Buckley Blasts Amazon for Van Traffic

By Kevin Buckley
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Last month and again this month, Selectman Chair William Buckley unleashed a barrage of criticism about the negative impacts Amazon.com’s delivery vans are having on traffic flow through Milford. Earlier this month, he called upon company officials to sign an “impact agreement” with the town.

Buckley’s criticism of the e-tailing giant included:
- Illegal “terminals” where Amazon tractor-trailers and vans are being parked;
- Vans stopping on roadways and impeding traffic flow;
- Excessive queuing and funeral procession-like groups of vans blocking other vehicles from getting through traffic signals;
- Groups of vans overloading local gas stations and blocking traffic flow from passing in front of the stations;
- Not paying excise taxes to the town on the vans parked in Milford overnight.

“It feels like Milford has become a dump site for Amazon,” he noted. Buckley called for a moratorium on any more vans “until we better understand their concerns that we have.”

Continuing, Buckley said, “To be candid, Amazon’s exhausted any good will it has with the community and it’s trying our patience.”

Since Amazon came to Milford in 2016, the numbers of vehicles it said would be located at its local facility are now “orders of magnitude higher.”

“How do we go along with a company that’s not going anywhere?” Kingkade asked. He said that he, himself uses Amazon’s Prime service, and it made sense to resolve issues over time. “The most important thing is to get everyone into a room and start talking,” Walsh said. “I hope tonight is the start of it and we move forward from here.”

Amazon’s Cleland said other communities where Amazon’s delivery centers are located are not having the problems Milford is experiencing. “We are here to solve these issues,” he said. “Your constituents are our customers.”

As a first step, Amazon is expanding the geographic area where vans can be refueled — which should ease traffic woes around Milford’s gas stations, Cleland explained. He promised an action plan would be forthcoming.

“I don’t want to be seen as the enemy of the town,” Cleland stated.

He told Buckley that Amazon is paying excise taxes on the vans with Massachusetts registrations that are parked in Milford, but does not have to pay excise taxes on any vans engaged in interstate commerce. Buckley suggested Cleland take a closer look at the state’s laws.

So Far a Winter with Little Snow

Despite a fairly little storm that dropped about 3 inches of snow in Milford, the night of January 18, it has been a mild winter so far. Just the weekend before, January 11-12, residents shivered in warm, almost summer-like temperatures. The deepest snowfall of the season was during the first few days of December accumulating about a foot of the white stuff. Since then there have been small snow storms and a lot of rain.

According to the Old Farmer’s Almanac, the rest of the winter weather will be similar to what has already occurred. Its prediction for the next few weeks in southern New England and the Atlantic corridor, which stretches from Boston down to the coast to Richmond, Va., states, “Winter temperatures will be much above normal, on average, with the coldest periods in mid- and late January and early and late February. Precipitation will be above normal, with below normal snowfall. The snowiest periods will occur in mid- and late January and early February.”

Looking ahead to spring, the almanac predicts, “April and May will be warmer than normal, with precipitation near normal in the north [southern New England] and above normal in the south.”

The heat and rain continues in for the rest of the year. It states, “Summer will be hotter and rainier than normal, with the hottest periods in mid-July and early to mid-August. September and October will be warmer and rainier than normal, with a tropical storm threat in early to mid-October.”

If so the predictions are right, get ready for snow during the next couple of weeks and then be prepared for a rainy 2020.

The Community Sounds Off About Amazon’s Vans

Several Milford residents and a prominent local businessman took advantage of the Board of Selectmen’s “Invitation to Speak” portion of its January 6 agenda to let their feelings about Amazon.com’s delivery vans be known.

“When Amazon came to town, the entire dynamic changed,” said David Bliss of Ferguson St. “On the east side of town, they have destroyed the quality of life.” He continued, “We’re getting nothing I return.” Bliss said it feels like “they’re taking over the town.”

Pasquale Ceriauolo of Messina St. said he is an Amazon Prime subscriber. “The product is a good product,” he noted, but added the van traffic makes it almost impossible for him to turn onto Medway Rd. (Rt. 109). “It’s just a major headache for the town,” he said. Benjamin Boone of Bodio Circle. “That’s a lot of traffic.”

Laura Ryan of Janock Rd. suggested Amazon develop its own gas station so it could fill the delivery vans without impacting the service station near the Milford Crossing shopping plaza. She also voiced concern about lighting at the new Amazon parking lot being developed off East Main St. near the I-495 overpass shining into her neighborhood. Imperial Toyota owner Kevin Meehan, responding to complaints about having Amazon vans parked at that Fortune Blvd. dealership, noted it was his right to service and sell vans. In terms of allowing Amazon vehicles to park on his property off Beaver St. near the I-495 ramps on Medway Rd., he noted the area will soon be paved and fenced in.

“I think we can work with them [Amazon] to fix this,” Meehan said, adding, “to find them proper parking.”

Possible solutions to current problems are making the section of Beaver St. that is now only one way into a two-way roadway or even turning the land on East Main St. where a casino was once proposed to be located into a 1,000-van parking area with its own on/off ramps onto I-495, Meehan suggested. In terms of the van drivers not being courteous to other drivers, Meehan noted the booming economy makes it hard to find good workers.
The Legacy of a Young Man, Supporting Those with Disabilities

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

A foundation in memory of a young boy who championed diversity, tolerance, and acceptance for people with disabilities will roll out this month on the anniversary of his passing.

The new Aaron Zenus Foundation has been established to encourage and support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families, as they seek to achieve independence, community integration, social growth, and an enhanced quality of life.

“Aaron was a loving, caring, and compassionate young man, who touched the lives of everyone he met,” read a statement by Milford’s Special Olympics Coordinator Jennifer Walsh, who is also one of the Foundations founders along with Aaron’s grandfather Joseph Zenus, Sr. “At such an early age, he was a strong advocate and cared deeply for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and, he supported them regularly by volunteering his time with the Milford Special Olympics program.”

Aaron passed away in January of 2019 from flu-related complications. He was described as cheerful, curious, funny, outgoing, witty, and at times mischievous, but at all times, friendly, unselfish, and sincere.

Walsh said what separated Aaron from the typical 12-year-old was the tremendous respect and consideration he showed to all individuals, especially to anyone who was less fortunate than he. “Aaron always rooted for the underdog, and seemed to befriend and care for anyone who was lonely, or, just needed a friend,” she said. “These qualities led him to his desire to volunteer and coach with his dad [Joseph Zenus, Jr.] in the Special Olympics programs offered in our community.”

Aaron truly embraced the overarching qualities that Special Olympics encourages, supporting the activities of special athletes, promoting diversity, tolerance, and acceptance for people with disabilities, and encouraging inclusion for all.”

Walsh said that the best way they could find to honor Aaron’s kindness, love, and compassion for all was to honor him by creating a foundation that would include increasing opportunities for creating a healthier lifestyle, enhancement of social networking and social programs, and to inspire participation in sports, recreation, and the arts.

“Through the Aaron Zenus Foundation, we intend to keep his memory alive, and see to it that his dreams and wishes are fulfilled, as he continues to live on within our hearts and minds,” reads their mission statement. “In his short life, Aaron left a lot of things undone and had dreams and wishes that he never had a chance to start. Through the Aaron Zenus Foundation, we intend to keep his memory alive, and to see to it that his dreams and wishes come to fruition.”

A foundation in the name of Aaron Zenus, a Milford boy who died of a flu-related illness last year, will kick-off this month to benefit the Milford Special Olympics, a cause that was near and dear to him. Pictured is Aaron (front right) as an Assistant Coach to the Special Olympic qualifying Basketball game at Weston High School.

For more information or to make a donation to help fulfill Aaron’s dream please visit their web-site at TheAaronZenusFoundation.com.

Compassionate Companions Needed

Milford Regional Medical Center is looking for volunteers to serve as Compassionate Companions to ensure that patients at the end of life are not alone.

Based on the No One Dies Alone program, Compassionate Companion volunteers provide a comforting, compassionate presence for patients at the end of life who would otherwise be alone.

For more information about Compassionate Companions or to volunteer for this important program, contact Elaine Willey, director of Volunteer Services, at ewilley@egrmc.org. Volunteers will be interviewed, screened and trained. The deadline to apply is Thursday, January 30, in order to be included in this year’s training.

Thanks To Yanks Handles Cold Weather Donation

Michael Shain, founder and president of Thanks To Yanks, a local charity that serves military families and Sue-Ellen Szymanski, Milford Town Library Youth Services Supervisor, stand in front of the library’s Mitten Tree. This year the annual collection of hats, gloves and scarves is being donated with help from Thanks To Yanks to the Family Program director of the Massachusetts National Guard for holiday distribution. For more information visit Thanks To Yanks on the web or like them on Facebook.

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Blaire House of Milford Assisted Living Residence is here to provide caregivers a much needed rest from the mental and physical strain of caring for their loved ones. We can accommodate respite guests for a few weeks to a few months – giving you the opportunity to take a well deserved break — with the confidence your loved one is receiving the best possible care.

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Milford Town Crier
JANUARY 24, 2020
I Love New York!

Members of Milford Girl Scout Cadette Troop 30570, enjoyed three full days touring New York City on a memorable, whirlwind trip. The girls had many adventures including Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Statue of Liberty, remembering what happened at the 9/11 Memorial; exploring Ripley’s Believe it or Not Museum and Madame Tussauds wax museum; shopping; strolling Central Park; eating at numerous food trucks; enjoying late night gelato runs; and attending Aladdin on Broadway. The girls spent many months prior earning funds to pay their way, for Girl Scouts love great adventures. Shown, l-r, are: Lineishly Moscoso, Racquel Goncalves and Cee-Cee Deslaurier-Tate. Carolyn Deslaurier-Tate photo.

Girl Scout Carolers

Girl Scout Troop 11275 spread Christmas cheer with an old fashioned night of caroling house to house in Milford. They wanted to do something different this year and had an absolute blast making people smile with their festive singing. Shown in the photo, l-r, at the top front are: Tessi Scrimgeour and Emily Croteau, while in the background are Kaylee Nevins, Natalie daCunha, and Elena Popula. Troop 11275 photo.

Helping Families Who Have No Home

Troop 30149 helping with supplies for Pathways Shelter. Troop 30149 photo.

Daisy Swimmers

Milford Daisy Girl Scouts enjoyed an afternoon swimming for their Daisy Level Event on January 5 at Milford High School. The girls are members of Troops 64940, 65125, 65141 and 65017. Girl Scout photo.

Climbing High

Milford Girl Scout Troop 30016 recently went rock climbing at Central Rock Gym in Worcester Shown at the top of the wall is troop member Ainsley Allen. Other members who participated were: Jachia Brownlee, Katelyn Mackenzie, Ella Forgit, Leah Schepis, Savannah Beals, Bryanna Humiston, Riley Barney, Kailyn Cneober, Alice Gilman, Victoria Powers, Lily Buckley, Toyah Piausi and Caroline Finchfield. Troop Leaders are Jennifer Schepis, Kelly Church, and Kate Piausi. Troop 30016 photo.
Over 400 guests were dazzled by the transformation of Milford Middle School East into a stunning convergence of glamour and uptown chic for Milford Regional’s Mélange Gala and Live Auction - Glitz & Graffiti. This year’s auction was the most successful in the event’s history, raising crucial funds in support of oncology & palliative care.

15TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT
Mélange Celebrates with Glitz & Graffiti!
NEARLY $800,000 RAISED THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF OUR LOYAL DONORS!

On Saturday November 30th local radio station MyFM 101.3 set up camp outside of the Milford Target for a 30-hour toy drive. The 3rd Annual MyFM Stuff-a-Bus partnered with Uxbridge-based Toys For Kids and Teens in 2019 to assist local families in need this holiday season. MyFM President Tom McAuliffe reported over 8,000 toys were collected, beating last year’s collection of 5,000. The effort was also supported by Affordable Junk Removal and Resellables, TGIFridays, IHOP and Five Guys along with Vendetti Bus Company, which again provided the bus. Besides donating gifts, individuals and businesses also gave cash donations of $6,250, which was used to purchases other presents. These donors include Dinner and Co., Chelsee O’Meara – LuLaRoe, Montgomery Lodge, Milford Tire, The Kearsnrs, Lioce Properties, KemForKids, Milford Hardwood, Milford TV, Doyle Siding and Window, Ray’s Automotive, Friends of Holliston, Old Time Auto Sales, Masters Touch, Devlin’s Tavern, Depot St Tavern, Stephanie G Jewelers, Target and an anonymous Hopkinton donor. Gallo Moving and Storage transported the donations to the Toys For Kids and Teens drop off site.

Wish List
The Milford Historical Commission is looking for a few things for the Museum. First is a World War I military uniform to add to the exhibit in Memorial Hall. If anyone has one, preferably worn by a Milford soldier or sailor, and would like to donate it please contact a member of the commission or email: memorialhall@townofmilford.com

Second, a 1991 Oak Lily and Ivy yearbook to complete the Milford High School collection. Also the museum has a limited number of St. Mary's yearbooks so if any donations of Blue Mantle books would be appreciated. And, third a toy train engine for display would also be appreciated. The trains played an important role in Milford's history and a train with a picture of the depot behind it would be a nice addition to the museum.

Mémorial Hall and Museum
Mémorial Hall, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is an impressive building rich in history, built by the Town in 1884 to honor the Civil War soldiers and sailors. The Milford Historical Commission maintains the Museum and the Lyn Lovell Research Room on the first floor of the building. The Museum has memorabilia from Milford’s businesses, industries, military uniforms, sports, the hospital, and various maps. Several items have been donated from the Milford National Bank along with a grandfather clock that dates back to the Home National Bank. DVDs are available for viewing: early town pictures, “The Plains” by Joe Brucato, a Michael Baravo DVD, the funeral of David H. Rubenstein, who was the first soldier to arrive home after WWII, and the granite and boot and shoe industries.

Museum Hours
The Museum is opened to visitors every Thursday 1 to 4 p.m., free of charge. Meetings, which are open to the public, are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Visitors are welcome to tour the museum at that time. Groups that wish to visit the Museum at some other time should please call and book an appointment. For further information, please call 508-473-3560 or 508-473-8571.

Moments from the Past

Submitted by Anne Lamontagne
Milford Historical Commission

14 Prospect Street • Milford, MA 01757
508-422-2228 • foundation.milfordregional.org

Another Successful MyFM Stuff-a-Bus

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Kevin and Leslie Lobisser
Joe and Suzette Ferreira

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

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Moments from the Past

Another Successful MyFM Stuff-a-Bus
**Police Chief: Search to Finalists to Select Men Next Month**

By Kevin Budden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Police Chief Selection Committee plans to wrap up its work early next month by sending the names of final candidates to the Board of Selectmen.

Chronym Chretien, chief of staff for DeBarlomolized, the search committee, has reviewed videotapes of the six semi-finalist candidates who completed a multi-day “Assessment Center” challenge last month and winnowed the group down to four people.

Background checks are now being made on those four people and, next week, the search committee plans to review questions to ask each candidate, DeBarlomolized said.

Then, on February 4, the committee plans to interview the four candidates that take place in three to recommend to the Board of Selectmen, he said. The finalists’ names will be given to selectmen on February 5, DeBarlomolized said.

Selectmen Chairman William Buckley said he is aware of the search committee’s schedule and will discuss with his colleagues when to schedule interviews with the finalists.

Although the names of the four people being considered have not been made public, various town officials have confirmed that none are members of the Milford Police Department.

**Four Possible Races in Annual Town Election**

By Kevin Budden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Based on candidates taking out nomination papers, there could be four races on the April 7 Annual Town Election ballot: Board of Library Trustees, Board of Directors, School Committee and Selectmen.

- **School Committee:** Incumbent Joseph Callery is not seeking re-election. They are interested in learning about the computer/technology related topic. Patrons may take computer classes each week that will cover the same computer classes that continue through February 1. All appointments will be on Saturdays, and may be made now by calling the Information Desk at 508-473-2145, ext. 219.
- **Selectmen:** Former Police Chief Thomas O’Loughlin and local realtor Joshua Lioce have taken out and returned nomination papers to replace retiring Selectman William Buckley.
- **School Committee:** Incumbent Joseph Callery is not seeking re-election. They are interested in learning about the computer/technology related topic. Patrons may take computer classes each week that will cover the same computer classes that continue through February 1. All appointments will be on Saturdays, and may be made now by calling the Information Desk at 508-473-2145, ext. 219.

If you are eligible for the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker, remember to bring your 2019 real estate and personal property tax bills and receipts with you. If you do not have records of your payments, they may be obtained from the Town Treasurer’s Office. Tax Forms will be provided by the Tax Counselor.

Also make sure to bring a photo ID for any person who did not have their tax return prepared by AARP last year; copies of Social Security Cards for all dependents; a copy of last year’s tax return, regardless of who prepared them, as well as any W-2 forms; unemployment compensation statements; any SAA-1999 forms showing social security received. Health care documents unless covered by Medicare/Medicare; a blank check for direct deposit; rent payments for the 12 months of 2019; plus all other documents you feel appropriate.

Patrons will not prepare Tax Returns for Rental Property, Social Security, Farm Income, HAS, or original or amended returns farther back than 2007. All appointments must be scheduled by AARP last year; copies of Social Security Cards for all dependents; a copy of last year’s tax return, regardless of who prepared them, as well as any W-2 forms; unemployment compensation statements; any SAA-1999 forms showing social security received. Health care documents unless covered by Medicare/Medicare; a blank check for direct deposit; rent payments for the 12 months of 2019; plus all other documents you feel appropriate.

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Is a Tax Incen...
On January 2, Montgomery Lodge of Milford, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Milford, gathered for their annual business meeting. They were joined by Jennifer Walsh and JP Young of the Milford Special Olympics. Montgomery Lodge, along with the attendant York Rite Bodies of Mr. Lebanon Royal Arch Chapter, Milford Council, and Milford Commandery, presented Walsh with a $5000 donation for the Milford Special Olympics.

"One of the core tenets of Freemasonry is Charity, and at the root of that word is Love. The volunteer work that Ms. Walsh and Special Olympics performs is one of the finest examples of Love that I’ve ever seen," said Kris Tronerud, presiding Master of Montgomery Lodge, as the presentation was made.

"I just want to express my sincere gratitude to the Montgomery Lodge of Milford, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, for helping to make a difference in the lives of our Milford Special Olympic athletes," said Walsh. She added that Young, a Special Olympian, "was so excited driving home and couldn't wait to open her presents." She said that the donation will help the Special Olympics to continue to work towards the MYC mission, which is to provide a safe environment that promotes self-esteem, builds character, and fosters skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Milford Special Olympics is located at Milford High School, 31 West Fountain St., Milford. For more information Walsh can be at 508-478-1100 ext. 1121, or walshj@milfordma.com. Information is also available at MCS.Milford, MA.us/special-olympics/activities/. Montgomery Lodge is one of the country’s oldest Masonic Lodges, chartered by Most Worshipful Paul Revere in 1797, with a prestigious membership including historical local names such as Thayer, Eastman, Claddon, Draper, and Stacey. For more information, please visit MontgomeryLodge.org.

Presenting the donation to the Milford Special Olympics is Mike Fattman, R. Sutton. Riverhead, R. Sutton.

For more information, call MYC at 508-473-1756. Thank you for your support. Thank you all for attending. Over 120 Youth Provided Gifts this Holiday Season! The Milford Youth Center was able to provide gifts to over 120 After School members due to the amazing generosity from the community this holiday season. Due to the amazing support each youth was able to receive at least three gifts. The total was $20,000 worth of gifts. Thanks to go out to Pizza Chef of Milford and John Seaver for food, to Gene Sardinha Jr., Steven Sardinha and Nick Jenkins for facilitating a generous donation of $5,000 on behalf of Milford Dunkin' for gifts; United Way of Tri-County, SeaCare, Waters Corporation, Anytime Fitness Medway, Tri-Valley Sports, CYCLEBAR, West Street Autobody, Santos Garage and Amazon for collecting gifts; the Milford Rotary Club for donating 100 handmade goodie bags to the following individuals who sponsored a child and/or family: Courtney and Jessica Walsh, Katie Covel, Carrie McGrath and the Ferrucci Family. Thanks also to all staff members and volunteers who attended and helped. In appreciation, the Youth Council and gardening program helped put together and package gifts for over 180 volunteers. Passing out the gifts were Youth Commission members, State Representative Brian W. Murray, D. Milford, Selectman Mike Walsh and a representative from the office of State Senator Ryan Fattman, R. Sutton.
By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Planning Board did not hold a public hearing earlier this month on a proposed Zoning By-law change that could limit the number of Amazon.com vans parked in town because it failed to follow the proper legal procedures necessary to have that hearing. “I made a mistake,” Board Chair Marble Mainini said at the board’s January 7 meeting. The board advertised the hearing to be held that day, but when it came time for it – Mainini said it was not being held “because of some procedural problems I kind of screwed up on.” The proper procedure would have been sending a draft of the proposed zoning amendment to the Board of Selectmen, who would then vote to remand it back to the Planning Board for the public hearing.

Board member Patrick Kennelly took issue with the fact that the board as a whole never discussed the proposed amendment or voted on it before it was advertised and put on the board’s agenda. “I don’t think this gets to the root of what the problem really is,” he said. “It’s a start,” Mainini responded. “We need to discuss this as a board,” member Lena McCarthy stated. The board did that after finishing working on the items listed on its agenda.

The proposed change that was on the agenda basically would have governed so-called “transportation terminals” – the category under which the Amazon.com vans are now allowed. The current zoning definition for a “transportation terminal” is: ‘Premises for the parking and/or servicing of commercial vehicles.”

Currently, the Planning Board only has site plan review authority – basically, where things are located – over transportation terminals and has signed off on two for Amazon’s delivery vans – the parking lot at the Quarry Square shopping plaza on East Main St. and new parking area being constructed further down East Main St. just after the I-495 overpass.

The proposed amendment would have given the Planning Board much stronger authority by requiring it to have a better definition. Board member Joseph Calagione said that Amazon’s vans fall under the current by-law’s definition for transportation terminal “because that’s the only thing that comes close.” He defined the current model as “a commuter lot.”

By better defining what a “transportation terminal” is, the board could then determine what type of traffic study is needed, Calagione continued. Mainini agreed with the need for a better definition.

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Planners Concerned About Future Deliveries and Parking

While discussing a potential Zoning By-law change to better regulate the number of Amazon.com vans parked in town, Planning Board members also discussed what the future of retail operations might look like, as well as the need to plan for a growing number of “specialized” parking spaces at existing retail and food service establishments.

Board member Joseph Calagione noted – given the increasing popularity of people ordering goods online and having them delivered to their houses – today’s “big box” retail stores might change. Companies such as Target might convert part of their retail stores into warehouses for customer pick-up or offer delivery like the Amazon Prime model.

The town should prepare for that by looking at how it regulates parking and the use of delivery vans, he said. Another issue he discussed was what his colleague Patrick Kennelly termed “vanity parking” – the increasing use of stores and restaurants setting aside a number of parking spaces for special uses such as spots for people picking up online orders.

The board makes sure a business has the required number of parking spaces based on its size and type of business, but then that overall number gets reduced by the businesses designating certain spaces for everything from expectant mothers to charging electric cars to spots for online order pickups, members said.

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Members discussed the need to change the “formula” used to determine the number of required parking spaces so that it accounts for all the new uses.
By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Board of Selectmen

- 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)

- Chairman William Buckley opened the December 16, 2019 board meeting with a moment of silence in memory of the late Milford Firefighter Patrick Evans.

- Unanimously approved a request from TGI Friday’s, Inc. to transfer the All-Alcoholic Beverages license and change its officers and directors for its restaurant at 240 Fortune Blvd. from TGI Friday’s Boston, LLC to TGI Friday’s, Inc., with David Klein as the manager. (December 16, 2019)

- Unanimously granted a Retail Package All-Alcoholic Beverages license to Water Street Meat Market, LLC doing business as Water Street Meat Market at 3 Water St., with Lisa Carneiro as manager. (December 16, 2019)

- Unanimously approved a request by the Greater Milford, LLC doing business as 99 Restaurant at 240 Fortune Rd. to transfer the All-Alcoholic Beverages license and change its officers and directors for its restaurant at 240 Fortune Rd. from the Viana Bar Inc. doing business as Tradicao de Roca at 119 East Main St. to Encuentro Latino Restaurant, Inc. at that address, with Maria Loja Castro at 119 East Main St. (Rt. 16). (January 6)

- Hired Christopher Jennings as the new building custodian for the Milford Youth Center at a starting salary of $17.79 per hour, with a tentative starting date of January 13. Town Administrator Richard Villani said 84 people applied for the position, five were interviewed over the telephone and two were interviewed in person. (January 6)

- Gave Town Counsel Charles Boddy permission to pay $18,655.36 to RJM Customer Auto Body Inc. for repairs to a police cruiser damaged in an August 9, 2019 accident. Boddy explained he needs the board's permission to pay any claim that is more than $5,000 from the town's self-insurance funds. (January 6)

- Discussed reorganizing the Information Technology (IT) department by hiring a director-level person over the current manager – who is the department's only staff member right now. “We’re falling behind,” Selectman William Kingkade noted, adding that the manager cannot plan and lead future improvements if he is spending his time running around and fixing things. “I’ve taken it as far as I can,” said Town Finance Director Zachary Taylor, to whom the manager reports. (December 16, 2019)

- Appointed Gail Arcudi as a member of The War Memorial Renovation Committee. (December 16, 2019)

- Approved Police Chief Michael Piggotti’s request to install “Stop” signs at the intersection of Teresa Dr. and lajardela Ave. and Teresa Dr. and Madden Ave. in response to complaints from residents about vehicles not stopping at the two intersections. (December 16, 2019)

- Approved a request by the Vernon Grove Cemetery’s Board of Trustees to use $6,600 from the Avis Pond interest account as follows: $2,940 for a new fertilization program and $3,640 to remove hazardous trees. (December 19, 2019)

- Granted Jose Acero a Permit to Obstruct a Public Way from a procession beginning at 11 a.m. at 82 Hayward St. and ending at St. Mary of the Assumption Church. (December 19, 2019)

- Accepted a letter of retirement from Paul Bouclair – long-time custodian at Town Hall – effective January 10, 2020. (December 19, 2019)

- Approved a Common Victualler license for East Main Street Pizza at 206 East Main St. (Route 16), subject to Fire Department approval of a new cooking fire protection system and obtaining necessary Health Department permits. (January 6)

- Approved a Live Entertainment lice se for the Viana Bar Inc. doing business as Tradico da Roca at 119 East Main St. (Rt. 16). (January 6)

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- Discussed the status of demolishing a building at 72 Depot St. with Highway Surveyor Scott Crisafiulli. Building Commissioner Matt Marcotte and Boddy. The January 2 deadline the town wanted for tearing down the deteriorating building has passed, but Crisafiulli said it would take time to do an asbestos remediation study, shut off utilities, secure the site with fencing, and then actually tear it down. (January 6)

- Villani reported the town has received a $39,000 state grant which will be used for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) repairs. These funds will upgrade the ramp into Town Hall, he said. (January 6)

- Villani reported the Milford Youth Center is receiving an $8,000 grant to purchase a boxing ring. (January 6)

- Gave Taylor permission to extend the contract with Scanlon & Associates of South Deerfield for the annual town audit for another year. (January 6)

- Re-appointed Rochelle Thomason as Animal Control Officer and Keith Haynes as Assistant Animal Control Officer. (January 6)

- Selectman Michael Walsh said people continue to make improper left-hand turns from Medway Rd. (Rt. 109) into the Milford Crossing shopping plaza and questioned what the town could do to stop them. Buckley said the town and state are looking into placing barricades similar to the ones now located in front of the Wendy’s restaurant on Cedar St.(Rt. 85) across that section of Medway Rd. (January 6)

Finance Committee

- Voted 9-2 to transfer $8,000 from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund to the Police Chief Selection Committee to cover travel and accommodation costs for six semi-final candidates who were scheduled to go through physical and psychological testing and a Chief Selection Committee to cover travel and accommodation costs for six semi-final candidates who were scheduled to go through physical and psychological testing and a day-three “Assessment Center” challenge in mid-December. (December 11, 2019)

- Voted unanimously to recommend favorable action on the January 13 Special Town Meeting warrant article that – if passed – would approve a 12-year tax incremental financing (TIF) agreement with Rentchler Biopharma, Inc. for the company's planned a 24,000 square-foot expansion at 27 Maple St. (December 11, 2019)

- Voted unanimously to recommend favorable action on the January 13 Special Town Meeting warrant article that – if passed – would approve a 12-year TIF agreement for Interactions LLC to renovate a vacant building at 31 Maple St. in to its new corporate headquarters. (December 11, 2019)
Town Meeting Approves TIFs

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Town Meeting Members have approved tax increment financing (TIFs) agreements for Rentschler Biopharma Inc. to expand at 27 Maple St. and Interactions, LLC to relocate from Franklin to 31 Maple St. The approval votes at the January 13 Special Town Meeting were nearly unanimous:

"The taxes on their current locations are not going down," Finance Committee Chair Christopher Morin said. Under the TIF agreements, the two companies will gradually increase their property tax payments on new construction until they reach the normal level, he explained. "It's a permanent addition to our tax revenues," Morin said.

Selectmen Chairman William Buckley explained both agreements, saying they came about after negotiations between each company and a "working group" of town officials consisting of himself, Town Administrator Richard Villani, Town Counsel Charles Boddy and Finance Director Zachary Taylor with assistance from Assessor Administrator Jennifer Sclar. The goal was to reach agreements that would work for each business and for the Milford community, he said. Town Meeting Member Michael Visconti received no opposition when he proposed amending each TIF agreement to strengthen the language regarding the efforts Rentschler Biopharma and Interactions have to make to hire Milford residents and use Milford contractors. Rentschler has a 12-year agreement with the town for its 24,000 square-foot expansion costing $55 million. "We would like to continue to expand in Milford. We really like Milford," because of its proximity to the company's biotechnology clients, Vice President Karen Savage said. Interactions has a 10-year agreement with the town for its planned $7 million renovation of a vacant building. "We like to think of ourselves as the largest AI [artificial intelligence] company that no one has ever heard of," said Justin Jaundoo, director of Corporate Development. State Representative Brian Murray, D. Milford, spoke in favor of both proposals, noting past TIF agreements created the "commercial and industrial foundation of Milford" and these two would help build Milford's economic future. Rather than call a TIF agreement a "tax break," Murray said, it is really "a development incentive. You can't give a tax break on revenue you don't have," he said.

Town Meeting Member Jamie Wheelock opposed the agreements, saying he did not like being "coerced" into thinking that "if we don't do this, they'll leave." Rather than foregoing tax revenues, "They should want to stay here on the same terms as the rest of the residents and taxpayers do," he said.

Town Meeting Members Russell Abiola and Debra Garcia spoke in favor of the TIF agreement for Interactions, but both said the two agreements would mean more traffic in an area of town residents and taxpayers do. "That's a significant number of properties," Chairman William Buckley said. "We're terrible landlords," he noted saying the properties pose a potential risk for the town and abutting property owners. "What I'm looking for, frankly, is a process," the chairman said.

The problem arose because town departments were not communicating about what properties were acquired and what to do with them, Taylor explained. Now, Town Treasurer Christopher Pilla is managing a process of identifying what to do with the properties, he continued.

Pilla explained that he is working with Town Planner Larry Dunkin to determine which properties are located in watershed areas and to get them transferred to the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction. The other sites will be evaluated to see what they are worth and then auctioned off, he said. Each particular parcel is "unique in every way" and has to be reviewed to find out why it was acquired. "We're going to try to get as many of them back on the tax rolls as possible," he said.

Town Counsel Charles Boddy explained that now—when his office forecloses on a property for non-payment of taxes—relevant departments are notified and discuss what to do with it. Pilla acts as the "property custodian" of all the foreclosed-upon properties, he said. In addition to the properties already foreclosed upon, there are another 64 parcels whose owners are two or more years behind in paying taxes, Pilla explained. And, over the past six years, the town has collected $2.4 million in penalties and interest beyond the taxes owed, Taylor noted.

On January 6, Pilla told the board he had identified 10-15 parcels that could be auctioned off and received the board's permission to contact an auctioneer who specializes in such auctions at no cost to the town. The board also approved Pilla's request to vacate its foreclosure of a house on Camp St. as its owner handed the treasurer a check for $82,352.02 to pay unpaid property taxes, penalties, interest, court fees, and legal fees stretching back to 2012. The owner explained he was taking care of a spouse with a serious illness and had ignored all of the town's letters to him about the unpaid taxes.

Tax Title Property Policy Being Developed

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Following discussions with the Board of Selectmen on December 16 and again on January 6, town financial officials said they are developing a policy and process to make sure that property the town acquires by foreclosure after non-payment of property taxes is disposed of on a timely basis.

There are 74 such properties whose foreclosures go back to the 1990s, Finance Director Zachary Taylor told the board on December 16. "That's a significant number of properties," Chairman William Buckley said. "We're terrible landlords," he noted saying the properties pose a potential risk for the town and abutting property owners. "What I'm looking for, frankly, is a process," the chairman said.

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Background

- Highway Superintendent for the Town of Northbridge
- Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official
- Construction Supervisor's License
- Chairman Vernon Grove Cemetery Board of Trustees
- Town Meeting Member- Precinct 1
- Mayor of Prospect Heights - 2019
- Member of the John Warren Masonic Lodge
- Member of the Marchegiano Club
- Milford Youth Softball Board Member and Coach

“I will provide you the availability and accountability that you deserve. I ask for your vote on Tuesday April 7th.”

Jamie Luchini

Paid for by the committee to elect Jamie Luchini

ELECT

Tom O’Loughlin
Selectman

Please join the Committee to Elect Tom O’Loughlin at our:
Campaign Kick Off
Thursday, January 30th, 5 to 9 pm
Craftroots Brewery
4 Industrial Way, Milford, MA

“I have had the honor of serving the residents of Milford with personal respect, compassion and understanding. Please join me to share your perspective on how together we can make Milford a great place to live and work.”

Pizza, Refreshments, Cash Bar
Donations appreciated.
Election Day is on Tuesday, April 7th
Paid for by the Committee to Elect Tom O’Loughlin

Milford Town Crier
JANUARY 24, 2020
No Word Yet from DPU on Water Company’s Value

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities – as of January 16 – had yet to issue its decision on how much the privately-owned Milford Water Company is worth. The decision had been expected by the end of 2019. After an initial attempt to buy the utility for a mediated price of $63 million failed in 2017, the town filed suit in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SCJ), asking it to have the DPU decide the value of acquiring only the company's assets. The town's request before the SCJ was successful, and the DPU established a procedural timeline calling for a decision by the end of last year.

The utility’s submission to the DPU said the company believes the fair market value of its assets is $149 million. The town argued that the utility’s assets are worth $40 million. The two sides used different appraisal and accounting methodologies to arrive at their respective conclusions.

Once the DPU establishes a value, the town can decide if it still wants to purchase the water company. Finance Director Zachary Taylor told the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee earlier this month that he is making sure the town audit is completed early enough to show bonding officials a complete picture of the town’s ability to pay for the utility. Any borrowing to purchase the water company would be paid back through users’ water bills, town officials explained several years ago.

Student Population Growth to Affect FY21 School Budget

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Growth in the number of students attending Milford public schools this school year versus last will most likely cause the School Department to ask for a substantial budget increase for Fiscal Year 2021, which begins next July 1. “We have serious population in the schools that needs to be addressed, Finance Committee Chair Christopher Morin said at committee’s January 8 meeting. There are 250 more students attending public schools in the 2019-2020 school year than in the 2018-2019 year, committee member Jeffrey Niro – who chairs the FinCom’s Education budget subcommittee – told his colleagues on the board. And, there are 234 more English Language Learner (ELL) students this school year than last year, Niro added.

That news was the only caution as the committee reviewed the July 1-December 31 half-year financial outlook with Finance Director Zachary Taylor, Town Treasurer Christopher Pilla and Town Accountant Thomas Brown. They reported that the Fiscal Year 2020 was on target at mid-year. “The news here, we’re in good shape,” Taylor said. At mid-point in the fiscal year, 46.2 percent of the $107.3 million operating budget had been spent, he explained. The only spending issues that will need to be addressed during the second half of the fiscal year are funding new contracts for the firefighters and for library employees, Brown said. After an eight-year-long process, the financial part of building the new Woodland Elementary School is wrapping up, Taylor said. FinCom member Aldo Cecchi, who co-chaired the building committee for Woodland, noted the total project came in about $2 million below projections. “We could have spent $61 million,” Taylor noted. “We did not” he quickly added. However, after all state reimbursements for the new school were received, the town will still need to pay off a final $113,000, Taylor said. He characterized that amount as being almost trivial – it amounts to 0.002 percent of the overall $61 million project. The $113,000 – and any potential Snow and Ice Removal deficit – can be paid for from the $1.9 million in the “Free Cash” account, he explained. And, as of January 8, the mild winter meant that only 59.3 percent of the $600,000 Snow and Ice Removal budget had been spent, Brown said. Another project expected to come in “under budget” is the Sewer Department’s new sludge handling/grit removal building, Brown explained. He projected the estimated $6 million project would come in $61,478 less than projected.

The town accountant explained that Fiscal Year 2021 budget preparation packages will be distributed to all town department heads, who will return them in mid-March so that the Finance Committee review them in April in preparation for the Annual Town Meeting in May.

“As a local Realtor, my experience over the last several years has been that many families are choosing to live outside of Milford. On a weekly basis, in my conversations with consumers, I am constantly fighting the negative perception of our town. My family has been in this town for over 100 years. I am committed to change that perception of our community so that my family and yours can proudly call Milford home for generations to come. I ask for your vote on April 7th to help me move Milford forward.”

Member of Board of Assessors
Town Meeting Member
Downtown Revitalization Committee
4th Generation Milfordian
Owner Lioce Properties, Inc.
Corporator for the Milford Regional Medical Center
Past President and Current Member of the Milford Rotary Club
Member of the Friends of the Milford Area Special Athletes

JANUARY 24, 2020
Milford Town Crier

Please join my family and me for my Campaign Kick off Saturday January 25th 7-9pm at The Hoboken Club

Political Advertisement

Scott Crisafulli
Highway Surveyor

Organizational Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
7:00 P.M.
Italian Veterans Club Post 40
Hayward Field, Milford MA

Paid for by committee to Re-Elect Scott Crisafulli, 52 Harding St., Milford, MA. Please join us! scottcrisafulli@gmail.com
Our Grandmothers Knew What They Were Doing

The Greenleaf Garden Club of Milford’s February meeting will feature landscape designer, Laura Bibler, who will present a talk entitled: Our Grandmothers Knew What They Were Doing. The meeting will be Monday, February 10, at the Ruth Anne Bleakney Sr. Center, 50 N. Bow St., Milford and will start at 6:30 p.m. Bibler will go back in time to look at the horticultural wisdom handed down from a grandmother’s time. She will explore the design approach and sage advice of prominent garden writers of the early 20th Century. Their ideas continue to inform us on color blending, cultural considerations and plant placement in the gardens of today. Bibler has been creating landscape installations and designs for 22 years in private homes and historic estates. She has studied at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University and has a Graduate Certificate in Landscape Design. The meeting will start with refreshments and will feature a horticulture display as well as a photo collage of the WAM Flora in Winter exhibit. The Greenleaf Garden Club of Milford is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Garden Club Federation of MA, Inc. For further information email greenleafgardencubs@gmail.com.

Rising Recycling Costs Impacting Budget

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The nationwide problem of municipalities having to pay sharply rising costs to dispose of “recyclable” paper, plastics, bottles and cans recyclables because fewer foreign countries are “buying” them may tip the Health Department’s budget into the red ink zone this year.

Health Officer Jacqulyn Murphy told Board of Health members on January 13 that – if disposal costs continue at the same level in January through June as they did in the first half of the fiscal year – there could be a $143,685 budget deficit. “We are upside down,” she said. One disposal costs continue at the same level in January through June as they did in the first half of the fiscal year – there could be a $143,685 budget deficit. “We are upside down,” she said. One

Milford’s Compost Facility off Fiske Mill Road is closed for the winter. It is scheduled to reopen on April 2.

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Great Backyard Bird Count

Join Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park volunteers and West Hill Dam Team on Sunday, February 16 at 2 p.m. to take part in the Cornell University Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. The rain/heavy snow date is Saturday, February 22 at 2 p.m. Meet at the West Hill Dam office, 518 East Hartford Ave., Uxbridge. Explore various habitats and the birds that migrate or make their home in the pine groves, marshes, and riparian (river) habitats of West Hill Dam. Observations help researchers determine species decline and migration patterns. Participants should dress for the weather, be prepared to hike about a mile to the various sites, snow shoes or deep snow boots are recommended. All are welcome to bring binoculars, pack a snack and water. Participants will observations over warm beverages while supplies last. Junior Rangers Level 2 – earn wildlife credit. Scout Troops, home schooled students welcomed for merit badge requirements. Youth under the age of 18 please bring an adult.

For more information, please call Park Ranger Viola at 978-318-8417.
By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Recent Actions by Milford Town Boards

**Board of Health**
- Discussed taking the owner of property at 10 Cherry St. to court if he continued not complying with state and local sanitary regulations and the town’s occupancy by-law. “It’s been a thorn in our sides since at least 2014,” board member Paul Maurizielli said. “It’s a headache.” He added, “We’ve been more than patient with him [owner Yang Xiaowei].” (December 16, 2019)
- Health Officer Jacquelyn Murphy reported her October, 2019 survey of 591 Milford High School students — taken during Governor Charlie Baker’s temporary ban on vaping products — showed that only 32, or 5.4 percent, said they had smoked cigarettes within the past 30 days. Only 44, or 7.5 percent, of the students said they had “vaped” or smoked e-cigarettes within the past 30 days, Murphy said. (December 16, 2019)
- Health Inspector Lisa Tamagni reported that property owners of buildings at 10 Cherry St., 406 Central St. and 5-7 Orchard St. had cooperated with the Health Department in cleaning up their properties to comply with state and local sanitary regulations and the town’s occupancy by-law. “The landlords have been cooperating,” she said. (January 13)
- Murphy reported she is working with Milford Regional Medical Center to educate town officials on how to understand various diseases and identify risks for things such as the Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus and tick-borne illnesses. Board members suggested she reach out to all local sports-related groups as well. (January 13)
- Murphy reported that there is a high rate of people suffering from fevers and coughing within the Milford area. “They’re [the number of cases] definitely not leveling off yet,” she said. A statewide shortage of the flu vaccine is preventing her from scheduling another flu shot. (January 13)
- Appointed Joan Clarico as a new food inspector in the Health Department. (January 13)
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- Appointment of Joan Clarico as a new food inspector in the Health Department to conduct inspections of restaurants and other food-service establishments. (January 13)

Planning Board
- Unanimously approved an amended site plan allowing the Seven Hills Foundation to locate an adult day care center for adults with intellectual disabilities in a 20,450 square-foot portion of the shopping plaza at 146 South Main St., next to the Ace Hardware store. Town Planner Larry Dunkin said a new rear parking area for the vans will circulate it to the store’s entrance/exit and that one of the conditions required would be a dedicated parking area for the vans in the main parking lot area. The approval was subject to three conditions. First, verifying that an easement over an adjacent property will allow the vans to circulate around the shopping plaza, second, checking the condition of the main parking lot and re-paving and re-striping if needed; and, third, erecting a “Stop” sign along the exit of the Dunkin’ Donuts drive-up window. (January 7)
- Unanimously approved an amended site plan allowing the Target retail store at 250 Fortune Blvd. to remove six parking spaces near the store entrance and designate that area as a pick-up station for remote orders placed by phone or on-line. The approval was subject to two conditions: First, moving the area so that it connects to the existing crosswalk from the store’s main entry/exit or parking and second, required parking requirements data to the engineering plan for the new parking layout. (January 7)
- Approved an amended site plan for the Sira Naturals marijuana cultivation facility at 13 Commercial Way that would alter two previously approved small additions to the building: One addition would now be two stories tall and add 710 square feet of space and the other would be two stories tall and add 2,500 square feet of space. The number of parking spaces was to drop by three from 71 to 68, but board members said three spaces in the re-configured parking area would be awkward to use and recommended removing them — the overall parking to 65 spaces. Four board members voted for the changes; board member Patrick Kennedy abstained due to a conflict of interest. (January 7)

Zoning Board of Appeals
- By a two “Yes” to three “No” vote, denied a variance request by EG Cutler, LLC of Hopedale to split a 27,010 square-foot lot at 21 Highland St. into two lots: one with the existing house would meet all zoning requirements, and a new, 11,993 square-foot lot would lack about 15 feet of required frontage and about 3,000 square feet of required area. The ZBA members voting against the request said they failed to find any hardship existing. (December 19, 2019)
- Unanimously gave 88 Corp. permission to modify its previously granted Comprehensive Permit to build a 162-unit affordable apartment complex off Birch St. by reducing the complex from four to three buildings in order to reduce its impact on adjacent wetlands. The change also would allow the number of garaged parking spots to increase from 40 to 645. (December 19, 2019)
Twice Blessed Thrift Shop
HOPEDALE-The Sacred Heart Church of Hopedale Twice Blessed Thrift Shop offers the following specials in February—sweaters, accessories, outerwear, boots and jewelry. During the first full week of February fill a bag with clothes for only $7 Open every Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; the first and fourth Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

Grief Recovery Support Group
WINTER SWIMMING-
The grief support group is now meeting on Tuesdays, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Pleasant Street Church, 25 Cross St., Whitinsville. GriefShare is a program designed to help people in bereavement find encouragement and support during the grieving process. GriefShare meetings, which are free and non-denominational, are for anyone who is grieving the loss of someone close.

Each GriefShare session includes a video seminar and group discussion, providing an opportunity to interact with others who have experienced a recent loss. The program continues and runs through March 31, and attendees are welcome to join the group at any point. Contact the church office at 508-234-5268, e-mail howard@pscc.org or visit PSCC.org for more information and to register.

Citizens for Milford’s Public Meeting
MILFORD-Citizens for Milford invites all residents to attend on Thursday, January 30, meeting at 7 p.m. in the Milford Town Library, 80 Spruce St., in the Granite and Quarry Rooms. A representative from the Census Bureau, as well as Milford Board of Health officials and members of the Milford Downtown Revitalization committee, will be our special guests.

Elle Bourot, a Partnership Specialist with the Census Bureau, will be the first speaker on the agenda, giving a ten-minute presentation regarding the 2020 census. Dr. Jacquelyn Murphy, who took over the reins as Milford’s new Health Officer this past fall, will discuss services offered by the new Pagani, Chairman of the Milford Downtown Revitalization committee, will share news of their efforts to improve the downtown corridor. Attendees will be able to ask questions following each of the three presentations.

Interfaith Speaker Series-Buddhism
EPTON-The St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church’s Peace & Social Justice Ministry presents the second in its interfaith speaker series on Wednesday, February 5 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Paul Galvin, Priest and Senior Thurma Teacher from Boundless Way Zen Temple will talk about Buddhism in an interactive presentation offering an overview of the religion’s basic tenets and origin. Small group discussion, questions and reflection will be included as well. The reflection sessions are open to all members of local community. St. Gabriel’s Church is located 153 Mendon Street, Upton. For more information, contact Sarah at shildsbg@gmail.com or 508-320-8876.

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Show
UPTON-Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild in Mendon is holding its bi-annual Quilt Show on Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15 at the Blackstone Valley Technical High School, Pleasant St., Upton. The show will feature an exhibit of table runners, baby quilts, lap quits, pillows cases, etc. The proceeds from the show go to support Quilt Guild funds. In addition, a hand-crafted quilt will be raffled on Sunday afternoon at the close of the show. Tickets for this quilt are available from any quilt member and ThimblePleasures.org.

New Hope Annual Moonlight Wine, Beer and Food Gala
NORTH CASTLEBORO-New Hope’s 12th Annual Moonlight Wine, Beer and Food Gala is Saturday, January 25 at Briggs Nursery Restaurant, 255 Kelley Blvd., North Attleboro from 7 to 10 p.m. Tickets include a night of tasting the best local cuisines and dozens of fine wines and craft beers— all while under the stars, as the venue features a hayloft under a canopy glass sponsored by Coogan Smith, LLP.

All the proceeds go directly to supporting New Hope’s work with survivors, thanks to the generous support of sponsors.

Red Cross Blood Drives
MILFORD-The Red Cross Blood Drive is currently has a critical need for blood donors of all blood types— especially type O – and platelet donors to make an appointment now to help replenish the blood supply after the holiday weeks.

Donors are urged to make an appointment to give now using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Blood drives at the Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford are Saturday, January 25 and Friday, January 31 at 2 p.m.

Winter Adult Education Courses
Leonard M. Freeman, director of the Milford Community School Use Program, has released the schedule for the Winter Adult Education courses, which are set to begin the week of February 3.

A wide variety of classes and workshops are offered with the complete list available at MilfordCommunity.com under Adult - Winter/spring. Registration can be completed both online and offline at the same website. Offline registration forms may be printed and will be accepted immediately by mail to Milford Community School Use Program, 31 West Fountain St., Milford, MA 01757. Or the completed form and payment may be dropped at the security kiosk in the front of Milford High School between the hours of 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. or in the Milford Community School Use office from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

A separate registration form and a separate check is required for each course. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Milford – MCRM. Individuals paying in person with cash are asked to have the exact amount. For further information, please call the office at 508-478-1119.

In the Bag Sale
MILFORD-The MRMC Auxiliary has announced that the In the Bag sale will be held at the Atkinson Café in the hospital, 14 Prospect St., Milford, on Thursday, February 20, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. This sale features a large selection of new and gently used handbags, luggage, briefcases, wallets, mini-bags and small leather goods. There is always a huge selection to choose from in the newest styles, and the prices are discounted from 30 to 60 percent. Cash, credit cards and debit cards are accepted. The public is invited to attend.

Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Meeting
MILFORD-The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary meets on Tuesday, February 11 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in Conference Room A on the first floor, 14 Prospect St. Auxiliary members hold monthly and/or yearly fundraising events. All funds raised from these events directly support building funds, departments throughout the hospital, and scholarships.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from September to June. Both men and women are encouraged to consider joining. For information about the Auxiliary, please call 508-422-2099, or visit MRMC Auxiliary.

Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair
2020 - Exhibitors Needed
MILFORD-The Milford Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair is seeking exhibitors for its 26th Annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair which will be held Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Milford High School Cafeteria. Any business, agency or group which serves children and or families, is asked to consider joining. Space is limited. For more information, please call 508-277-4981 or email familyidawork@milfordma.com by February 28.

Living with the Ribbon Fundraiser
MILFORD-Living with the Ribbon is having a fun night out and fund raiser at Craft Roots Brewery, Milford on Sunday, February 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. The price is $30 per ticket and includes live music, a free pint of beer, light refreshments and more. Register online at EventBrite.com/craftroots-brewing. Living with the Ribbon sponsors scholarships to students pursuing higher education in a field of healthcare; grants to assist in funding cancer research; support for families facing a cancer diagnosis and donations to hospitals and cancer centers.
Superintendent's Goals Presented to School Committee

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter

The Superintendent of the Milford Public Schools will be concentrating on developing a new three to five year Strategic Plan, finalizing the new Long Range Facilities Education Plan, and "reimagining" Stacy Middle School among other items this year. Dr. Kevin McIntyre's goals were presented during the January 9 School Committee Meeting, laying out the path for this year's work for the district. Although he has been working on these goals since the beginning of the school year, this was the formal presentation of the goals.

McIntyre's first goal is to "complete the development of a new 3-to-5-year Strategic Plan by June 2020." The administration of the School Committee this goal includes discussing the concept of Portrait of a Graduate with the leadership team, compiling School Choice Survey data, hosting stakeholder focus groups during the late winter, and presenting a final Strategic Plan to the School Committee in June 2020. "We will be reaching out to a lot of our stakeholders for input in various points of the process," said McIntyre.

McIntyre's second goal is to finalize Long Range Education Facilities Plan to be ready for the potential submission of a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in the Spring of 2021.

"We have a very strong draft," said McIntyre. "We will be seeking input from town officials and community members. The goal is to make sure that we have not only this project lined up, but all future projects lines up as well."

McIntyre said he will conduct regular meetings with Town Finance Director, have a working session to finalize the plan and proposed timelines with School Committee in February, and host presentations for faculty, Town Officials, and families and community members this winter/spring.

Goal number three, to re-imagine Stacy Middle School, includes engaging in a scheduling process that creates a single bell schedule with the goal of implementing a new schedule at Stacy Middle School "that best supports student learning and maximizes human resources and facilities."

"We are going to share a draft of the schedule in the next month or so," commented McIntyre. "Then we can make adjustments [based on feedback]. I know the final product is going to be an improvement."

The new schedule would be for the 2020/2021 school year. McIntyre's fourth goal is to complete 300 or more classroom visits or walkthroughs by the end of the 2019-2020 school year. "This provides snapshots of educator practice across the district which supports professional development planning, budget development, identifies space and facilities needs and concerns, and understanding horizontal and vertical curriculum programming and alignment," reads the goal's wording.

"One of the most valuable things that I do in my role as superintendent is going into classrooms and see what is happening across the district," said McIntyre, who said he has already completed 122 classroom visits. The final goal for is to expand college and career readiness opportunities for students at Milford High School and Stacy Middle School. This goal will include college visits for Milford High School students on public and private campuses, Early College courses during the school day and after school through partnerships with Lasell University, Framingham State University, and Mass Bay Community College, plus the development of a year-by-year outline of the Metrowest Scholars Program and future early college course offerings.

"We are really excited about expanding opportunities for students to get on college campuses and engage with employers as we expand our senior year internship program," McIntyre commented.

McIntyre will update his goals to the School Committee at a future meeting.

Shining School Pre-School Registration

Shining Star Pre-School registration for the 2020-2021 school year is in February at the Main Office, Milford High School. All interested families must apply through this registration process. Registration packets for currently enrolled families is available in the Main Office, for the registered child and any siblings beginning Monday February 3. Registration is February 4 and February 25 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. for current students and sibling. Registration for new students is March 17 and 18 from 9 to 10 a.m. and 1 to 2 p.m.

Registration forms along with a check for the $50 registration fee, made out to the Shining School Pre-School, is due at the Main Office. Parents are reminded that children must be 3 years old by August 31, 2020 in order to attend preschool. Students in all programs must have independent toileting skills.

The following Milford residents were among those receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees at Fitchburg State University’s 126th commencement exercises, winter ceremony, on Friday, December 20. Francis P. DeAngelo, Masters of Education in Special Education, Kathleen Pereira, Masters of Education in Special Education, Ross X. Weaver, Bachelor of Science in Comp Info Systems; and Morgan M. doCarril, Bachelor of Science in Communications Media.

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Fitchburg State University Graduation

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February 4. Students will also experience an amazing character theme, Mindspark! Wild West, which combines S.T.E.A.M. skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) with character-building.

Brookside announces that in the last nine years, students have donated over 4,000 items to The Giving Tree. All items (books, clothing, socks, and scarves) are then boxed up and given to The Salvation Army and The Daily Bread Food Pantry for distribution to families in our community.

Memorial: Memorial kicked-off its eight-week Books and Beyond Reading Program on January 17. This year's theme is Around the World. This program challenges kindergarten through second grade students to read seven books or 175 pages a week throughout the program.

Memorial Elementary School is looking for five to six volunteers to help the School Nurse, Donna McGee, hand out weekly Fluoride cups to students from 8:45 to 10 a.m. on Tuesdays. Interested volunteers need to secure a CORI form/Fingerprinting process via the main office.

Woodland: Woodland is working to increase students’ understanding of inclusiveness among all members feeling valued and accepted. Students are encouraged to practice inclusiveness at recess, in the lunchroom, in the classroom, and beyond the bricks and mortar of the school building. Principal Tim Kearnan announced the Principal’s Council for Kindness. During December, students were nominated by their teachers for demonstrating the value of Kindness in the classroom and throughout the school community. The following students were recognized: Charlotte Bien, Gabriel De Souza, Bianca Sousa, Enzo Ribeiro, Tessa Persico, Madison Bourmaizian, Marcela Bourassa, Colin Plant, Isadora Gomes, Addison Trettel, Andrea Mendosa, Gabriella Barbosa, Emily Annantuonio, Tayla Do Nascimento, Annie Auger, Jackson Luca, Lilli Wild, Aiden Kokkinen, Brian Abbas, Emily Heitz, Matthew Asonganyi, Grace Sweeney, Layna Dornelas, Jepherson Avelar Aguilar, Isabella Jacobson, Gabriella Ferreras, Gabriella Annantuonio, Shaftey Prando, Justin Vo, Caydion Dickhut, Cameron Dickhut, Sofia Figueroa, Shane Caguana, Marianna Bernardees, Cameron Carter, Daniel Dias, Janis Ossorio Santani, Miguel Olegario, Pedro Da Costa, Ryker Fauth, Anthony Pinsonnault, Maddie Sanborn, Iveleny Chequi, Matthew Henebury, Caleb Kingkade, Chris Lalangui Ponce, and Yasmin De Oliveira.

The PTO Talent Show will be held on January 25 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and the PTO Dinner Dance will be held on February 4 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Stacy Middle: Save the date for Stacy Middle School Performing Arts performance of Disney’s Little Mermaid Jr. on March 6 at 7 p.m. and March 7 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available in the Stacy Main Office. $10 (adults) / $5 (students). The Milford Public Schools was awarded a $2,500 grant from Project Bread: Breakfast After the Bell Grant. The focus of the grant is to provide an additional breakfast opportunity for students at Stacy Middle School. Mid-term Progress Reports will be issued on January 30.

Milford High: Milford High School (MHS) Mindmatters Team was awarded a $2,500 grant through the Shine Initiative. Congratulations to Jennifer Walsh, the advisor to the group, and the Mindmatters Team. The Mindmatters team was established at MHS this fall due to passionate students advocating and bringing this opportunity to the community. It is a continuation from the School Mindmatters Team at Stacy Middle School. The team is in the beginning stages and are excited to continue their work. The Mindmatters Team wants everyone to feel comfortable talking about their mental health since it’s such an important part of what makes each student so unique in MHS. The team is working on spreading education and awareness to the larger school community as well as aiding in reducing stigma, normalizing conversations about mental health, and encouraging mental wellness.

The Milford Public Schools thanks Greater Milford Community Health Network (CHNA) for the $6,000 grant to provide health educators and a select group of secondary staff with Life Skills training in drug education prevention/vaping education prevention.

Milford High School was awarded a $4,200 Financial Literacy Planning and Implementation Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Funds will support curriculum development and implementation related to financial literacy concepts.

Milford High School has partnered with Framingham State University to offer two free college courses, Environmental Biology and Quantitative Reasoning, for qualified juniors and seniors during the second semester. Both courses allow students to earn college credits which will be transferable into Massachusetts public colleges and universities. Both courses can be used to fulfill graduation requirements.

Course Selection Day is January 27, before the first day of Semester 2 on January 28.
Creating a Positive Environment, Even in a School Bathroom

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter

Smiles can be found in the most unusual of places. In the case of Stacy Middle School, smiles can even be found in the bathroom now thanks to the hard work of a group of students, teachers, administrators and community members.

Ten bathroom stalls at Stacy received makeovers during the December break by the Stacy Mind Matters Society (formerly the Student Wellness Advisory Team) who had worked together for months to brainstorm ways to fulfill their mission of “creating an environment that is happier, kinder, and more positive.” “The kids came up with the idea to paint inspirational messages on the restroom stalls,” said Health and Wellness Teacher Celeste Salley, one of the three Mind Matters Society advisors along with Art Teacher Tiffany Cote, Guidance Counselor Meredith Purcell, and Adjustment Counselor Meghan Coonan. Normally, writing things on the bathroom stalls is frowned upon in schools, but when the students approached the Administration about this idea, they were all for it. “For three months the students worked twice a week on their plan – picking out inspirational messages, researching themes… it was a process,” said Salley. Over Christmas break, over two dozen students, with a little help from some parents and teachers, first painted the stalls all black, then painted them with inspirational quotes such as “Do what is right, not what is easy” and “In a world where you can be anything, be kind”, along with colorful pictures of Dr. Seuss characters and superhero symbols. “The students came back and there was such a buzz about the bathrooms. One student told me that it puts a smile on her face every time she walks in there,” said Salley. The project received the support of the Milford community as well, with a generous donation from Koopman Paint on West St. “Not only did [Koopman’s Manager Tom Pierie] donate his expertise, but they also donated all of the paints and supplies for the project,” said Salley. “It was an unbelievable collaboration with the community. I can’t thank them enough.” Now that the once drab restrooms are a happier place, the Mind Matters Society have already turned to working on their next projects which include a goal of bringing therapy dogs to the school to help students with stress and anxiety before high-stakes tests. The group already spent countless hours trying to help their fellow classmates de-stress by painting calming stones for the entire 8th grade class, making fidget toys for the 7th graders to use for when they are anxious in class and scrunchies for the 6th grade class to give them a sense of unity. They will soon be passing out 1,200 hand-made buttons to remind everyone about the Mind Matters Society and why mindfulness is so important. “All of these projects are really driven by the kids and that is what makes this club so unique and awesome,” said Salley. “I am so proud of them.”
MHS Girls Track Looks to Rack Up Hock Titles

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford girls' track team earned a win, a loss, and a tie through the first three meets, but the top-four finish on the Scarlet Hawks' roster has had coach Derek Rosirotto thinking more championships could be coming as the focus shifts to the postseason meets.

"The goal is for the girls to be one of the top three teams in the league," Rose said, looking ahead to the Hockomock Championships next month at the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston.

"We could possibly win the 300, the 600, the 55 and the 4x200 relay and place very high in the high jump," Rose said. "We have some big time point scorers. We don't have the depth to get those fifth, sixth and seventh places, but we will have those top-three finishes."

Leading the way for the Hawks is junior Kerry O'Connor, who has been a standout track athlete since she began her high school career. She has top-10 times in the state in both the 300 and 460 meter runs and is part of a 4x200 team that is top-five in the state.

Sarah Flanagan recently set a new school record in the 55-meter dash and her time is among the top-10 in the state. Lake O'Connor, Flanagan is also a force in both the 300 and the 4x200 relay, where the pair join Jenna Mastroianni and Kiyani Simon.

Simas, who is a freshman, has been a pleasant addition to the track team this winter. She has already qualified for states in the 55-meter and as part of the 4x200 team, and is close to reaching a qualifying distance in the long jump.

"She finished second in the middle school 100, so we knew she was going to be very fast," Rose said. "But she has been even better than we thought."

Sarah Brogoli has also continued to excel in the high jump and hurdles, qualifying for states in both events. She has also become the team's best shot putter. Rose said he was pleased to have Brogoli back to full strength after a hamstring injury slowed her down at the beginning of the year and kept her from training the entire month. "She is an all-around talent," Rose said. "She can do so many events."

The Scarlet Hawks are set to continue the dual meet season on Friday against Stoughton and Canton, ahead of the Hock League meet on Saturday, February 8.

Milford Boys Swim Team Unbeaten

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford High boys' swim team cruised through the first six dual meets of the season, starting the week with a perfect 6-0 record and in position for a third straight title in the Hockomock League's Davenport Division.

"I would say we have handled the schedule pretty easily," said head coach Dave Chaplin, who, after 32 years, finally had one of his seminal messages to the swim team.

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Milford Girls Hoops Seeks Faster Improvement

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford High girls’ basketball team has improved on its win total from last season. This year the team has three victories by the halfway point of the schedule compared to just one game a year ago. But head coach T.J. Dolliver is hoping his team can accelerate its improvement over the second half of the season.

“It was good to get a couple of those wins under our belt,” Dolliver said. “Hopefully we can build a little bit of confidence and show the fact that we are improving.”

A recent victory over Hopedale was especially significant, Dolliver said, given that the Blue Raiders got the better of the Scarlet Hawks twice last winter. But MHS still does not have a win in the ultra-competitive Hockomock League.

“When we play teams in the Hock, we are not really in a basketball game in the second half, unfortunately,” Dolliver said. “We are improving, just not at the rate that we would like to compete in more games than not.”

One challenge is the Milford teams does not have any seniors this season, so it has had to rely on younger players to carry the load. Junior guard Emma Lawrence is the leading scorer on the team at nine points per game and is one of the Hawks’ leaders in multiple statistical categories.

“She has been working hard and she is definitely getting better,” Dolliver said.

Another junior, Jill Michelson, is scoring about right points per game. “She works really hard offensively and defensively,” the coach said. “She makes up for anything she lacks with hustle and effort.”

Without any seniors, Milford has turned to freshmen to play big roles. Brooke Ferreira has stepped into the starting point guard position in her first season with the team, averaging six points and three assists per game while minimizing turnovers.

“It’s a lot to take over a team as a freshman and be the starting point guard,” Dolliver said. “For a team that does not score the ball effectively, three assists per game is doing really well. She is learning for sure, but she is also in the process doing a good job distributing the ball and trying to find girls for open looks.”

Over the second half of the schedule, Dolliver has several goals in mind. Chief among them is getting his team to practice as hard as it plays.

“It is a lot to take over a team as a freshman and be the starting point guard,” Dolliver said. “For a team that does not score the ball effectively, three assists per game is doing really well. She is learning for sure, but she is also in the process doing a good job distributing the ball and trying to find girls for open looks.”

The effort and intensity in the games is much different than in practice, which is why we are not improving at the rate we would like to see,” he said. “I am trying to come up with ideas and drills and games to get the intensity out of them as much as I can. That’s my main motivation over these next couple of weeks.”

Top Athletes Inspiring MHS Boys Track Teammates

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Milford High boys' track and field team is led by a number of veteran athletes who could be among the best in the state this winter at their respective events. That talent and dedication has not only helped the team win two of its first three meets, but it has also given some of the younger athletes an excellent example to try to live up to.

“I don’t think we have a ton of depth but we have a lot of kids putting up great teams and a lot of top-end talent,” said head coach Derek Rose. “The other kids are seeing that and saying ‘yeah, I want to be a part of that.’”

Max Manor has been leading the way for Milford in the distance events, running the mile and the two mile as well as putting together a good split in the 4x400. The senior figures to be a factor at both the Hockomock League meet as well as in statewide competition.

Rafael Feliciano has been inching closer to a school record in the 300. Coming into the week, he was only a half second shy and his time is already top-10 in the league and good enough for a state qualifying spot.

The 300 is not the only school record that may fall. Senior Anthony Ghalbouni shaved three seconds off of his time in the 600, down to 1:25, putting him about a second away from a school record in that event.

Some of the younger athletes have already been following the examples set by their older peers and are contributing to the MHS cause. Sam Borst has been strong in the hurdles and Rose said he has also “come a long way” in the 300. He is also on two relay teams, joining Feliciano, Ghalbouni and Keith Sutton.

Sutton has been a standout sprinter, running a sub-seven second 55-meter dash. “He has been the fastest for us int hat even and he is trying to branch out and do some other distances as well,” Rose said.

With so many athletes who can place high or win events, Rose figures Milford should be in a good position to place well at the league and state meets.

“Max, Anthony, Rafael, they will be big time at the Hock meet and in the states as well,” said head coach Derek Rose. “The other kids are seeing that and saying ‘yeah, I want to be a part of that.’”

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Saying Goodbye to My Biggest Fan

Any athlete can attest to the importance of having fans. But the concept of a fan is one that goes far beyond the boundaries of a court or a playing field. No matter who you are or what you do, you need someone who is going to be there to cheer you on through highs and lows. Someone to just be your fan. For me, that person was my mother.

It’s fair to say my mother had an unrealistic view of my own athletic ability during my playing days. My dad was my little league coach and never wanted to show favoritism. He also had an accurate sense of my capabilities as a baseball player, so I was usually in the bottom half of the lineup and playing somewhere in the outfield where I could do the least damage to our cause.

One day, he was running late to the game, so my mom stepped in and filled out the lineup. There I was, batting third and playing shortstop.

That anecdote is a snapshot of my mother’s fandom when it came to her only son. It’s also a story my dad told during her eulogy last month. My mother loved sports, especially the Patriots, and her cheers and shouts could easily be heard throughout the house on Sunday afternoons. When my mother cheered, she put her heart into it, as she did with just about every other aspect of her life.

The thing about true fans is they stick with their teams, even during a losing season. When I’ve been at the lowest points of my life, my mom was always the one to love and support me unconditionally. Fans can also be critical of their teams when it’s called for, and my mom was certainly willing to call me out when I stepped out of line.

It’s fitting that, when my mom and dad met 47 years ago in high school, he was usually in the bottom half of the lineup and playing somewhere in the outfield where I was batting third and playing shortstop.

And in our hearts we know, somewhere, she’s still cheering us on.