Selectmen Approve “Declaration of Emergency”

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Citing the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency, the Board of Selectmen voted on March 23 to approve a “Declaration of Emergency” stating “The Board of Selectmen, in consultation with the town’s emergency management personnel and the Milford Board of Health, has determined that immediate public action is needed in order to prevent, mitigate, or minimize the spread of COVID-19 by and among the people of Milford, and to prevent, minimize or mitigate damage to the public health, safety, or general welfare of the people of Milford”.

“I think it’s the right thing to do,” said Selectman William Kingkade, who first brought up the issue of the move during the meeting, citing a new law – signed that day by Governor Charles Baker – allowing local elections to be postponed. “You can delay democracy, but you can’t postpone it,” Kingkade added.

Chairman William Buckley, whose 15 years on the board were due to end on April 7, noted that no one wanted the election to be held more than the candidates or himself. “The election should only be moved if the town couldn’t guarantee the safety of voters and the people staffing the polling locations, he said.

At the board’s March 30 meeting, Buckley said all the people who met on the issue during the week between the two boards meetings unanimously agree that, “We could not hold an election safely,” Town Clerk Amy Hennessy Neves recommended the June 16 date, he said, because it gave her office the most time to prepare for the change.

Town Councilor Charles Boddy said Neves had surveyed area communities with springtime elections and 35 out of 36 of those elections were done by COVID-19. Many of Milford’s poll workers told Neves they would not work at an April 7 election because of the coronavirus, Buckley added.

Selectmen technically took two votes. The first was to move the election date from April 7 to June 16. The second was to adopt an order regarding the new date. It contained information about the postponed election:

- Incumbents whose terms were due to expire on April 7 will continue in their positions until the new election date.
- The last day to register to vote in the election will be Friday, June 5.
- The ballot for June 16 will be identical to the one for April 7.
- Absentee voting will be allowed until noon on Monday, June 15.
- Early voting may be done by anyone applying by mail to the Town Clerk’s office, Town Hall, 52 Main St. Room 12, Milford, 01757

Audit Criticizes School Chromebook Inventory System

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The outside auditing firm which reviewed the town’s finances for Fiscal Year 2019, ending June 30, 2019, determined that “the School Department did not have proper inventory controls with regard to the Chromebooks purchased.” The Management Letter from Scanlon & Associates of South Deerfield reported that – after reviewing invoices for purchasing 2,641 of the laptop computers – 253 or roughly 10 percent valued at about $54,000 – could not be located.

School Committee Chair Jennifer Parson disputed that finding, saying, “A significant number of the Chromebooks that were noted as ‘missing’ in the audit have since been accounted for as present, but not asset-tagged. It is important to note that per the audit, a ‘missing’ Chromebook is defined as a Chromebook not currently asset-tagged in the inventory control system.” She added, “The audit misrepresents the significance of the dollar amounts and public interest in the inventory controls with regard to the Chromebooks, we recommend the School Department implement procedures and policies to ensure the assets are properly safeguarded and accounted for. We would recommend that the School Department, along with oversight from the Town, at the end of the school year this year do a complete inventory and reconciliation to physical count. That listing would then be the basis to maintain an inventory on a perpetual basis. Furthermore, at every year end of the school year the inventory listing should be reconciled to a physical count.”

Small Businesses Part of the Community

Life is changing fast in the face of the Coronavirus. But small businesses are here to help. They know what is happening in our neighborhoods and our towns. Smaller and more flexible they can respond more quickly to your needs.

Support your local, small businesses, they are ready to help you.
Six Test “Positive” in Milford during March

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Six Milford residents tested “positive” for the COVID-19 coronavirus last month. Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director William Touhey told the Board of Selectmen on March 30. The Board of Health and state Department of Public Health worked to trace who those six people came into contact with, he added.

“We're seeing an accelerating number of cases statewide, ” Health Officer Jacquelyn Murphy also told the board, noting that Governor Charlie Baker's office predicted a surge of cases occurring between April 7 and April 17.

In a March 27 statement, the Board of Health noted: "Transmission appears to be largely from persons who seem healthy but spread the virus to many people before they are diagnosed. Keeping away from others remains important in reducing the spread."

• Don’t go out, unless it is critical.
• When you are out, do not shake hands or hug others outside of your household.
• Maintain at least six feet from others.
• Stay home, especially when you are sick.
• If you see others gathering in public spaces (e.g., parks) tell them to stay away from each other and go home.

By working together, we can reduce the spread of this virus in our community,” Murphy noted there are a series of fines for people who fail to maintain the six-foot to 10-foot "social distance" from others: first, there is a warning; the second offense carries a penalty of up to $300; and, a third offense means a $500 fine and possible jail time.

Emergency Deficit Spending Approved

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Selectmen on March 23 approved Finance Director Zachary Taylor's request – allowable if there are approved state and local declarations of emergency – for the town to be able to spend beyond appropriated budget amounts.

In requesting the ability to "deficit spend," Taylor noted the COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency has led to several unanticipated requests to immediately spend money on services such as sanitizing town buildings and buying items such as personal protective equipment.

All deficit spending will be tracked in a special fund so that costs can easily be reported to the state Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services and for possible federal and state reimbursements, he explained to the board.

Taylor also sought and received the board's permission to issue revenue anticipation notes in the event the town's cash flow becomes disrupted. Basically, this would mean borrowing money if property tax payments are delayed.

In a March 17 memo to selectmen, Taylor noted the town is accelerating planned Information Technology improvements to ensure employees can communicate with each other and work remotely, if needed. Among the things being done are: installing Microsoft Office 365, enable remote access for employees and remote meeting access, increasing bandwidth and creating identification badges for essential personnel.
Gov. Extends Closure of Nonessential Businesses Until May

By Chris Villani
Staff Reporter/Columnist

After the federal government announced the exertion of social distancing guidelines through the end of April, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker announced the state would keep all nonessential businesses closed and extend the “stay at home” advisory until at least May 4 due to the ongoing COVID-pandemic.

The state’s Department of Public Health issued new guidance around hotels, motels, and short-term rentals, saying they can only be used in efforts related to fighting the novel coronavirus.

The state website lists services deemed essential in several broad categories, including healthcare, public safety, and transportation, among others.

While medicinal cannabis is included under the “healthcare” category, recreational cannabis shops will remain closed during the public health crisis. Other states have kept their adult-use shops open, but Baker said the fact that Massachusetts is the only state in the region that has legalized marijuana could lead to people traveling to the state to purchase cannabis during the crisis.

“We have had many, many conversations with businesses across the Commonwealth that were deemed nonessential,” Baker said. “They understand why we are doing it and why it’s an important step to ensure the health and safety of them and their employees and others in the Commonwealth.”

The governor encouraged people to go outside, talk a walk, or go to the park, but warned them not to do it in large groups and to practice social distancing.

“The next couple of weeks are going to be critical in this battle,” Baker said. “If we can work together to meet the growing need of medical supplies in response to COVID-19, items needed are:

- Surgical procedure masks with elastic ear loops
- NIOSH approved N95 masks and face shields
- Impervious isolation gowns
- Nasopharyngeal swabs

To arrange a donation, contact the Foundation Office, 508-622-2204 or Foundation@milreg.org. Thank you.

Milford Regional encourages everyone to visit MilfordRegional.org to stay up to date on the Medical Center’s response to COVID-19.

Celebrate Milford Cancelled due to COVID-19

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Next months planned “Celebrate Milford” activities are being canceled due to the COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency.

“After carefully examining the events of the past two plus weeks, which included the extension of school closures through May 4, 2020, the Board of Directors of Celebrate Milford voted to cancel this year’s events,” the board said in a statement issued last week.

“Vendors and exhibitors who paid their 2020 fee will be refunded in full over the next two weeks. We thank the entire greater Milford community for their understanding in this matter. As we previously communicated in mid-March, the safety of the general public, vendors/exhibitors and our volunteers is a primary concern of ours,” the statement continued.

Milford Regional Needs Medical Supply Donations

Milford Regional Medical Center appreciates the support of the community as we work together to meet the growing need of medical supplies in response to COVID-19. Items needed are:

- Surgical procedure masks with elastic ear loops
- NIOSH approved N95 masks and face shields
- Impervious isolation gowns
- Nasopharyngeal swabs

To arrange a donation, contact the Foundation Office, 508-622-2204 or Foundation@milreg.org. Thank you.

Milford Regional encourages everyone to visit MilfordRegional.org to stay up to date on the Medical Center’s response to COVID-19.

Online and Mobile Banking offers a convenient, secure way to bank… Anywhere, Any time!

- View account balances, transfer funds and pay bills with online banking at MilfordFederal.com.
- Deposit checks, transfer funds, receive banking alerts and more using our Milford Federal Bank mobile app, available on the App Store or Google Play.
- Use your debit card for purchases.
- Sign up for e-statements through online banking.

Visit MilfordFederal.com or download the app today to get started!

CELEBRATE MILFORD CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19
New Shopping Directives in Massachusetts

Responding to the March 25 directive by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, grocers and pharmacies are offering at least one hour a day of shopping for adults age 60 and over and those who are vulnerable. The directive also prohibits reusable bags and lifts all plastic bag bans. Stores cannot charge for providing plastic and paper bags. Stores were also ordered to provide sanitizer and disinfecting wipes, ensure customers and staff maintain a six-foot distance from each other, close self-serve food stations and instruct employees to stay home if not feeling well.

Customers are advised to check the stores’ local web page to determine operating hours since many stores are now closing earlier or opening later in order to stock shelves and thoroughly clean the building.

Local stores with senior hours for those age 60 and above, pregnant women and those who are vulnerable are:

- Aldi - 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday.
- Big Y Market - 7 to 8 a.m. daily.
- Hannaford - 6 to 7 a.m. daily.
- Market Basket - 7 to 7 a.m. daily.
- Price Chopper & Market 32-6 to 7 a.m. daily.
- Roche Brothers - 7 to 8 a.m. daily.
- Shaw’s/Star Markets stores - 7 to 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Stop & Shop - 6 to 7:30 a.m. daily.
- Whole Foods - 8 to 9 a.m. daily.
- Walmart - 6 to 7 a.m. Tuesday.
- Walgreens - 8 to 9 a.m. daily.
- Market Basket - 6 to 7 a.m. daily.
- Whole Foods - 8 to 9 a.m. daily.
- Walmart - 6 to 7 a.m. Tuesday.
- Walgreens - 8 to 9 a.m. daily.
- Dollar Store, Whitinsville - 8 to 9 a.m. daily.
- Dollar Store, Milford - 9 to 10 a.m. daily.

Access by Appointment

SAFE DEPOSIT BOX
Send a Wire Transfer
Transfer between accounts at CRB and another bank
Pay a Friend
Pay a Bill
Set up Direct Deposit
Move Money
Make a Payment
Mass Save Loan - Application
Business Loan - Application
Auto or Personal Loan - Application
Insurance
Auto Insurance
Homeowners Insurance
Money Market
Savings Accounts
Certificate of Deposit
CDs
IRA
Bonuses
Lines of Credit
Accessibility
ACH Transfer
Give a Gift
Stop payment
Deposit
Balance and Transaction History
ACCOUNT INQUIRIES
To stay up to date on the Medical Center’s response to COVID-19, visit MilfordRegional.org.

COVID-19 Information Resources

Officials at all levels encourage people to get information about COVID-19 from reliable and credible resources. Here is a listing of some of those resources:

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – CDC.gov/coronavirus
- State of Massachusetts — Mass.gov/Covid19
- Massachusetts COVID-19 test alerts, text COVIDMA to 888.777
- Massachusetts Department of Health (DPH) – Mass.gov/orugs/Department-of-
  Public Health
- DPH COVID19, real-time COVID19 information, resources and referrals hotline – 211
- Town website – MilfordMA.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates, which links to state and federal sites.
- Milford TV is broadcasting up-to-the-minute local updates on Comcast Channel 8 and Verizon Channel 38 and its streaming videos available on its website MilfordTV.net
- World Health Organization (WHO) – WHO.int
- John Hopkins University, latest outbreak statistics on an interactive map – Coronavirus.jhu.edu
- New York Times – Nytimes.com, free access during the epidemic
- Washington Post online simulation of how infections can spread without “social distancing” at WashingtonPost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/
More COVID-19 Related Changes at the RMV

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) announces changes to reduce customer volumes in physical locations and maintain proper "social-distancing." Plate Registrations

All passenger plate registrations that have expired in March or will be expiring in April have been extended. Registrations that expired in March are extended until May 31 and registrations that expire in April are extended until June 30. Registration renewals can continue to be performed online at Mass.gov/RMV. No in-person renewals are allowed at this time.

Inspection Stickers

Annual motor vehicle safety and emissions inspection stickers that expire March 31 and April 30 have been extended 60 days and all motorcycle inspection stickers originally set to expire on May 31 must be inspected by June 30. The RMV is also extending the time during which newly registered vehicles must be inspected based on the purchase date.

Appointment-Only Online Reservation System

An appointment-only reservation system is required for in-person transactions—certain Commercial Driving License (CDL) and some new registrations – at the RMV’s eight open Service Centers. Appointment reservation times will be available on a rolling basis up to two business days in advance on Mass.Gov/RMV. Roll-ins and all motorcycle inspection stickers can be performed online at Mass.gov/RMV along with more than 40 other transactions that can be conducted online, over the phone, or by mail.

Commercial Transactions

The Milford and Wilmington RMV Service Centers will remain open to exclusively perform walk-in commercial transactions for CDLs and permits (CLPs), and CDL road tests continue to be administered.

60 Day Extensions

All Class D, Class M and Class DM driver's licenses, ID cards, Learners' Permits, and commercial driver's licenses and permits (CDLs / CLPs) with an expiration date between March 1 and April 30, 2020, have a 60-day extension applied to their credential, with the exception of customers whose end of stay in the United States is the same as the expiration date on their driver's license, ID card, or Learner's Permit. Customers eligible for these extensions should wait to visit an RMV Service Center to renew until after the State of Emergency has concluded.

CDL Medical Certificates (Med Certs) that have expired or will expire March 31 through April 30 are extended to June 30.

Suspension Hearings and Reinstatement Procedures

Customers may continue to request suspension hearings by visiting a RMV Service Center in-person on a first-come, first-served basis. Under new protocols, customers will be required to submit their application and all required, supporting documentation, before leaving. A Hearings Officer will call the customer directly to conduct their suspension hearing by phone. Some suspended customers may already be able to complete the reinstatement process and payment online by visiting Mass.gov and registering and selecting "Pay my Reinstatement Fees."

Hearings are being conducted at Boston/Haymarket, Brockton, Fall River, Lawrence, Springfield and Worcester. Hearings at the Pittsfield RMV are Wednesdays and no hearings are conducted in Plymouth. California wheel failure (CWF) hearings are still held at Boston/Haymarket.

Suspending Issuance of New REAL IDs and Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Exams and Road Tests

The RMV has already suspended knowledge/written exams and road tests for non-commercial (Class D and Class M) learner's permits. In addition, the federal government's REAL ID compliance deadline has been postponed, and is now next year, in October 2021, so the RMV has suspended current issuance of new REAL IDs. For more information RMV services and changes visit Mass.gov/info-details/rmv-covid-19-information.

The Milford Youth Center, Milford TV and the towns Board of Health have partnered up to provide mask-making kits to Milford families. These masks are intended solely for use within your house to reduce likelihood of spreading the COVID-19 coronavirus among family members.

The kits are available today from 8 to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Memorial Elementary School, 12 Walnut St.

The Kits also will be distributed with the free breakfast and lunch program, sponsored by the Hockomock Area YMCA, Milford Public Schools and the Milford Humanitarian Coalition. The first 40 families to pick up a kit also will receive a free 2020 Census drawing backpack with information in English, Spanish and Portuguese on why responding to the Census is important to get accurate numbers that reflect our community.

The goal of handing out the free kits is to provide a safer environment for families at home, but also to create a community-driven activity for all to take part in. If you have a video and or photo of making the masks that you want to share, please send them to our Youth Center Program Coordinator Kathleen Irwin at Kirwintownofmilford.com.

The Milford Summer Meals Program, which provides both breakfast and lunch, has been activated during the school closures due to the coronavirus. The Milford Area Humanitarian Coalition, the Hockomock YMCA and the Milford Public Schools have teamed up again to address this unprecedented issue presented to the community. The alliance was called to arms to address the immediate need of providing breakfast and lunch to students. Currently, a student or adult with a child can simply drive up or walk to Memorial Elementary School, Walton St. and be handed a meal without entering the building. Monday through Friday, breakfast is served from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The first two weeks of distribution, a total of 4,440 meals were served.

Weekend meals designed to fill in the gap between lunch on Friday and breakfast on Monday is ongoing. Many contributions have been donated but more are still needed. Chefs maybe made out to the Milford Area Humanitarian Coalition and mailed to the Law Office of Michael M. Kaplan, 291 Main St., Milford 01757. All of the donations go directly to the program, none are used for administrative costs.

Family Mask-making Kits Available

Milford Summer Meals Program Responds to Feed Students

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Things to do in a Pandemic

Shop Local Now

I called my local auto mechanic last week to schedule an oil change. Usually, he’s booked solid. Not this time.

His business may be deemed “essential” but, in this time of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, his customers are staying away.

So, here’s a plea to all of my readers: Shop local now!

Most of the smaller businesses in town – the ones every group turns to when they need a donation – are the early victims of this virus. I’m not trying to trivialize any human being’s illness or death, but local businesses are on life support right now.

They are either closed due to being deemed “non-essential” or – if still open – their business has dropped dramatically. In plain language, they may not have enough cash coming in the door to make it through the pandemic.

You can help them through it.

First, you can call or check websites to see if they are still open.

Next, you can still support them by buying a gift certificate for use when they re-open.

You can still patronize those still open while practicing “social distance.” For example, my auto mechanic no longer lets people in his garage. But, he let me drop the car off with a key left in it and called me when it was ready. He let me read off my debit card number to him when he called. My car was waiting in his parking lot.

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy. The ones employing two or three people are just as important as the companies employing hundreds. Their owners are our neighbors.

Federal Census

There’s something else we can do while waiting for the public health emergency to end:

Fill out the federal census form! The national response rate as of April 1 was 41.3 percent, with Massachusetts coming in at 42.9 percent and Milford even higher at 48.0 percent! (The feds have a neat website that lets you track the response rates.) Surely, Milford can do much better than that!

Why is it important? A properly counted Milford population means the town gets a greater share of federal dollars. This is why the state did a mail survey to see if we needed a computerized version of the Census form.

Next, you can still support them by buying a gift certificate for use when they re-open.

In my opinion, the narrative over the last three years is a simple one: Kingkade did not want O’Loughlin nor his logical successor, Falvey, as police chief. And, in my opinion, it is Kingkade who has done a disservice to the Milford Police Department by concocting this false narrative and has sullied his office by this smear campaign.

Michelangelo Bon Tempo

Milford Town Meeting member

Precinct 4

MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEALS

The March 30 list of confirmed, free, nourishing meals offered monthly to all in the local community

Last Wednesday

4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford. 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org. April meals are scheduled but subject to change based on Covid-19 directives

Last Thursday

4:30-6 p.m. Dinner, Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Congress St., Milford. Sponsored by First Methodist Church of Milford volunteers. 508-473-8464 or office@trinitychurchmilford.org. April meals are scheduled but subject to change based on Covid-19 directives

A Disservice to the Milford Police Department

To the Editor:

Statements made to discredit former Police Chief Thomas O’Loughlin by Selectman William Kingkade at the February 10, Board of Selectmen meeting are problematic, not for O’Loughlin, but for Kingkade. ("Selectmen Interview 3 Police Chief Finalists," Milford Town Crier, February 28, 2020) First, there is no way to corroborate Kingkade’s claim that the former chief said no one in the police department is qualified to be the police chief. The statement was reportedly made during an Executive Session, but minutes to those meetings are not being made available by the Town.

Unreported in the story is the fact that Kingkade was spreading this rumor to his constituents, which, in my opinion, is clearly unethical and of questionable legality.

Contrary to Kingkade’s claim is a memo dated October 27, 2017, in which O’Loughlin detailed to Selectmen the hiring and promotion practices in the department and how supervisors have been provided with the necessary training to compete and serve as administrators, including the position of chief. Also, why would O’Loughlin say something that he knows is not true.

I named James Falvey, an officer of impeccable reputation and qualifications, as the Deputy Chief and he recommended Falvey as Interim Chief.

Second, Kingkade claimed that O’Loughlin had no succession plan in place, and this was a disservice to the department. However, in the same October memo, O’Loughlin brought the issue of a succession plan to the Board’s attention and explained that the language of the Police Chief Selection By-law precludes a police chief from putting in place a succession plan.

Kingkade has had ample opportunity since October 2017 to address the issue of a succession plan through an article at Town Meeting, but he took no action.

In my opinion, the narrative over the last three years is a simple one: Kingkade did not want O’Loughlin nor his logical successor, Falvey, as police chief. And, in my opinion, it is Kingkade who has done a disservice to the Milford Police Department by concocting this false narrative and has sullied his office by this smear campaign.

Michelangelo Bon Tempo

Milford Town Meeting member

Precinct 4

Opinion

LETTERS letters may be edited for length and clarity, and will be published on a space available basis. Maximum 300 words. Must include signature, address & telephone number.

Opinions expressed are solely those of the writer. Town Crier Publications will not be responsible for inaccuracies. No Political Endorsements, please!
Milford Girl Scouts Staying Connected

Many of youngsters are now feeling disconnected from the usual routines of daily life, after school activities, and friends. To ease this physical isolation, Milford Girl Scouts join the millions of people around the world by staying connected through multimedia. Girl Scouts continue to text or video chat with each other, participate in virtual troop meetings, earn badges, and work on community service projects. When this pandemic reached Massachusetts in March, Milford’s troop leaders created a video message to let Girl Scouts know they’re thinking of them and hope to see their smiling faces in-person soon. Until then, troops have been scouting, at-home by suggesting nearby hiking trails to enjoy with their families or earn badges individually.

Troop leader, Jen Scheps, met with her 4th graders via video conferencing to work on the Junior Cybersecurity badge, noting “the girls are just happy to see each other and chat about what they have been up to the past two weeks.” Other troops have connected virtually to work on Brownie Home Scientist and Pets badges, which are well-suited for meeting in girls’ home kitchens. Troops have also connected virtually to work on Brownie Home Scientist and Pets badges, which are well-suited for meeting in girls’ home kitchens. Troops have also connected virtually to work on Brownie Home Scientist and Pets badges, which are well-suited for meeting in girls’ home kitchens.

McCarthy explained many of those volunteers are seniors themselves and therefore some have decided to step back from volunteering until the virus is no longer a threat.

BSA Troop 219 Celebrates First Anniversary.

Troop 219 Scouts of Mayflower Council Boy Scouts of America celebrated their first anniversary in February. The girls took part in rock climbing activities. Exciting and challenging adventures planned in the year ahead include white water rafting, zip lining, tent/cabin camping overnights and community service/conservation work. Most recently the girls were invited to a Camporee at West Point Academy in April. These Scouts have and continue to grow in leadership and outdoor skills. The girls, who come from Milford, Hopkinton, Franklin and Hopkinton thank the communities for support. Enrollment doubled in the past year and it hopes to expand to other towns. The troop is open to girls age 11 through 17 interested in being members of the Boy Scouts of America.

For information visit Troop219Milford.org.

Love your local shops! Support them through this crisis. Phone and online orders, a nd buying gift cards are some ideas to keep them going.

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

Milford Town Crier

April 10, 2020

APRIL 10, 2020
Milford Town Crier
**If Trees Could Talk**

We are living through unsettling times with Covid-19. Being restricted mostly to our homes can be tense for some. Hilarious cat videos and ones of people doing ridiculous things to keep themselves occupied during isolation provide a great comic relief. The outdoors can also help and I have seen more people than usual hiking, walking along the roadside or just out in their yards.

Andy Finton, Nature Conservancy Forest Ecologist, says that the healing power of nature is real and critical to human health. Numerous studies show that time spent in nature has therapeutic effects. It improves mental function, lowers stress and boosts the immune system. There is a growing body of knowledge that supports this.

While being outdoors, you may have noticed that many large trees have been cut down along the roadsides. Some trees are healthy and 80-100+ years old, but in an inconvenient location; by an electrical line or a poorly-sited new house lot. Tree trimming is essential to reduce power outages, but it seems that there could be more pruning and less removal. We will never be able to recreate these majestic trees in our lifetimes.

A century ago, when our towns were rolling pastures, these legacy trees were left to shade the sheep and the roadsides. They are historic. It’s not noticeable when the trees are removed one by one, but the accumulation of lost trees has left some of the once tree-canopied country roads stark.

Trees are no-cost powerful machines that clean and filter our drinking water, cool us in the summer heat, soak up water like a sponge to prevent flooding and slowly release water during times of drought. These grand giants provide cavities for birds and other wildlife to live in, which smaller trees cannot provide. They absorb carbon and release the oxygen we breathe. We need trees more than they need us. Anne Mazaa photo

Anne Mazaa

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**Electronic Recycling Cancelled**

The May 2 Electronic Recycling event at the First Congregational Church of Milford has been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.
The auditing firm did say that an asset tagging system for technology was begun in Fiscal Year 2020, but was not completed during the firm’s fieldwork earlier this calendar year because “there was no asset tagging system in place and technology assets were maintained on spreadsheets,” Scanlon & Associates wrote.

Specifically, the auditors looked at three purchases: 1,450 Acer laptops for $303,050 invoiced on May 8, 2018 (95 unaccounted for); and, 80 for $18,320 invoiced on January 18, 2018 (95 unaccounted for). Of those 2,641 computers, 395 were perched in classrooms where they were listed by the School Department as “decommissioned inventory.” The audit did not look at an additional 1,524 laptops purchased separately.

The three invoices add up to $560,235, giving each of the 2,641 Chromebooks purchased an average price of $215.

The 253 unaccounted for would then be worth $53,889 and the 395 listed as “decommissioned” would be worth $84,135.

“The schools saw a need to improve the inventory management system of the Chromebooks in the spring of 2019,” Parson told the Town Crier. “Our district-wide technology inventory has been under review since July 2019, when our newly appointed Technology Director began reviewing the current processes for asset tagging and management. “A number of the Chromebooks identified were decommissioned or already out of circulation because they were broken. The continued work of tagging and managing the assets is underway, though understandably challenging to undertake at the present time, with Chromebooks either currently deployed to students or present in schools that are closed due to COVID-19. A full inventory of the Chromebooks will again begin when devices are returned by students at the end of the school year. The system that has been put into place is sustainable in terms of asset management, and will continue with the current inventory and with any new devices moving forward.”

For that reason, the Management Letter was presented to the Board of Selectmen for board members to review Scanlon & Associates’ recommendations for improving financial audits. Thomas Scanlon and Finance Director Zachary Taylor reviewed the firm’s findings with selectmen on May 23. “There were not adequate controls over the Chromebooks,” Scanlon said, recommending that – given the amount of tax paid dollars for the school laptops – a complete inventory be made going back to the first purchases.

“We need to have people to do a lot better with accounting for public dollars,” Selectmen Chair Jennifer Parson said.

“With this issue exists with Chromebooks, where else does it exist?” he questioned. Buckley asked that Taylor or Town Administrator Richard Villani send the School Department a memo requesting that the “root cause” of the problem be discovered and that corrective action be taken on the School Department’s capital asset management policies and procedures. He also noted that saying it should not be difficult to do so given the schools are closed due to the COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency.

“We may have activities that require our Police Department to be involved,” Buckley added. Selectman William Kingcade said, “We really need to know what happened, how it happened and it’s never going to happen again.”

The Board of Selectmen asked for a response within 30 days, saying it should not be difficult to do so given the schools are closed due to COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency.

“Cities and Town are required to conduct various audits annually to be in line with federal bond covenants for tax-exempt municipal bond issuance. These audits are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial documents of the Town are free of misstatement of information and make recommendations for improvement based off of the testing of internal control,” Taylor wrote.

This is an opportunity to demonstrate our fiduciary responsibility as employees of the town, funded in large part by the taxpayers of Milford,” the memo said.

The lunch program in mentioned by the School Superintendent for Finance and HR) along with the School Committee chair and co-chair have been in contact with Mr. Scanlon to schedule a meeting time when we can discuss the audit in greater detail.”

One of Scanlon & Associates’ findings “concerned the controls around Chromebook management. More specifically, the need to enhance the procedure of tracking distribution, replacement and decommissioning of Chromebooks on a perpetual basis,” Taylor wrote.

“The details of the testing have been provided to you,” he continued. “Original fieldwork could not be conclusive due to the unavailability of key employees who administered the program. Therefore, an additional two days of field work at a later date was required where new information was provided. In a conference call I had with Mr. Taylor, he discussed the outcome of the engagement and described the sample size used. Mr. Scanlon suggested a larger sample size; however, it was clear to me that the sample used was sufficient evidence that there would be similar results if other, older invoices were tested.”

“At that time,” Taylor continued, “I expressed a greater desire to help address the issues and get the program back on track. During the course of the discussion it was the recommendation of Mr. Scanlon that a physical count at the end of the school year be conducted in order to have an accurate basis to maintain inventory on a perpetual basis.

I strongly recommend that this important step become part of the response requested in this letter. During the first week of March a meeting was requested to review the two findings with the Superintendent and School Business Manager. This meeting was conducted on March 12th to review the above-mentioned findings with Mr. Scanlon, which concluded the background data and recommendations were reviewed.”

Taylor noted that the Board of Selectmen discussed the audit’s findings on March 23 and Board members were in agreement to seek a detailed response to the above findings. He wrote, “I understand the budgetary autonomy provided to a School Department; however, the Selectmen as the Chief Executive Officers of the Town of Milford are requiring cooperation to help address the issues. One of the largest roles and responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen is to create policy and procedure for all School departments to follow and ensure a sound financial process. This is the reason the Management Letter recommends oversight from the Town when implementing procedures and policies to ensure the assets are properly safeguarded and accounted for.”

Finance Director Explains Audit Procedure

By Kevin Rudden

In a March 30 memo to School Committee Chair Jennifer Parson, Finance Director Zachary Taylor explained the purpose and use of the town’s annual audit.

“Citizens and Town are required to conduct internal and external audits annually to be in compliance with federal bond covenants for tax-exempt municipal bond issuance. These audits are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial documents of the Town are free of misstatement of information and make recommendations for improvement based off of the testing of internal control,” Taylor wrote.

“The audits are carried out by third-party creditors and investors to assist them in making decisions in conducting business with the Town, such as the bonding of the Woodland Elementary school and even securing funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. It is also an important tool to help the Town in areas that have been identified as needing improvement. The annual audit is an opportunity to demonstrate our fiduciary responsibility as employees of the town, funded in large part by the taxpayers of Milford,” he continued.

The audit is carried out by third-party creditors and investors to assist them in making decisions in conducting business with the Town, such as the bonding of the Woodland Elementary school.
Field of Flags Sponsorships and Renewals

Citizens for Milford and the Milford Corps of the Salvation Army are expanding the Draper Memorial Park Field of Flags, a yearly display of American flags at Draper Memorial Park as a tribute for the service of veterans and active military on five holidays—Memorial Day; Flag Day; July 4th; Labor Day and Veterans Day. Citizens, organizations, and businesses are invited to sponsor a 3’ x 5’ American flag to fly on a 10’ staff for a $60 donation. Previous sponsors are encouraged to renew their sponsorship. Sponsors can choose to honor a veteran (alive or deceased), an active military member or veterans.

Each flag includes a yellow ribbon and card naming the honoree, their military branch, years of service, and the sponsor’s name. Sponsors may provide a photo if desired. The laminated name cards are attached to each flagpole.

To sponsor a flag, visit CitizensforMilford.com, complete the form and mail it to the address listed with a $60 check made out to the Salvation Army before May 11. Requests for a sponsorship form can be emailed to CitizensforMilford@gmail.com.

All residents are welcome to help install the flags. Volunteers from Milford Federal Bank and the Milford Junior Women’s Club, as well as many flag sponsors have helped install the flags. The majority Field of Flags donations support the work of the Milford Salvation Army. For more information, visit CitizensforMilford.com or email CitizensforMilford@gmail.com.

Recent Actions by Milford Selectmen
By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

• Approved changing the management of the Caffé Sorrento, Inc. at 143 Central St. to Linda Chesci. (March 23)
• Granted a one-day Automatic Amusement license to Fun Zone Milford LLC, doing business as Pizza, at 110 South Main St. to have a mechanical bull ride on May 22 for the Milford After Prom party. (March 23)
• Accepted the resignation of Michael Soares from the Finance Committee. (March 23)
• Approved Carly Keenan to the Finance Committee. (March 23)
• Accepted a $225 donation from Unbank and a $941.26 donation from the Boston Red Sox for the Fourth of July parade. (March 25)
• Approved Martin Montoya to the Milford Cultural Council. (March 23)
• Accepted the resignation of Scott Harrison from the Personnel Board. (March 23)
• Approved Timothy Goggins to the Personnel Board. (March 23)
• Appointed Ariea Bryan to the Milford Youth Commission. (March 23)
• Appointed William Whitney as a school Crossing Guard. (March 23)
• Continued until April a request to transfer the All-Alcoholic Beverages liquor license currently held by Sky Buffet on East Main St. (Rt. 16). (March 30)
• Transferred the Second-Hand/Antique Dealer license for Central Street Reale at 2 Central St. to Heidi Burrill, subject to payment of $64.24 in outstanding FY 2019 Personal Property taxes. (March 30)
• Renewed the Seasonal Club liquor licenses held by: Maspenock Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 1 McGall Lane, the Sons of Italy Dramatic & Sportsmen Club, Inc. at 55 Depot St.; the Greater Milford Social Club, Inc. at 28 Granite St. Selectman William Kingkade abstained from the vote on the Greater Milford Social Club, Inc. (March 30)
• Granted Milford Special Olympics permission to hold its annual race road beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday, September 26 at Milford High School. (March 30)
• Accepted a $500 gift from the Lt. Robert C. Frascati Post No. 1544 Veterans of Foreign Wars to the Milford Police Explorers. (March 30)
• Accepted a $619 gift to the town from National Grid’s Employee Giving Campaign. (March 30)

New Hope Has Gone Virtual
Anyone who is in a domestic or sexual violent relationship, please know New Hope is still here for you. Following Massachusetts Governor Charlie Bakers’s order for non-essential businesses to close due to the pannedemic, the New Hope physical offices were closed in late March. However, the organization is still providing life-saving support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence survivors. The staff members have worked diligently to develop remote processes and procedures to support those in need. All the while, prioritizing the health and safety of survivors and staff. The 24/7 Hotline (800-523-4673 HOPE) is still operating; counseling, advocacy and education is happening via telephone or through a secure virtual session.

While methods may look different, survivors are still being offered the same level of professional care and compassion. So, reach out, via phone, web site (New-Hope.org), social media and soon through a web chat function linked to the web site. Stay tuned in April for on-line Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities. Together, everyone can create communities free from violence and exploitation. Please keep safe and healthy.

Stay Positive
Help Wanted

HOMEMAKERS/ PC AIDES WANTED
Part Time Jobs
Flexible Hours
MUST HAVE CAR
Work in Milford, MA area
Call PRIMARY HOME CARE
(508) 478-3500
for more information

Now Hiring Drivers
Transportation Drivers AND
7D School Van Drivers and Monitors Needed

Openings for between 20 – 39 Hours

Sign-On Bonus
(new applicant sign on bonuses. Restrictions apply, inquire at office.)
$1,300 bonus if you have a valid 7D License
$1,000 bonus if you do not have a 7D license

Wanted:
• Regular transportation drivers - no special licenses required.
• 7D drivers wanted to transport students to and from school in company vehicles. If you are interested but do not have a 7D license we can go through the paperwork to get your license and walk you through the process. It’s very easy.
• Must be 21 years old and have a valid driver license for at least three years.
• Hours are early morning and mid afternoon. This is a split shift.
• Great if you are retired! Shifts available from 6-39 hours per week.

Monitors also needed!

Call Mark’s Transportation at 508-473-3600

Our office is located at 51 East Main St. (Route 16) Milford, MA. Stop in the office to fill out an application from 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.
Purchase Street School Sold

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The former Purchase Street School, originally built in about 1864, is being sold by the town for $190,500 to Little Stars Daycare and Preschool, LLC – the building’s current tenant which submitted the highest of two bids for the property.

The Board of Selectmen awarded the bid at its March 30 meeting. The other bid, for $125,000, was submitted by Wetherfield, LLC of Chelsea.

According to Assessor’s records, the 229 Purchase St. property has 0.482 acre of land and approximately 1,780 square feet of interior space. Total assessed value is listed as $357,300.

The Massachusetts Secretary of State’s office lists Alexandra Alves Iannitelli as the manager of Little Stars and list the company as being formed in 2014.

“I’m very happy with the way that went,” Selectman William Kingkade said of the bidding process, noting that Little Starts would not have to move since it submitted the highest bid for the property.

Pighetti Named Permanent Milford Police Chief

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Selectmen voted 2-1 on March 23, with Selectman Michael Walsh dissenting, to offer Interim Milford Police Chief Michael Pighetti the job on a full-time basis, subject to contract negotiations. The board approved a three-year contract for Pighetti, on the same 2-1 basis, at its March 30 meeting.

With Baltimore Police Commander/Major James Rhoden – one of three final candidates recommended to selectmen by the Police Chief Selection Review Committee – turning down the town’s offer to become its new chief in mid-March, Selectmen Chair William Buckley asked his colleagues on March 23 how they wanted to proceed with obtaining a new Police Chief. Selectman William Kingkade noted he was “quite disappointed by his [Rhoden’s] decision to decline the offer he initially accepted. “ With the country dealing with the COVID-19 coronavirus public health emergency, it would not be a good time for any police officer to leave his current location, Kingkade added.

Since Pighetti has been doing a good job as Interim Police Chief and continuity is important during an emergency situation, Kingkade said, he asked Pighetti if he would stay on the job and received a positive response. Kingkade then made a motion to appoint Pighetti as full-time chief for a three-year period.

Walsh noted that – at last fall’s Special Town Meeting – an article was passed mandating that the board pick a new chief from among the finalists recommended by the search committee. “I don’t think this is the time for us not to pay attention to the Town Meeting Members,” he said. Buckley then asked if Walsh wanted to go back to the two other finalists who were not picked and Walsh said he did. Buckley said selectmen did what the town’s by-laws require them to do and what they promised to Town Meeting Members last fall by picking one of the finalists. “We did follow the by-law. We made every effort,” he said. He did not want to approach another finalist and tell him he was the town’s second choice, Buckley added.

“I have full faith and trust in Mike Pighetti to carry on with his duties,” the chairman said.

Happy 100, Viola Barsanti

Long-time Milford resident Viola Barsanti (a.k.a. “Nonni V”), turned 100-years-old on March 13. The matriarch was surrounded by family and friends to help celebrate her birthday at her daughter Corrine Iacovelli’s home in Mendon. The centenarian credits ‘fresh vegetables, hard work, and plain living’ to her longevity. Pictured is Barsanti (front center) with her family (back row l to r): Deanna Iacovelli, Paul Iacovelli (grandson), Michael Iacovelli, Anthony Iacovelli, Jr (grandson), (middle row l to r): Arianna Iacovelli (great-granddaughter), Maria Iacovelli (granddaughter), Corrine Iacovelli (daughter), and Anthony Iacovelli, (front row l to r): Josh Schweisfish (great-grandson), Barsanti, and Emily Iacovelli (great-granddaughter). Melissa Orff photo.
School Committee Reacts Strongly to Selectman's Statements About Chromebooks

By Melissa Orff
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Several members of the Milford School Committee reacted to the "inflammatory and unwarrented" statements made by Milford's Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, William Buckley regarding the presentation of a recent technology audit where over 250 Milford Public School Chromebooks were marked "missing."

After the results of the audit were presented to the Board of Selectmen a March 23 meeting, Buckley called the fact that the audit revealed 253 Chromebooks to be unaccounted for a "fundamental failure of controls on capital assets." Buckley went on to say this may be an issue "that would require our police department to be involved.

There were no representatives from the School Committee at the Selectmen's meeting, an issue that the School Committee Chairperson took exception to. "Those statements were made without context or any ability to respond on the part of the School Committee or Administration," said School Committee Chairperson Jennifer Parsons during the March 26 Selectmen Meeting when discussing the comments made by Buckley.

Over the past several years, the town has made a significant investment in Chromebooks to fund their 1:1 technology initiative. Currently, all students in grades 3 through 12 have Chromebooks, with students in grades 6 through 12 able to take them home for homework. The cost of 253 Chromebooks would equate to approximately $53,000.

Over this past summer, knowing that they had a need to better keep track of their inventory, the district switched to a new asset management system to count the district's technology hardware, similar to one used for library books.

"This goes beyond Chromebooks," said Milford's Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin McIntyre. Since the summer, the Technology Department has been asset tagging Chromebooks in circulations, and accounting for decommissioned - broken devices that will be used for parts.

"Sometimes the term 'missing' means 'not currently in the asset management system," said McIntyre to the School Committee about the audit.

McIntyre said that they had already accounted for 200 of the 253 "missing" Chromebooks, and that they will continue to work on developing the asset management system in time to collect the equipment at the end of the school year.

School Committee Member Christopher Wilson asked McIntyre for an accounting of the "missing" Chromebook, and to answer why the School Committee was not informed of the discrepancies on the audit.

But other members stated that this was not the time to discuss the issue, stating that the comments made by Buckley were "grandstanding."

"How is he going to find 200 Chromebooks? Is that what we want Nancy [Angelini, Milford Public School's Technology Director] to do 40 hours a week?" commented School Committee member James Liger. "Are you going to do that going student by student right now?"

Parson also responded that the comments made by other boards should have no influence on their procedure, as they are not driven or overseen by any other town board. "The last thing that I want to see anyone in the Milford Public Schools doing in the midst of a pandemic is to sit and try and track down 200 Chromebooks, the same as I wouldn't want to see someone tracking down 200 pencils or textbooks," she said. "I am surprised it was not mentioned that we should be looking for library books or telephones at the police department or other [assets] in our town."

The School Committee asked for a future agenda item to be added to discuss the process of asset management for the district.
BVT Using 3D Printers to Create Face Shields

Submitted by Elise Bodgan
Blackstone Valley Tech

During this global COVID-19 pandemic, local community hospitals are experiencing a shortage of supplies and have expressed concerns about running out of personal protective equipment (PPE) when the virus peaks in Massachusetts. The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, in partnership with other technical high schools, is answering the call. Valley Tech gave a substantial donation of PPE to Milford Regional Medical Center in March and is now working on a new project to create needed face shields.

After the District received requests to manufacture face shields, administration and staff planned and coordinated how to utilize the school's inventory of 3D printers. A total of 12 were safely collected and relocated by staff members who practiced required social distancing through a spaced process, entered the school at their scheduled time slot, and set up to work with one another across the Commonwealth.

“Being able to actively and creatively respond to the shortage of supplies with 3D printing speaks to our mission,” said Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. “We are proud of the response that is underway in concert with our staff and Senators Moore and Fattman. Ironically, the District originally acquired major equipment upgrades with the help of our Senators and State Representatives Murray, Soter, Muradian, Frost, and McKenna, now finds itself perfectly utilizing those resources beyond the classroom.”

“We will continue our 3D printing efforts as long as resources allow us to help address the shortage of supplies for medical staff and healthcare providers on the front lines,” said Dr. Connors. “I am happy to report that over the last few weeks, we were able to print 100 face shields to be sent to hospitals and medical facilities across the Commonwealth.”

Jewelry Fundraisers Supports Trail Projects

ONLINE—Between now and May 16, when jewelry purchases online at TouchStoneCrystal.com/TVSTRAD and 25 percent of your purchase will benefit Bay State Trail Riders Association, Inc. (BSTRA) to help fund upcoming trail projects. This fundraiser offers everyone an opportunity to make a difference to trails in State Forests in their community. BSTRA has a large $55,000 trail asset to the community, and it has been their focus of BSTRA’s latest book, All the Best.

The Easter Bunny stopped by PAWS’s Mendon office for a photo with some furry friends. Due to the coronavirus and resulting social distancing, PAWS Bed & Biscuit, is unable to have an Easter picture event this year, but is taking picture requests. Over the next two weeks, their Easter Bunny may drop in for a few random appearances to take photos with the daycare and boarding guests. Since PAWS is working with the bunny's schedule, changing weather and the cooperation of visiting furry friends, requests cannot be scheduled. Daniel and Megan Antonellis, the owners of PAWS, said the Easter Bunny visits are their way to give back to the community and bring a little brightness and joy during this socially difficult time. PAWS Bed & Biscuit, a doggie daycare, boarding, grooming and training facility, is located at 97 Millville Rd, Mendon. For more information, visit PAWSSavedandBiscuit.com or call 508-478-6390.

Peter Cottontail with a Few Friends

Milford Easter Services

First Congregational Church of Milford
4 Grafton St. 508-473-3259
MilfordCongregational.org
Contact the Church for information concerning Easter services

First United Methodist Church
39 Exchange St. 508-473-4252
Rev. Daniel Stone

Easter Sunday, April 12
Easter sermon can be viewed on Facebook.com/FumcMilford.ma, 9 a.m.
All church news and updates are available on FumcMilford.org.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church
5 East Main St. 508-634-5435
SacredHeartMilford.org
Rev. Richard A. Scioti
Easter Sunday, April 12
Easter mass can be viewed on WorcesterDiocese.org.

St. Mary of the Assumption Church
19 Winter St. 508-473-2000
StMaryMilford.org
Rev. Peter Joyce
All masses will be live streamed on the Parish website and Facebook page at St. Mary of the Assumption Church
Saturday, April 11
Holy Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
Easter Sunday, April 12
Poirgue, 9 a.m.
English, 10:30 a.m.
Spanish, 12 p.m.

Salvation Army
29 Congress St. 508-473-0786
Reverend Peter Joyce
All services will be live streamed on the Salvation Army of Greater Milford

Trinity Episcopal Church
17 Congress St. 508-473-8464
The Rev. Judith Lee, Interim Priest
All Easter services will be live streamed and available through Facebook at Trinity EpiscopalChurch/Milford or TrinityChurchMilford.org
Good Friday, April 10
Eccumenical service of Seven Last Words, 12 p.m.
Easter Sunday, April 12
Holy Communion, 9 a.m.
Milford’s Rosa Running Off to the Windy City

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Luke Rosa had never been to Chicago until he flew out to the Midwest last week to check out the University of Chicago. But it didn’t take the Milford High senior long to figure out that the elite university is where he wanted to continue his academic and football careers.

“I loved the city itself and once we got to campus, I spend some time with the guys and got to know the coaches and it was kind of a no-brainer,” Rosa said. “I was trying to find the best of both worlds in terms of academics and athletics and this was the best possible school where I could go and play football.”

Rosa was recruited as a running back and figures to help the Maroons on the offensive side of the ball, but he said the coaching staff took note of his ability on defense as well. He said the next several months will be spent maintaining and building on his speed and strength in order to get ready for the college level.

“I just want to keep in shape so I can go in and be as competitive as possible,” Rosa said.

Rosa’s ascension to the college ranks follows a standout career with the Scarlet Hawks. In addition to being the featured back for the MHS offense, he also served as a captain this past season. “I think I performed well this year but I also took my role as a captain as a big challenge for me that I took real pride in,” Rosa said.

The way the other captains and I were able to build the team and make us closer off the field so that those bonds would transfer onto the field was something we focused on and I think we did a really good job with that,” Rosa thinks that approach helped the Hawks get the most out of their talent the past couple of years.

He is hoping to build on that momentum when he heads to Chicago, where he plans to study economics.

His parents, Ken and Nicole, have been guided and aided his athletic and academic pursuits, he said. “They have been super helpful,” Rosa said. “My mom and my dad brought me to camps over the summers and they were there for me the whole way through, whether it was buying me equipment or giving me encouragement. I couldn’t have done it without them.”

College football has always been a goal of Rosa’s and achieve it feels “awesome”, he said.

“It’s a relief too,” Rosa added. “It’s been a long process and it feels good.”

MHS Cheer Trips to States & Nationals Canceled

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The cheerleading season came to an abrupt end amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Milford High squad found out it would not be able to compete at either the state or national championships in a hard one-two punch that came on back-to-back days in March.

“This is tough for them,” said head coach Heather Johnson. “Not only did they get nationals taken away due to COVID-19 but the day after we found out they canceled the state championship.” The Scarlet Hawks were slated to compete in the state tournament on March 15 and then leave for Florida four days later for two days of competition against some of the best cheerleading teams in the country. The latter competition was postponed until May, though Johnson is skeptical it will take place at all.

Either way, Milford decided it would not be going after an announcement by Gov. Charlie Baker that schools should cancel field trips. The Massachusetts state championship was one of the winter sports state finals called off after the pandemic closed schools and sent students home for the foreseeable future. “The seniors took it the hardest,” Johnson said.

Her squad had six seniors this year, five of whom were going to compete at states. Johnson had high praise for the group, which included Caitlyn Baglione, Katherine Schuler, Aly Nesta, Miyoko Yancey, Elena Bon Tempo and Alyssa Williamson.

“They brought a determination and a great work ethic,” Johnson said. “They came in focused with a goal that they hoped to achieve and this season, that was winning a national championship and a state title.” Even on rough days, Johnson said the seniors kept the team focused and working towards the same goal.

“It’s been a really, really tough year for them,” the coach said. In the fall, the cheerleading team lost out on the chance to cheer at Friday night football games due to eastern equine encephalitis. Then, in the spring, they ran into another health issue that brought their year to a premature conclusion. “They are devastated,” Johnson said. “The underclassmen, at least, have another opportunity to attend nationals next year. They were upset too, but the blow was the hardest on the seniors.”

In addition to praising the seniors, Johnson said she was grateful for the support of the community in helping the team raise money for the trip. This funds, she said, will be put towards next year’s team.

Sport

MIAA Keeping Hope Alive for Spring Season, Playoffs

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

As states around the country are musing the possible return of students to campus this spring during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts is one of the hold outs keeping alive the possibility that students could be back in classrooms before June.

Hand-in-hand with the chance of a return to school is the goal of Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), the governing body for high school sports in the state, which hopes to have some form of a modified spring sports season.

During recent MIAA board meeting, the organization voted to shorten the number of days required between the start of the season and the first game from 11 days to seven. If schools were able to reopen on May 4, the earliest possible date according to Gov. Charlie Baker, then the spring season could begin on May 11.

Teams would play a shortened schedule, the MIAA said, and have some sort of postseason ending no later than June 27. In order to qualify for the postseason, teams would have to play a minimum of eight games and would not play more than 12.

Golf would only need three days before it could begin competition and rugby would have to wait nine days, still fewer than the typical 11.

The MIAA also said any junior varsity or freshman teams could continue playing games all the way up until the final day of the year, June 27.

It was unclear whether a full state tournament would be possible or whether teams would just engage in sectional tournament play. The MIAA executive board said it hoped to wait a couple of weeks for additional guidance.

The coronavirus has torpedoed sports and school years throughout the world. As of Tuesday, schools were closed through the rest of the academic year in Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Michigan, Indiana, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia and Vermont, according to Education Week.

Some Massachusetts school officials and political leaders have suggested the Bay State should join some of the others around the country in ruling out a return to campus before the fall.

The rapidly evolving crisis has already forced the MIAA to alter earlier guidance it had offered, which indicated that any spring season starting after Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), the governing body for high school sports in the state, which hopes to have some form of a modified spring sports season.

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**Borges Earns College Soccer Role at Salve Regina**

By Chris Villani  
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Jordan Borges will be playing soccer for Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I. next fall. The soon-to-be Milford grad is pictured with his dad, Jimmy. Borges family photo

When I went to Newport to watch them play, they played that style," Borges said. He hoped to be able to play right away, though he admits that will be a challenge with a strong recruiting class. But he said the coaches told him the opportunity to contribute right away at the center attacking midfield spot will be there after Salve Regina graduated a four-year starter at that position.

The transition to the college level follows a successful four-year career with the MHS soccer program the culminated in a district championship and a trip to the state final this past fall and included a pair of Hockomock League championships.

Borges said he hopes to look into majoring in marketing, citing Salve Regina's strong business college. He's also excited about how he can fit in on the field.

"I like a possession-based style where you keep the ball and you're patient," he said. "Some coaches don't like to play that way, others do.

Navigating the college search process was a challenge, but Borges said his parents, Jimmy and Lisa, helped tremendously. Jimmy Borges played Division I college soccer so he was able to help his son with the soccer side of the process while Lisa helped with writing emails, responding to coaches, and putting together a highlight video, Borges said.

The change to call the seaside town of Newport his home for his college career is also something that appealed to Borges. "Newport is very cool, just walking around and seeing all the students," he said.

The memories from the big games are crazy and will always stick with me," Borges said. "When I went to Newport to watch them play, they played that style."

**France Decides to Continue Soccer Career at Springfield**

By Chris Villani  
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Juliana France, a standout at Milford High, will attend Springfield College next year. 

"I really liked everything about the program," Borges said. "I visited there and talked with the coach and they play a style that fits my game and it's also challenging academically."

Borges said he plans to look into majoring in marketing, citing Salve Regina's strong business college. He's also excited about how he can fit in on the field.

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**Renowned Program & Chance to Run Lands Cota at WPI**

By Chris Villani  
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Gabriel Pardo-Cota feels that he will be in a good position to help the cross country and track and field teams at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, but academic opportunities are what made him decide the school would be the place for him.

"I saw the world class opportunity and a program that will allow me to travel and do projects in different parts of the country," Cota said. "Sports is also a good opportunity and I want to be on the team, but it's not the main reason I went."

Still, Cota has run 17:17 on a 5K cross country course, a personal best he set in his final meet as a member of the Milford High team. He has also broken three minutes in the 1,000 meters, running a time of 2:56.

"The last time I looked at the qualifying standards, it seemed like those times were perfect for a Division III cross country team," he said. "I think I can make the team and do really well." With high school on hold amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Cota said he has been running outside sparingly and has been using the treadmill and weight training indoors in order to stay in shape before he begins his college running career.

Cota said he is excited to have landed at WPI. His father, Paul, said the process was a bit stressful for his son as well as him and his wife, Angelica.

"Of course, Gabriel had to make the choice, but this is a perfect fit," Paul Pardo said. "I think I can make the team and do really well." With high school on hold amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Cota said he has been running outside sparingly and has been using the treadmill and weight training indoors in order to stay in shape before he begins his college running career.

"I have been talking to them about doing a summer league with some of the Milford upperclassmen," France said. "I think we will all play together somehow."
The Milford Trail in the Age of COVID-19

The Friends of the Trail hope everyone in town is staying safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people are using the Milford Trail during warmer days to avoid cabin fever and build up some vitamin D. Usually the trail is as busy in spring on a weekend as on a summer weekend. With 6.8 miles of trail (13 counting the trail in Holliston), there's plenty of space to enjoy the trail while practicing socializing at a distance.

Anyone using the trail during the pandemic, is asked to adhere to the six feet rule when near other people, and be especially cautious when passing any elderly neighbors, as they are in the highest-risk category for COVID. The trail is 12 feet wide along much of its length, which offers plenty of space for people to pass while keeping a distance from one another.

For people on foot: please be aware of other trail users and do not walk in the middle of the path on congregate in groups. For people on bikes: calling out “on your left” has long been the guideline, and it’s now even more important. Pass others with a distance of at least six feet; this may mean riding off the trail for a short distance.

Though the stay-at-home advisory has quieted the streets, motor vehicle traffic is still present, so please watch for cars when crossing the roads.

High School Baseball on Hold During Pandemic

For more than two decades-worth of springs, Alex Dion has welcomed the season with baseball as a player, a coach, a fan, or some combination of all three. But this year, as we all know too well, is different. So how is the Milford High head coach fitting the time?

“I bought a dog,” Dion said.

The new pup is an eight-week old golden retriever named Tedy. Dion says it’s for Ted Williams, aka Teddy Ballgame. His wife says it’s also for one of her favorite Patent, Tedy Bruschi. The spelling, with one D, suggests his wife is correct, a point Dion quickly conceded. Tedy has brought joy to the Dion household and kept his new dad company while he works out in the yard, but not having the baseball season begin on time has been tough to swallow for both Dion and his MHS players.

“When the thing we keep saying to each other is to try to say optimistic and control the things we can control,” Dion said.

The coaches met with the Milford High players via Zoom last Friday and talked for nearly an hour, the closest interaction that is safe amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. “It was nice to see their faces and heard their voices and catch up a little bit,” Dion said. “That’s all we can really do at this point.”

Although the situation is rapidly evolving and several states around the country have already said students will not return to classes on campus this school year, Massachusetts is holding out hope for a May return and, with it, an abbreviated spring sports season. Dion and Mike Reed, Milford’s assistant coach, have their players doing whatever they can to stay sharp in the house. The Scarlet Hawks’ players are encouraged to get some swings in their back yards or garages and use a tennis ball for drills to improve their hand-eye coordination. Dion and Reed shared numerous video resources with the players, designed to give them ideas about the sport and try to bring them to the field in as good a shape as possible, if they return at all. Dion said Milford Athletic Director Peter Boucher has been communicating with the coaches frequently and hope is still alive for schools to restart on May 4 with games to be played soon after that. Until then, it’ll be a lot of time around the house, training Tedy. “It’s weird and it’s tough,” Dion said. “The senior class and the guys that are missing out on their playing time makes it difficult.”

The coach said those words at 5:15 on a sunny, relatively warm April evening. He mused, “We should just be...left” has long been the guideline, and it’s now even more important. Pass others with a distance of at least six feet; this may mean riding off the trail for a short distance.

Though the stay-at-home advisory has quieted the streets, motor vehicle traffic is still present, so please watch for cars when crossing the roads.

Eight-week old golden retriever, Tedy, is keeping MHS baseball coach Alex Dion busy as he hopefully awaits the beginning of the season. Dion family photo