wording of agreements to share with the two companies and then the full Board of Selectmen can review them and – if approved – send them to the Finance Committee for its review, Buckley explained.

Both companies originally wanted a Special Town Meeting decision by the end of December, but agreed to a mid-January timeframe, the chairman said, after he explained to them the approval process and the need to let Town Meeting Members enjoy their holiday seasons, Buckley explained.

Boddy termed the agreements to date “very solid” and noted they provide for “what protects the town the best.” He continued, “I think we get a deal that’s beneficial to both sides.”

Town Administrator Richard Villani said he expected to have the board set the Special Town Meeting date and open the warrant for it at its December 2 meeting.

Kingkade said his request to add the liquor license request comes after he talked to the owner of the Rail Trail Flatbread Company in Hudson. “To me, this Town Meeting is all about economic development,” he said. “There is a huge build-out that they have to do with that building.”

Kingkade said about the former Home National Bank of Milford/Rockland Trust site on Main Street. Having the town support for a liquor license will help the owners get financing for the renovations.

At the November 4 meeting, Interactions officials said they want to move from their current headquarters in Franklin to a 52,080 square-foot vacant building at 21 Maple St. where the company would invest $7 million into the facility – $5 million in construction costs and $2 million in personal property. Interactions would relocate its 200 employees to Milford, and plans to hire another 100 people over the next three years, they said.

Rentschler Biopharma already own and operates a 108,340 square-foot facility at 27 Maple St., where it develops and manufactures medicines for more than 100 biopharmaceutical customers, its officials said. The company is planning a 24,000-square-foot expansion that will cost $55 million, including $46 million in construction costs and $9 million in personal property. In addition to its existing 85 jobs, the expansion would mean another 75 full-time jobs, they said.
A Picture is Worth a Thousand Smiles

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words; but a recent project taken on by the National Art Honor Society (NAHS) students at Milford High School may prove that a picture can also be worth a thousand smiles.

Approximately 15 NAHS members volunteered their time for The Memory Project, an organization dedicated to promoting intercultural awareness, friendship, and kindness between children around the world through the universal language of art. Students involved in the project received pictures of orphaned children from parts of the world to use to create portraits to send back to them as a keepsake, or memory, of themselves.

“This year we received pictures of children in orphanage in Pakistan,” said NAHS junior Samantha Martinez. “We learned all about how they love art and love to receive portraits that people draw of them.”

The students received photos of the orphans which they used to create a likeness in paint or colored pencils. The portraits will be returned to the children in the orphanage and a video of the package being opened of the artwork is sent back to the artists by The Memory Project.

“You get to see the faces of these children light up when they see the portraits,” said Milford High School Art Teacher and NAHS Advisor Marcia Ansalone. “That is why we keep doing this year after year.”

The Memory Project is just one of the many volunteer opportunities available to the NAHS students, who jump on chances to share their talents by beautifying our school and community.

“We are working on designing a mural for the senior wall in the cafeteria to represent diversity,” said NAHS junior Megan Najarian about one of the many projects the group is working on this year, along with painting inspirational quotes on the restroom doors at Stacy Middle School.

But having the ability to share their artwork in a way that will put a smile on a young child’s face is what it’s all about, said Najarian.

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Milford Town Crier
The EL Student Population
Increased by Five Percent

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

English Learner (EL) students in the Milford Public Schools have increased by 5 percent in the past year, many of whom are coming into the district needing considerable language development support.

Milford’s EL Program Director Jennifer Noorjanian gave an update on the EL Program to the School Committee during their November 21 meeting, speaking on the current influx of Level 1 EL students (students who speak a language other than English and need to receive language development instruction by a licensed EL teacher) coming into the district this year.

“Last year on October 1, we had 757 EL students…this October 1 there were 939 EL students,” said Noorjanian.

Those numbers equate to 23 percent of the Milford public school population, up from 16 percent last year. A majority of the EL students are at Memorial (39 percent), though Noorjanian said that there was a significant increase in EL students at Milford High as well.

Since October 1 of this year, those numbers have risen even further to 939 EL students.

“Half of those students are level 1; they are either just entering the country or are scores a level 1 on their access test,” Noorjanian told the School Committee.

EL students are categorized by their English Language Proficiency levels (1-6), where a student typically progresses over these levels over the course of six years. Students who have “graduated” from the EL program, still have to be monitored for up to four years as they become FEL (former English Learner) students.

Currently the EL department is monitoring 412 FEL students throughout the district.

“(Including the FEL students) the EL Department is overseeing 30.6 percent of the student body,” said Noorjanian.

Those numbers are higher than the state average of 21.9, and could possibly continue to climb for the town, said school officials.

“We need to keep these numbers in mind when we think about staffing for the 20/21 school year,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin McIntyre. “We need to keep them in mind when we are having budget conversations.”

This year the district added two staff members as interpreters who have been working with the non-English speaking families during meetings and events.

“They are so busy,” said Noorjanian of the new hires. “It was much appreciated by the staff and the community.”

But with over 200 new EL students this year alone, there is some catch-up to do with staffing levels, even before projecting the number of EL students coming to Milford next school year.

“If politics remain the same in Brazil, we may continue to see the increase here,” said Noorjanian. “We have increased more students this year than we have in the past 2 1/2 years in total.”

Another student population that has increased in Milford is the number of EL students who also have disabilities. According to Noorjanian, 3.8 percent, or 167, of Milford students are classified as EL with disabilities.

“Some of these students have severe cognitive disabilities,” she said. “We need to look at how we meet the needs of those students.”

Noorjanian spoke about the goals that the department have been focusing on this year including providing instructional coaching for the staff. “As students in front of our teachers are changing, our teachers need more instruction on how to teach to our changing demographics,” she said.

The School Committee thanked Noorjanian for her presentation and commended her for her efforts as the EL Program Director. “I think we have a lot to talk about at budget time,” commented School Committee Chairperson Jen Parson.

81 BVT Students Earn Adams Scholarships

A tuition-free college education is a reason to smile, and it is one of the many options now available to 81 Blackstone Valley Tech students named recipients of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship.

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Students must earn Advanced and Proficient scores on the grade 10 MCAS exams in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering (with at least one score advanced) and earn a combined score within the top 25 percent of their school district to be eligible.

Students who accept the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship and enroll as full-time students in a Massachusetts state college or university will receive a Scholarship and enroll as full-time students in a degree program leading to a degree in an area of study approved by the Adams Scholarship Office within the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

The following members of the BVT Class of 2020 (listed alphabetically by town) were recently informed of their eligibility for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship:

Hopedale
Thomas Buckley, Annabellle O’Reilly, and Chloe Pigeon.

Mendon
Carlie Brown, Chase Duncan, Kate Healy, Ethan Lynch, Cole Peterson, Abigail Pontier, and Brian St John.

Milford
Michael Boone, Olivia Chesni, Minhaz Choudhury, Joao Goncalves, Timothy Haarstick, Brandon Kee, Lorenzo Morose, and Melissa Vieira.

Upton
Coby Asselin, Nolan Ballard, Adam Dickey, Andrew Galicki, Hannah Giglio, Morgan Matellian, Jillian Napolitano, Mallory Rogers, and Noah Stulcup.

BVT Hosts Aging Well Assessment Day

The Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School welcomed a group of 13 senior citizens from the Upton and Mendon Senior Centers for Aging Well Assessment Day on November 13.

This annual event is a collaborative effort of the BVT Post-Secondary Practical Nursing Program with the school’s Health Services, Dental Assisting, and Culinary Arts Programs.

Aging Well Assessment Day was established in 2010 by the Practical Nursing Program as a way for its adult-learners to practice real-life application of nursing skills and theory.

Area senior citizens were invited to the school for a day of assessments that included height, weight, vision screenings, home safety, nutrition, dental, and a hour-long physical performed by Practical Nursing students.

“More thanks to the faculty, staff, students, and participants from the Upton and Mendon Senior Centers that assisted in making this year’s event a success,” said Practical Nursing Coordinator, Joann Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA. “Without them, this event would not be possible.”

Peggy freey of the Upton Senior Center, dressed in BVT purple, was ready for her dental lab visit with Caitlyn Meisner of Bellingham and Sklyar Mnymak of Douglas, both seniors in the Dental Assisting program. Peggy told Caitlyn and Sklyar that she loves coming every year to Aging Well Day and how much she enjoyed visiting the Dental Clinic for the new dental assessment.

Lana Mars of Millville, visiting with the Mendon Senior Center, was all smiles during her assessment performed by Practical Nursing Student, Ana Carlino. Lana explained that her husband, Peter, participated last year and was happy to have her turn.

Giving back to these students and participating in this event was important to Lana. “I worked in the health field for many years at a hospital in Connecticut. Some people helped me along the way, and now I am glad to help these students in this way,” said Lana Mars.

While Health Services and Dental Assisting students’ aided in the assessments with the BVT Practical Nursing students, the Culinary Arts students prepared to cater a delicious, healthy lunch for the participants that was enjoyed and served in the Three Seasons Restaurant.

“Our seniors were thrilled about their experience at BVT,” said Bernadette Denson, Upton Senior Center Department Specialist. “One of them said she was amazed by how ‘polite, articulate, friendly, and respectful’ your students were. They were really raving about every aspect of their visit, including the food!”

For additional information, please visit https://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/practicnursing and connect with Program Coordinator, Joann Monks.

Shop Local
Buy Local

Practical Nursing student, Tyler Yedinak of Northbridge prepares ‘treats’ for the Upton Senior Center for her nutritional assessment. BVT photo
Positive Trends in Student Health and Safety

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Milford Public Schools saw positive trends in students facing health and safety issues inside and outside of school including alcohol use and bullying, while vaping continues to rise according to the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey.

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey is given to students in Milford in grades 7 through 12 every other year since 2006. The anonymous survey of over 100 questions tracks trends in issues that affect teens such as substance abuse, bullying, and mental health.

“Our data was very consistent with what is happening within the MetroWest,” said Amy Leone, Director of Community Impact and advisor to the Milford Public Schools.

Leone, SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Director Lisa Kinglake, and Director of Nursing Lee Waignor presented the results and the ongoing efforts to address some of the issues identified in the survey during the November 21 School Committee Meeting.

Vaping has become a trend that has increased over the past three years, said Leone, with eight percent of Milford’s middle school students and 30 percent of high school students reporting that they have vaped in the past 30 days. Students who have reported that they have vaped in their lifetime has increased from 10 percent in 2016 to 16 percent in 2018 for middle school students and 27 percent in 2016 to 43 percent in 2018 for high school students.

“That is pretty consistent with what all the other school districts are talking about,” said Leone.

With vaping related illnesses rising, officials hope that students are becoming aware of the negative effects of vaping.

“We are starting to get more data about emotional issues that is helping us to look at the underlying problem for some of these issues that affect a student’s ability to learn.”

While alcohol use rises from 7th through 12th grade, the results of the survey showed a decrease from 2016 of four percent in high school students who have consumed alcohol if they had a drink in the past 30 days.

“We really have to look at this from a cultural perspective,” said Leone. “To consider what does this data mean and how the kids are interpreting this question.”

Increased pressures in the schools and the community of the dangers of substance abuse has been a focus for Community Impact over the past few years.

“It is nice that we have seen that there is a decrease in drinking over time,” she said.

Milford students (81 percent of middle schoolers and 53 percent of high schoolers) feel that there is “moderate” or “great” risk to using marijuana.

“You definitely know they are getting education around the risk factors,” commented Leone. Another positive trend was a decrease in bullying according to the survey results. Leone said that there was a “significant” decrease in bullying at the high school level both in and out of school, and a decrease at the middle school level from 40 percent in 2008 to 21 percent in 2018.

Cyber bullying continues to be an area of concern, with 18 percent of middle and high school students reporting that they have been verbally harassed because of race, ethnicity or culture; 25 percent of high school students and 38 percent middle schoolers reporting that they have been verbally harassed because of height, weight or how they look.

Students are also feeling stress and anxiety about school, social issues, and family issues, but the supports put in place both in and outside of school have helped with these types of issues that could affect a students’ ability to learn.

Overall, Leone said that though the demographics are different from other towns, the results of the data are very consistent to trends seen in MetroWest and Massachusetts.

“We are starting to get more data about emotional issues that is helping us to look at the underlying problem for some of these issues in order to come up with how we can address it,” she said.

GGC Offers 2020 Scholarship

The Greenleaf Garden Club of Milford (GGC) will again offer a $1000 Scholarship to be awarded to a graduating senior from the Class of 2020 who resides in Milford. The recipient must be accepted to an accredited college, university or institute of higher learning with plans to enter a field related to horticulture, the environment or agriculture.

Please use the application and contact information on the Guidance Department website of Milford High School and Valley Tech for application and contact information on the Guidance Department website of Milford High School and Valley Tech for details.

The Greenleaf Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Garden Club Federation of MA, Inc.

Calendar

Diabetic Family Fundraiser
MEDWAY-Diabetic Family Fundraiser will be held on Saturday, December 14 at the Metro West YWCA from 7 to 11 p.m. Come shop, play, enjoy games, eat great food, and support two local families affected by diabetes. Walk-ins welcome but prior ticket sales are preferred. Purchase ticket or for information, contact Kristy Lambert at 508-244-8103 or KristyLambert@gmail.com

Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Meeting
MILFORD-The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary will meet on Tuesday, December 10, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in Conference Room A on the first floor of the hospital, 14 Prospect St. The Auxiliary members conduct monthly fundraising events to support building funds, departments throughout the hospital and school scholarships. The public is welcome to attend all fundraising events held at the hospital. Auxiliary meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from September to June. Both men and women are encouraged to consider joining this successful organization. For more information, call 508-422-2099, or visit MRMCAuxiliary@milreg.org

Holiday Season Blood Drives
MILFORD-The American Red Cross urges eligible donors to be the lifeline for patients in need this holiday season by making an appointment to give blood or platelets. “With hopes to save lives during this time of year we need as many donations as possible,” said Leone, “so that we can support everyone that is in need of transfusion, enough, those who come out to give November 18 to December 18 will also receive a $5 Amazon gift card via email,” said Leone. “Immediate Plasma may be donated at Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford, on December 12 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and December 18 from 1 to 7 p.m.

Make an appointment by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on an Alexa Echo device.

Holiday Greenery Sale
MILFORD-The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary will hold the popular Greenery Sale on Friday, December 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the hospital’s Attrim Cafe. This year’s sale will feature fresh wreaths and greens, decorated holiday planters, and seasonal arrangements. Many items are crafted by the Auxiliary members. Come for some holiday cheer and help support the hospital, which is located at 14 Prospect St., Milford.

New members are always welcome to join the Auxiliary by calling 508-422-2099, or visiting MRMCAuxiliary@milreg.org

Twice Blessed Thrift Shop
HOPEDALE-The Sacred Heart Church of Hopedale Twice Blessed Thrift Shop offers the following specials in December - half off Christmas decor, outerwear, sweaters, jewelry, winter accessories, shoes and boots. During the first week of the month, a bag of clothing, except for specials, is $5. Open every Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the first and third Thursday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

See Holiday Shopping Guide on page 10 and 11 for more calendar listings!
By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

A memorable run for the Milford High boys’s soccer team came to an end in the state final with a 4-7 loss to Winchester, denying the Scarlet Hawks’ bid to finish the season undefeated. "We made a lot of mental and physical mistakes, and then come up short," said head coach Brian Edwards. "We were a bit too casual, and we didn’t put enough pressure on them." Winchester, denying the Scarlet Hawks’ bid to finish the season undefeated, scored a fourth quarter touchdown run, but that is all the offense Milford could muster. "We really want to thank our seniors and wish them the best of luck," Vizakis said. "The seniors, they gave it all they had week-in and week-out. I think they are giving us something good to work off of going into next season." As the team turns the page towards the future, Vizakis’ optimism is boost by the volume and quality of returning players slated to lead the roster in 2020. "We have a bunch of kids coming back," Vizakis said. "Our whole offensive line and our wide receiver core is returning." The former offensive sub, "Edwards said. "The guys wanted to go the whole way, but when we have time to sit back and think about it I think we will be happy with what we accomplished." The skill players figure to benefit from an experienced offensive line lead by Mario Lee and Nick Yohn, both of whole will be seniors. "The fact that we have so many juniors coming back is going to help," Vizakis said. Milford will also look to build on some of the lessons learned from this season, the coach said. The Hawks played in a number of tight games, falling just short in contests against Franklin, Stoughton and Hopkinton during the campaign. "For me personally, and for our staff, we learned a lot through important losses and close losses," Vizakis said. "It’s going to be exciting to see those kids in their senior year and see what they can do!"

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Milford football head coach Anthony Vizakis summed up his team’s 15-12 loss to Maynard on Thanksgiving Day with a single word, “Sloppy.”

"The field conditions were sloppy, our play offensively, defensively and on special teams was sloppy, we would have liked a better outcome for our seniors," Vizakis said, "but unfortunately, it was a sloppy game.

Senior Luke Rosa provided one of the few bright spots in the season-ending loss, which dropped the Scarlet Hawks’ record to 4-7, scoring a touchdown in the opening quarter. Junior quarterback Carter Scudo added a fourth quarter touchdown run, but that is all the offense Milford could muster. "We really want to thank our seniors and wish them the best of luck," Vizakis said. "The seniors, they gave it all they had week-in and week-out. I think they are giving us something good to work off of going into next season.”

As the team turns the page towards the future, Vizakis’ optimism is boosted by the volume and quality of returning players slated to lead the roster in 2020. "We have a bunch of kids coming back," Vizakis said. "Our whole offensive line and our wide receiver core is returning.”

"Joao Pedro has a strong game in the midfield and his goal was a big one for us," Edwards said. The head coach added praise for Eduardo Castro, who came off the bench and put together a strong performance in the decisive contest. MHS had a pair of one goal leads during the game, and neither team was able to open up any separation as the contest went to overtime. Pedro Araujo scored twice for Milford, while Joao Pedro Da Silva and Carlos Terrinha added tallies of their own. The latter of which sent the game to extra time.

"We are still disappointed about it, it won’t be for a while that we can really start to enjoy it," Edwards said. "The guys wanted to go the whole way, but when we have time to sit back and think about it I think we will be happy with what we accomplished.”

Hockomock Wins the Goal for MHS Girls’ Track

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford girls’ track and field team enters the winter season with a group of athletes who competed for the team a season ago as freshmen and sophomores and who are now prepared to help the team toward its goal of a Hockomock League title.

"This year we should be pretty strong," head coach Derek Rose said. "We have a small but talented senior group and we have young kids who are ready to step up and take more of the reigns.”

Leading the way for the Scarlet Hawks is junior Kerry O’Connor, who has been a star for the track program since she stepped onto campus. O’Connor is expected to compete in the 300, 600, long jump, and some of the MHS relay teams. "She has been a state-level talent since she was a freshman," Rose said, noting that the events O’Connor races on a particular day may depend on the matchups for that meet.

Sarah Brogoi is the team’s top high jumper and one of the best of a strong hurled group. Senior Bella Gonzalez will help lead Milford’s mid-distance group.

"That’s going to be a real likable group of kids, there are no cliques, everybody is just together," he said. “They seem like a very tight-knit group.”

MHS Soccer Run Ends in State Final

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Winchester, denying the Scarlet Hawks’ bid to finish the season undefeated, posted a victory on penalty kicks, and multiple styles of games during its march through the opposition just could not find the back of Milford. "We are still disappointed about it, it won’t be for a while that we can really start to enjoy it," Edwards said. "The guys wanted to go the whole way, but when we have time to sit back and think about it I think we will be happy with what we accomplished.”

MHS boys’s soccer team came to an end in the state final with a 4-7 loss, scoring a touchdown in the opening quarter. Junior quarterback Carter Scudo added a fourth quarter touchdown run, but that is all the offense Milford could muster. "We really want to thank our seniors and wish them the best of luck," Vizakis said. "The seniors, they gave it all they had week-in and week-out. I think they are giving us something good to work off of going into next season.”

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MHS Boys’ Track Hopes to Define Roles in New Year

By Chris Villani

Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford High School girls basketball team was not where it wanted to be last year in terms of wins and losses, but with nearly the entire team returning, head coach T.J. Dolliver is excited to turn the page to a new campaign.

“It’s a new season and we are going to have a different team,” Dolliver said. “Every season is different. Last year did not go the way we would want, but the goal this year is to make the tournament.”

Milford won the season finale a year ago, its lone victory of the season. Four starters return this year, including Emma Lawrence, who led the team in scoring as a sophomore. “She is definitely going to play a big role for us, both offensively and defensively,” Dolliver said.

Another junior, Jill Mickelson, is also a high-energy player, Dolliver said, who will be counted on as a defensive spark. Carly Ferreira and Katie Maitetta will be post players for the Scarlet Hawks.

“They are going to hopefully control the boards for us,” Dolliver said. “They are not overly tall, but we’re going to play against some tall girls, so we have to be physical and box out.”

The four most experienced players on the MHS roster have been together since they were freshmen. Dolliver said he is looking for them to take a big step forward moving into this season.

“We are going to be young, but we have a lot of girls who played together as sophomores last year who are now juniors,” he said. “All of them are coming back and four of them have been here for three years.”

The Milford roster may not have a single senior on it this year, but the Hawks may see some contributions from the freshman class. The sizable group of young players has needed two travel teams in middle school, Dolliver said, the depth may yield a player or two ready to contribute at the varsity level. The 20 freshmen joining the program this year is the most Dolliver has seen in his time at the helm of the program.

Milford begins the season at Franklin on Friday, December 13.
The Milford High School cheerleading team will compete in Orlando in March after a South Sectional Championship and a third-place finish at the state competition to cap off the fall season. MHS photo

I could have asked for anything better from them," Johnson said. "They performed as well as they could. Between our fans, the crowd, their families, we had an amazing turnout and they all had nothing but positive things to say about their performance." Milford's routine began with a cheer from and alongside Tyler, "Seaver said. "It exploded with a terrific offseason," Seaver said. "We are going to rely on him to be a part of the lineup. Ben Blanchard, a junior, is another player who could start. "He really prides himself on defense."

"We will be leaning on him for a lot of leadership and to carry us on the perimeter and hit big shots," Seaver said of the three-year varsity player. "He has had a terrific offseason and we are hoping he can take the final step of his career." Junior captain Jordan Darling, a senior during his sophomore campaign, is another player Seaver said is looking to take a "major step forward." Darling came off the bench for a couple of games last year before moving into the starting lineup and never looking back.

"I think we have big expectations," head coach Paul Seaver said, noting that the junior class has been especially strong and has been playing together virtually year-round since they were in first grade. "They know the expectations are to compete and compete with the best," Seaver said. "We expect to compete for a league title in the Davenport Division. We were one game out of a playoff spot and two games out of a league title last year going into the final week. I don't think anything intimidates these guys."

Milford has a dozen returning varsity players, including 10 members of the varsity roster who were sophomores on the varsity squad a season ago. A senior, Colby Pires, also returns after being a captain a year ago and will be a wing player for the Scarlet Hawks.

"Senior Tyler Wetherbee is also expected to play a significant role this winter. A strong defender, Seaver said he has a chance to work his way into the starting lineup. "I'll be better, a junior, is another player who could start," he really exploded with a terrific offseason," Seaver said. "We are going to rely on him to score."

Junior Matt Varrarantes joins Wetherbee in the backcourt, and the two will provide experience on that end of the floor. "He is a ball handler and he will play with and alongside Tyler," Seaver said.

The Scarlet Hawks finished 9-12 in 2018-2019. Milford will open up the new season December 13 against Franklin.