MHS Class of 2020 Graduates Finally Walk the Stage

By Scott Calzolaio
Staff Reporter

After much planning in the face of unprecedented obstacles, members of the Milford Class of 2020 finally turned the tassel last weekend.

The in-person ceremony took place on the football field at the high school on Saturday morning, August 8. Students sat socially distant in the field, while a limited number of family members sat on the bleachers.

Principal, Joshua Otlin opened the 170th MHS Commencement with praise to the class of 2020.

“To our students – thank you for your patience, poise, and grace. You’ve had to wait far too long for this day and you have lost much in the recent months," he said.

“But the day is here and this day is for you. You have earned your place on this field and you deserve to have this moment to be celebrated, recognized and honored.”

Class president, Allison Nesta, took to the mic and reminded her classmates the future is bright, and their senior year was a learning experience unlike any other. Through the lost planned events like prom, she said her class has found strength in the face of adversity.

“Graduation is not only a commencement, it’s a day that ties together the culmination of the past 12 years of our education," she said. “Senior year is a turning point in our lives. Our senior year will be truly unforgettable, but for vastly different reasons.”

Valedictorian, Emily Parke’s speech highlighted the true takeaways from high school experience. “We need to make a big change, not because we despise this world that will do to humanity’s “collective tank. We need to make a big change because we care about the people who will call home, but because we care about it, she said. “We should shoulder a little discomfort now if it means a safer world for future generations. ... It’s about making people see the damage in our walls floors and ceilings.”

Salutatorian, Anne Flanagan, was unable to attend the ceremony as she is set to start classes at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Instead, she put on her cap and gown and recorded her speech to be played.

Kindness and unity has kept the class together and strong, she said. They were the last class to boast surviving eighth grade at Middle School East alone, and may have been the only class to leave more unified.

“The class of 2020 is a diverse community," Flanagan said. “There are so many diverse accomplishments and characteristics to take pride in. We have proven to be scholars, actors, musicians, athletes, and everything in between.”

To view more photos of the 2020 MHS Graduation by Town Crier photographer Jim Calarese turn to page 13 and visit Facebook Town Crier Publications.

Class president Allison Lindsey Nesta gave the Prologue.

Tossing the mortarboard during the MHS 2020 Graduation Ceremonies.

Emily Nicole Frye sang the National Anthem during the MHS Commencement Ceremony.

The members of Milford High School Class of 2020 gathered one last time on Saturday, August 8 for their graduation ceremony held on the school’s playing field.

The Town Crier Team
Congratulates you! We are proud of you!
A Variety of Voting Options for September 1 Massachusetts State Primary

Milford residents have a variety of options for casting their ballot for the September 1 Massachusetts State Primary, including voting at the polls on primary day.

Since this is a primary election, voters will be asked to choose the ballot for the party they wish to cast their votes for—Democratic or Republican. Green-Rainbow and Libertarian party primary ballots are also available, although neither ballot has any candidates listed.

The deadline for residents to change parties is Saturday, August 22 from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. in the Town Clerk's Office. Additionally residents may do so online at Sec.State.Ma.Us/OVR/. This is also the deadline to register to vote in the September 1 primary.

Early voting for the September 1 Massachusetts State Primary will be held at the Milford Town Hall, 52 Main St., in the Upper Town Hall. Voting is available from August 22 through Friday, August 28. Regular polling locations will not be used for early voting. Additional parking for voters wishing to take advantage of early voting in Town Hall is available in the lot across from the Milford Youth Center on Pearl St. during this time. Masks are required and social distancing will be followed for all in-person voting.

The early voting schedule in Town Hall is:
- On Saturday, August 22 and Sunday, August 23, early voting will be held between 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.
- From Monday, August 24 through Friday, August 28, voters may vote in the Upper Town Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Residents may also vote by mail, either by absentee or early ballot; the deadline to apply for mail-in ballots is Wednesday, August 26 by 5 p.m. In addition, absentee voting-in-person at the Milford Town Hall is available; the deadline is 12 p.m. on Monday, August 31.

Information about voting in person at the polls on September 1 will be available in the August 28 issue of the Milford Town Crier.

For more information about voting during the September 1 Primary, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at 508-634-2307 or by email.

Two Electrotherapy and Laser Units Purchased

The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary has provided the funds to purchase Electrotherapy and Laser Units at the Milford Regional Medical Center Franklin Rehabilitation Center, Franklin.

This equipment will help the therapists with treating patients using ultrasound and electrical stimulation. The equipment is used to treat inflammation and circulation for a large amount of orthopedic injuries and conditions. It is used in hands on treatment.

The Auxiliary consists of volunteers from the area towns and always welcomes new members. Meetings, suspended due to the novel coronavirus, are usually held the second Tuesday of each month from September through June. For more information on how to join this group, please call 508-422-2099.

Milford Shows Upick in COVID-19 Cases

By Chris Villani
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Milford added 15 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the two-week period ending August 5, according to data released by the Department of Public Health. The number of new cases is greater than the number of new cases in the previous two-week reporting period, the state said.

In total, Milford has reported 679 cases of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus since the pandemic began. The town has consistently shown the highest numbers of the area, both in terms of raw number of cases and as a percentage of population.

Over the last week in July and the first week in August, 853 COVID-19 tests were performed on Milford residents, with 17 positive results, for a positive test rate of 1.99 percent.

The state has been hovering around 2 percent positive test rate in recent weeks. While the number is a precipitous drop from the spring, when more than 20 percent of Massachusetts residents’ tests came back positive on a regular basis, Governor Charlie Baker has signaled concern about an uptick since the third phase of Phase III would be delayed indefinitely. He also chastised certain businesses flouting rules and regulations, including a crowded ferry and a hotel in Gardner which hosted two large weddings.

The number of people allowed to gather in a single outdoor space was reduced from 100 to 50 and Baker promised more enforcement by state and local police, including cracking down on bars “masquerading as restaurants” by serving alcohol without food. While Milford showed an increase in cases, Mendon did not report any new COVID-19 cases over the two weeks ending August 5. Only one of its 147 tests in that time period came back positive. Upton reported one new case, its 26th since the pandemic began. The one new positive result came among 189 tests administered during the most recent period, according to the state data.

Hopkinton reported three new cases, an increase from the previous two-week stretch, and its total stands at 135. Hopedale’s one new confirmed case marks a decrease from the middle of July, and its town has had fewer than five cases. Holliston reported six new cases, an increase over the previous two weeks. Bellington’s case count remained flat, the state said.

Pros of Newspaper Advertising

Why to advertise with your Town Crier

Proactive Audience
Readers are actively looking to search for deals and coupons. Placing your ad in a newspaper provides you the advantage of knowing that your audience is much more likely to notice it because they habitually read that paper or magazine. They may take the time to read your ad and possibly act on a sale or offer.

Affordable
Local newspaper advertising may sound expensive considering that it requires ink, printing and distribution, however, it actually costs less per thousand readers than when you advertise on television, through direct mail, or online. Additionally, newspaper campaigns do not require any expensive costs for creative materials. They can be customized to any budget, and you can choose from a variety of ad sizes to fit your goals. This is the ideal medium to create brand awareness and start off connecting with your prospects.

Trustworthy
Print media agencies work very hard to help you create positive relationships with members of your community, and build a loyal customer base. As your reputation grows through the use of newspaper and magazine advertising, members of the community can trust you to provide timely and accurate information about your products and services, and your content can be complemented by the trustworthiness of the rest of the content in that medium.

Engaging
Companies have studied the way consumers respond to ads on different media. Print newspapers scored the highest on media engagement, when compared to radio, Internet, and billboards. Consumers are less likely to get annoyed when they see advertisements in newspapers and magazines, than they are when they see them online. If your primary method of connecting with prospects is through the use of advertising, print media will be your most successful option.

Impact and Effectiveness
Newspaper advertising is very effective because readers frequently look for advertisements in this medium. They rely heavily on newspapers to find out about shopping information, so by beautifully creating your ad with text and images you can engage them both emotionally and intellectually. It is also a more trusted medium than other forms of advertising, and it is assured that print media requires more fact-checking and professionalism than online ads.
Time for a New Chapter in her Life

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

For the past 33 years, Sue-Ellen Szymanski has helped the town’s youngest residents learn the enjoyment of reading books. But now, the Youth Services Supervisor at the Milford Town Library is entering a new chapter in her life: at the end of this month, she will retire.

Szymanski will take with her the memories of watching the town’s children grow up from early readers through high school, and then returning to the library with their own children. "It's thousands, many thousands," she said. Being part of their lives is "One of the most memorable, exciting things I can imagine," Szymanski said. "Just to see them all grow up and move into the next stages of their life is really phenomenal."

Prior to her tenure in Milford, Szymanski was director of Hopedale's Bancroft Memorial Library for seven years and worked at the Saxonville branch of the Framingham Public Library, which is now named after the late astronaut Christa McAuliffe. "I've been working in libraries since I was in junior high school," she said. "It was just meant to be."

Szymanski said she has enjoyed working with school staff as well as other organizations working with children and their families. "It's been a great team," she noted. The Milford Town Library staff is another great team to work with, she said.

During her career, libraries have changed – from in-person story-telling to now using technologies like Zoom to conduct virtual story hours during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the Milford Town Library holding virtual story-telling, Szymanski’s been using the technology to read to her own grandchildren.

And, when she visits the library next month, "It's going to be unusual being a patron now," she said. During her career, libraries have changed – from in-person story-telling to now using technologies like Zoom to conduct virtual story hours during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the Milford Town Library holding virtual story-telling, Szymanski’s been using the technology to read to her own grandchildren.

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I want to offer another of my thank you's in this column. My thanks is offered to all the businesses and their employees who are working very, very hard to follow the protocols outlined by the state and their communities to be open during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are doing the very best they can to keep their customers safe.

Social distancing is encouraged by marking spaces six feet apart in checkout lines and creating one way aisles to reduce crowding. Masks are required to be worn by everyone entering the establishment. Carts are disinfected between usage. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant is provided at various locations. The number of clients in any business is limited. Plexiglass shields have been installed to protect customers and staff members who have to stand near to one another for a longer period of time for transactions such as payments or registration. Hair salons, doctor's and dentist offices, restaurants and other services that need more one-to-one contact require registration so that if there is an outbreak of the novel coronavirus at the business, all those who might have been exposed can be contacted and asked to quarantine. I truly appreciate all these efforts and have become more comfortable going out to shop, keep appointments and conduct my business.

In contrast, I am not always so comfortable around my fellow customers. While most understand the need for the COVID-19 protocols and usually follow the instructions, there are a few that feel the rules don't apply to them.

These are the customers who wear a mask to enter a store and then whip it off as they make their way around the aisles. That is one way of keeping government staff employees, the person who deposited the envelope marked it in large letters, “NOT LICKED.”

And, in another community, residents seeking basic human contact have tried to look through the drop box slots – the box is attached to the Town Hall building – to see if a person could be seen through the slot. I guess the Plexiglas panels in Milford Town Hall aren’t that bad to deal with – at least you can see through them. That’s one way of keeping government personnel “transparent.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a trying time for everyone.

Unlike Milford, many smaller communities throughout the state still have their Town Halls closed to the public. Both residents and municipal employees have had to learn new ways of doing things.

Here are some real life examples, passed along by various town officials.

In the tiny Franklin County town of Shutesbury, the town erected a four-foot high, locked “drop box” for residents to drop their correspondence, forms and applications or tax payments off. It is placed on the side of the circular driveway in front of Town Hall. But, nine out of 10 residents kept walking by it and knocking on the locked front door to ask where the drop box is. So, the town made a sign with a red arrow and lettering saying “Drop Box” and erected it next to the drop box, thinking that would help. It did. Only five out of ten people now walk past the drop box and the arrow while continuing to the front door.

In Concord, someone called to ask when that town’s composting site would be open. The Town Clerk’s office answered the call and explained that odd-numbered houses can go on Thursdays and even-numbered houses on Fridays.

But, the caller persisted, what if your house has both odd and even numbers? That person’s address was “74.”

In another community, a Town Census form was found in an envelope its drop box. Concerned about the possibility of passing along the COVID-19 virus to municipal employees, the person who deposited the envelope marked it in large letters, “NOT LICKED.”

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Milford Regional Named a High Performing Hospital

Milford Regional Medical Center has been recognized as a High Performing Hospital for 2020-21 by U.S. News & World Report. The annual Procedures & Conditions ratings, now in their 6th year, are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for common conditions and elective procedures. These ratings extend the U.S. News mission of providing consumers with patient decision support beyond the Best Hospitals rankings, which are geared toward complex specialty care.

Milford Regional earned a “High Performing” rating for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart failure, in recognition of care that was significantly better than the national average, as measured by factors such as patient outcomes. “High Performing” is the highest rating U.S. News awards for those types of care.

For the 2020-21 ratings, U.S. News evaluated more than 4,500 medical centers nationwide in 10 procedures and conditions. Fewer than a third of hospitals received the highest rating U.S. News awards for those types of care.

For more information, visit https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/

Hospital Auxiliary Donates $10,000 to COVID-19 Fund

The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary members have donated $10,000 to the COVID-19 Fund at the hospital.

The Auxiliary members sponsor yearly community events such as The Fashion Show, The Taste of the Towns, and the Greenery Sale. They also host events in the Atrium Café such as JoJo’s Jewelry, Shift Change Scrubs, Inc. (formally First Uniforms), In The Bag, Butterfly Wishes and I Love My Clogs as well as the popular raffles at Valentine’s Day, Mothers and Father’s Day.

The Auxiliary consists of volunteers from the area towns. Any community member is welcome to join this group. The Auxiliary meetings have not been held since February, due to Covid-19. When the normal schedule resumes, the members will meet the second Tuesday of each month from September through June. For more information on how to join this group, please call 508-422-2099.

Massachusetts RMV Drop-Off Registration & Title Services

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) will begin offering drop-off registration and title services on Monday, August 10 at service centers, including Milford. These Registration Drop Off Centers will be dedicated to performing a number of vehicle-based registration and title services for both commercial and individual customer transactions on a drop-off only basis.

RMV Registrar James Tesler said, “Customers in need of one of these vehicle-based transactions can drop-off their paperwork and return to pick it up in a few business days. This alternative service channel will help meet increased RMV service demands during a time when services are limited by appointment-only due to the need to enforce social-distancing to keep our customers and employees safe.”

Registration renewals will still be conducted exclusively online or by mail for individual customers. Customers will continue to be able to make appointments for certain vehicle-based registration and title services up to 14 days in advance.

Customers in need of one of the services listed below should complete and complete all appropriate paperwork and any supporting documents. This includes contacting your insurance agent/company to obtain a completed Registration and Title Application (RTA). Customers must drop-off the required paperwork within 30 days of obtaining their RTA. Drop-offs with an incomplete or inaccurate RTA will not be processed.

The following types of transactions can be dropped-off by both commercial and individual customers, including casual sales, campers, trailers and motorcycles. Registration renewals will still be conducted exclusively online or by mail for individual customers.

• Register and title a vehicle
• Transfer plate to a new vehicle
• Reinstall a registration
• Apply for a registration only
• Transfer a plate between two vehicles
• Register previously titled vehicle
• Transfer vehicle to surviving spouse
• Registration amendments

Plate cancellations

Customers will be unable to visit a designated Registration Drop Off Center between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to drop-off their transaction paperwork. An RMV drop officer will review the customer’s paperwork to determine if it’s correctly completed and ask customers to fill out a conversation with their name, email and phone number. Customers will not be allowed to wait and should expect a phone call or email from the Service Center within a few days when their transaction is complete.

Transaction will be processed in the order received. Customers will receive a phone call or email when their transaction is completed and be instructed to pay for their transaction online. Customers will then return to the Service Center to pick-up their plates and/or registration.

Customers who are dropping-off or picking-up their paperwork will be served in the order of arrival and should anticipate a wait time for the intake and pick-up process.

While the RMV asks for its customers’ patience during the initial days of this service offering, anticipated turnaround time for completion of drop-off transactions is within four business days. Drop-offs with an incomplete or inaccurate RTA will not be processed and additional wait times are anticipated if there are problems with the paperwork.

Customers may alternatively continue to book an appointment—only reservation for these services. Appointments are available online up to 14 days in advance.

The service centers offering drop-off transactions are: Boston / Haymarket, Braintree, Chicopee, Haverhill, Milford Taunton and Wilmington.

The RMV is introducing drop-off service due to the COVID-19 emergency to encourage ‘social distancing’ in its Service Centers and prioritize other essential in-person needs by appointment—only. All RMV customers are encouraged to visit MA.gov/ RMV to complete one of over 40 other transactions available online, by mail, or by phone.

The Advertiser’s Club Directory

The Advertiser’s Club Directory is a listing of those businesses that have contracted to advertising at least 12 times a year in The Milford Town Crier. Features include a listing in this directory, discounts and a feature article about your business (size and frequency requirements apply).

Business Name: Ad on Page

Affer & Junk Removal........ next
Area Glass.................. 5
Barry Marcus Watch Maker....... next
Bright Insurance ................. 14
Church Roof Bank.............. 6
CPR Inc.......................... 10
Crystal Pools .................. 11
Gaiga Moving & Storage...... 11
Gentle Dental............... next
Guerrier & Halidon, Inc....... next
Health Source Chiropractic...... 1
Homefield Credit Union........ 11
Kadara Plumbing.................. 11
Imperial corp.................. 1, 13
Holode Overhead Doors........ next
Jayie Plumbing............... next
Koogman Paint & Lumber ...... next
Licoes Properties Group....... next
Mac ups.......................... next
Medway Oil & Proprietary Company........ next
Metrocet Ornoral Surgical Associates........ next
Milford Dental................ next
Milford-Frankley Eye Associates........ next
Nathans’ jeweler............ next
Park Plaza Dental........ next
Paw Real Estate............... next
Simeonc Electric........... next
Templman Tree Service....... next
Wendy’s Youth and Family Services... next
Well Drains.................. next
Women’s Total Body Fitness / Mash Up......... next
Zemith Mortgage.................. next

Daniels Farmstead Farmers Market

BLACKSTONE-The Daniels Farmstead Farmers Market continues every Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., through October 4 at 286 Mendon St. Blackstone. Doris’s Kitchen is open 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. serving grilled franks, burgers (both beef and veggie) Italian sausage with peppers & onions, cold beverages and all the fixins.

Vendors include Oakdale Farms, quality produce; B Food beautiful artisan breads, bakery; S Sisters Farm and Mill, Hooked Bugs, goat’s milk soap, handmade rugs and crafts, BV Cats, cat toys, mats, scarves, Fudge Lady, Winter’s Bread & Apiary/Three Little Wrens, Overpass Farms, natural meats; San Diego Sunday’s, delicious ice cream and lemonade; and Daniels organic vegetables. Chaos Farm, alpaca products, begins September 6. Social distancing and wearing masks are among the novel coronavirus precautions. Indoor tours have been suspended but guests may walk the property and observe the historic buildings. For more information, visit Facebook @Daniels Farmstead Farmers Market or reach out to Justine @508-726-2042. 76

Milford Area Chamber of Chamber Events

AREA-The Milford Area Chamber of Commerce (MACC) will be holding the following events. To register visit MilfordChamber.org, email hbailey@milfordchamber.org, call 508-478-6700 or stop by the offices, 258 Main Street, Suite 306, Milford.

CWL Luncheon, Women’s Hormonal Health, Wednesday, August 19, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Zoom event.

Ask a Quick Book Pro, Wednesday, August 26 at 12 noon, Zoom event.

Business After Hours, Thursday, September 17, 5 p.m. at Southwick’s Zoo and Gulliford’s, Mendon.

Nine and Dine Golf Tournament, Friday, September 18, 1 p.m. at Hopkede Country Club, golfing and dinner.
By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

When it comes to purchasing a new or used vehicle, Imperial Cars offers the future of car buying and goes above and beyond for its customers. To put it simply, the dealership’s atmosphere, professional staff, and unique programs make purchasing a vehicle an experience like no other. Imperial Cars has dealerships in Mendon and Milford, which are known for its rows and rows (and rows!) of cars, SUV’s and trucks to select from. The entire dealership proudly sells every major brand including Chevrolet, Chysler, Dodge, Ford, Hyundai, Jeep, and Ram.

Late last year, the Imperial family acquired DCH Toyota located at 300 Fortune Blvd. in Milford. The acquisition, according to Imperial General Manager Michael Penner, was a great fit and a homecoming of sorts as Imperial opened its first location in Milford nearly 30 years ago.

Since opening its doors in November, Imperial Toyota has added 1,000 cars to its inventory as well as a highly experienced and friendly sales and service staff. “We’ve more than doubled the sales since we took over,” said Penner proudly.

The Toyota dealership has a bustling service department catering to all the neighboring towns and offers a children’s room to keep little ones occupied and a large screen television for customers to sit back and enjoy if they need to kill some time. (Speaking of ambiance, customers traveling to the Mendon dealerships are wowed with the one-of-a-kind sports, rock n roll, and auto memorabilia themes. You can even see the David Ortiz jersey that was buried under Yankee stadium.) Imperial opened their Hyundai store in 2017 which has a video game and action hero theme. Located on East Main St. in Milford, it has a great selection of affordable Hyundai vehicles and Genesis luxury vehicles. Although each Imperial dealership is open to the public, in an effort to make purchasing a vehicle as easy as possible, the company has created a way to actually buy a car right from your home. First, view the thousands of new and used cars, trucks, and SUV’s online. Then call or email sales staff and someone will bring the selected vehicle to your home to test drive. In addition, staff will be happy to appraise a trade in and handle financing right over the phone. Customers are also encouraged to shop right and compare.

Milford Regional Receives Stroke Achievement Award

Milford Regional Medical Center has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines—Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes the hospitals’ commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

Milford Regional earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the proper use of medications and other stroke treatments aligned with the most up-to-date, evidence-based guidelines with the goal of speeding recovery and reducing death and disability for stroke patients. Before discharge, patients should also receive education on managing their health, get a follow-up visit scheduled, as well as other care transition interventions “Milford Regional is dedicated to improving the quality of care for our stroke patients by implementing the American Heart Association’s Get With The Guidelines—Stroke initiative,” said Bert Thurlo-Walsh, MM, RN, CPHQ, Vice President for Clinical Transformation and Medical Staff Services/Chief Quality Officer.

The tools and resources provided help us track and measure our success in meeting evidenced-based clinical guidelines developed to improve patient outcomes.”

Milford Regional has also met specific scientific guidelines as a Primary Stroke Center featuring a comprehensive system for rapid diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients admitted to the emergency department. “We are pleased to recognize Milford Regional Medical Center for their commitment to stroke care,” said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., national chairperson of the Quality Oversight Committee and Executive Vice Chair of Neurology, Director of Acute Stroke Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts. “Research has shown that hospitals adhering to clinical measures through the Get With The Guidelines quality improvement initiative can often see fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates.”

According to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, stroke is the fifth cause of death and a leading cause of adult disability in the United States. On average, someone in the U.S. suffers a stroke every 40 seconds and nearly 795,000 people suffer a new or recurrent stroke each year.

By Michelle Sanford
Staff Reporter

When it comes to purchasing a new or used vehicle, Imperial Cars offers the future of car buying and goes above and beyond for its customers. To put it simply, the dealership’s atmosphere, professional staff, and unique programs make purchasing a vehicle an experience like no other. Imperial Cars has dealerships in Mendon and Milford, which are known for its rows and rows (and rows!) of cars, SUV’s and trucks to select from. The entire dealership proudly sells every major brand including Chevrolet, Chysler, Dodge, Ford, Hyundai, Jeep, and Ram.

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August is Tree Check Month

August is the peak time of year to spot the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) as adults emerge from trees. That’s why the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) declared August as ‘Tree Check Month.’ Checking trees for the beetle and the damage it causes is one way residents can protect their own trees and help USDA efforts to eliminate this beetle from the United States.

Just this past June, we confirmed a new infestation in South Carolina after a homeowner reported that they found a dead Asian longhorned beetle on their property,” said Joseph Ryan, APHIS’ National Operations Manager for the ALB Eradication Program. “We need the public’s help to find new areas where the beetle has spread, because finding it sooner means less trees will become infested.”

ALB is an invasive wood-boring beetle that attacks 12 types of hardwood trees in North America, such as maples, elms, hickories, birches and willows. In its larvae stage, the insect feeds inside tree trunks and branches during the colder months. The beetle creates tunnels as it feeds, then it chews its way out as an adult in the warmer months. Infested trees do not recover and eventually die. Infested trees can become safety hazards since branches can drop and trees can fall over, especially during storms.

The beetle has distinctive markings that are easy to recognize:
- Black and white antennae that are longer than the insect’s body.
- A dull brown body with white spots that is about 1½ to 2½ inches long.
- Six legs and feet that can appear bluish-colored.
- Signs that a tree might be infested include:
  - Round exit holes in tree trunks and branches about the size of a dime or smaller.
  - Shallow oval or round scars in the bark where the adult beetle chewed an egg site.
  - Sawdust-like material called “bark dust,” laying on the ground around the tree or in branches.
  - Dead branches or limbs falling from an otherwise healthy-looking tree.

ALB is not harmful to people or pets if possible. Residents should take pictures and capture suspicious insects in a durable container and freeze them, which helps preserve the insect for identification. Residents can report the insect or tree damage by calling the ALB hotline at 1-866-702-9938 or reporting online at Asianlonghorned.beetle.com.

As people use firewood this summer, we are also asking them to buy heat-treated and certified wood rather than move untreated firewood long distances, which can potentially spread ALB,” warned Ryan. “You can also responsibly gather firewood where you will burn it or buy it in the area where you will use it.”

Firewood cannot move out of areas that are quarantined for ALB without a permit. It is important that people follow state and federal laws, which restrict the movement of woody material, to keep the tree-killing pest from spreading outside of known infested areas.

It is possible to eradicate the pest. Most recently, USDA and its partners declared Brooklyn and Queens in New York free of ALB. The insect has also been eradicated from areas in Illinois, New Jersey, Boston, Massachusetts, other portions of New York, and portions of Ohio.

For more information about the Asian longhorned beetle, other ways to keep it from spreading and eradication program activities, visit Asianlonghorned.beetle.com.

Long Time Employee Retiring

SueEllen Szymanski, Supervisor of Youth Services and library employee since 1987, is retiring September 1. We wish her well in her future life and role as grandmother.

Grab & Go

Although the library is open to the public, not everyone may feel comfortable coming inside. Our popular Curbside Pickup has led to a Grab & Go plan. Patrons may request items through Grab & Go by phone. Items will be bagged and placed on a table in the lobby with patrons’ names attached to be picked up within two days.

Center Book Group

The Center Book Group will meet on August 18 via Zoom to discuss Mrs. Dalloway’s Pentry by Virginia Woolf. The book is short and is available as an ORE pdf on Internet Archive. Contact Anne Berard at 508-473-2145, X 2, or aberard@cwmarls.org for information.

Hockomock Area YMCA Providing Free Food

In response to the COVID-19 Health Crisis the Hockomock Area YMCA is again providing free lunches to Milford youth. The Y has been participating in “Grab & Go” meals, providing free lunch through August 28 at Milford Memorial School from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. every weekday.

The Y’s commitment to serving their communities is stronger than ever by supporting families, children and communities in real time and in real crisis. To date they have provided 109,410 meals and 10,328 bags of food for their neighbors. They are working with school nutrition departments, and community partners such as senior centers, councils on aging and others. The Milford site, as well as others, is open to all, with no need for advanced signup or paperwork.

Reading Makes Cent$ for Summer Readers

Reading Makes Cent$ is a bank-wide summer program encouraging children to read during the summer and teaching the value of saving money. The program, which runs through August 31, is available for youngsters in grades one through eight, who can earn $2.50 in a Rockland Trust savings account for each book they read (up to 10 books) and track in the Rockland Trust Summer Reading Journal. Participants will need a Rockland Trust account. Stop by the bank or visit its website to download a copy of the Reading Makes Cent$ Summer Reading Journal.

Late Fees for Dog Licenses Waived

The Town Clerk’s office is waiving all late fees for dog licenses this year, and asks people to license their dogs before March 31, 2021.

Licenses can be obtained by sending mail to the Town Clerk’s Office at, 52 Main St., Milford, MA 01757; by using the “drop box” outside the Town Hall; and, by applying online. If paying online, please email a current rabies certificate and spayed or neutered certificate to MelanieLaughlin at mlaughlin@townofmilford.com.

Dog license forms can be downloaded at MilfordMA.gov/sites/genes/vfiles/2466/news/dog_licensure_form.pdf

For more information, please call the Town Clerk’s office at 508-634-2307.

JUNE 12, 2020
Milford Town Crier
Recent Actions by Milford Town Boards

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Planning Board
• Continued until September 1 a public hearing on the definitive subdivision plan for “Depot Street Estates,” a four-lot residential subdivision proposed for a 3.4-acre site of 109 Depot St. Several residents of Depot St. and John Lane voiced opposition to the plans, citing potential drainage, blasting and loss of privacy issues. “That’s a real tough area to put in a couple of houses,” said Frank Ruscitti, whose mother lives near the subdivision site. (July 14)

• Continued until August 11 a special permit application by Nouria Energy Retail, Inc. of Worcester for a 16 percent reduction in the number of parking spaces at the Milford Plaza at 91 Medway Rd. (Route 109). Nouria plans to redevelop the Plaza Shell gas station at 139 Medway Rd. – which is included in the overall special permit for Milford Plaza – into a new self-service station and convenience store. Attorney Joseph Antonellis said the parking reduction would lower the number of spaces in the overall shopping plaza and gas station from 924 to 777. Board member Joseph Calagione questioned that number, saying that about 111 parking spaces behind the plaza are never used. Ronald Muller, a Hopkinton-based traffic consultant working on the gas station redevelopment project, said his calculations discounted 230 spaces located along the sides and rear of the plaza. Currently occupied stores require 320 parking spaces, 33 more would be needed for vacant space in the plaza and the new convenience store would require 26 to 41 more spaces, for a total of 379 to 394, Muller said. During the Christmas shopping season, the need would increase to 504 spaces, he added. With 547 spaces available, not counting the side and rear spaces, “You’re going to have enough parking on the site to meet the peak demand, even at Christmas time, Muller said. (July 14)

• Continued until August 11 a site plan review of Route 85 Corp.‘s request to have a delivery vehicle storage facility and club house locations in the cul-de-sac area where the original part of the “Bear Hill Village” subdivision off Casey Dr. and to release the former Granite Gulf gas station at 97 Cedar St. (Rt. 85) into a self-service gas station with a new convenience store featuring a drive-through restaurant/coffee shop. (July 14)

• Voted to require an $814,416 performance bond for an initial two-phase lot of the “Blast Hill Village” subdivision off Casey Dr. and to release the unbuilt lots for construction. (July 14)

• Voted to lower the bond held to ensure completion of the Sanjala Crossing subdivision that extends the original section of Field Pond Rd. out to Fiske Mill Rd. close to the Upton town line by $373,989, leaving a bond balance of $642,772. Board members also voted to release the subdivision’s final two unbuilt lots for construction, finalized plans for certain sidewalks locations and reaffirmed the requirement to eliminate the cul-de-sac area where the original part of Field Pond Rd. used to end. (July 14)

• Voted to submit the Zoning Board of Appeals a favorable recommendation on PMG Northeast, LLC of Woodbridge, VA’s special permit request to redevelop the former Granite Gulf gas station at 97 Cedar St. (Rt. 85) into a self-service gas station with a new convenience store featuring a drive-through restaurant/coffee shop. (July 14)

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Zoning Board of Appeals
• Voted that proposed changes to parking garage and club house locations in plans for the previously approved “The Residences at Stone Ridge” – an affordable apartment complex proposed to be built off Deer Rd., which is off Cedar St. (Rt. 85) – did not constitute a “substantial change” requiring a public hearing. (July 16)

• Voted to require an 8814.416 performance bond for an initial two-phase lot of the “Blast Hill Village” subdivision off Casey Dr. and to release the unbuilt lots for construction. (July 14)

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Recent Actions by Milford Selectmen

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Rob DeDominick, owner of The Tradesman, asked the board to consider providing financial relief to the town’s bars and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic by eliminating their personal property tax payments, reducing their Fiscal Year 2021 property tax bills by 25 percent and reducing their liquor license renewal fees from $2,000 to $1,200. “I don’t know precisely what we have the authority to do,” Chairman William Kingkade said. (July 13)

• Ratified Villani’s decision to grant licenses for outdoor alcohol service to Taqueria La Canoa.

• Reviewed two memos from Pighetti outlining who will be notified when police respond to an opioid-related call for service (the three selectmen, Villani, Public Health Director William Kingkade and Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer Christopher Boody). Pighetti recommended the board delegate the matter to Pighetti to decide. The board asked the chief to review the issue again in three months. (July 13)

• Voted to place two articles passed over at the June 29 Annual Town Meeting on the agenda for the next meeting. (July 27)

• Allowed Pighetti to decide whether the police detail from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday night at the Wendy’s Restaurant at 128 Cedar St. (Route 85) will be discontinued, as requested by the chief’s district manager. Pighetti noted that, of the 240 calls for service received during the past three years for that address, only 47 related specifically to the restaurant. The remaining calls dealt with traffic issues or accidents at the nearby intersection with Dilla St. and Fortune Blvd., he said. Pighetti recommended a moratorium on the details for a set period of time and monitoring calls to Wendy’s during that moratorium. Because Chairman William Kingkade and O’Loughlin felt uncomfortable voting on the issue due to potential conflicts of interest since Kingkade’s brother and O’Loughlin’s son both serve on the police force, Town Counsel Charles Boddy suggested the board delegate the matter to Pighetti to decide. The board asked the chief to review the issue again in three months. (July 13)

• Voted to place two articles passed over at the June 29 Annual Town Meeting on the warrant for the next Special Town Meeting. Both articles involved changing the name “Board of Selectmen” to “Select Board.” (July 13)

• Reviewed two memos from Pighetti outlining who will be notified when police respond to an opioid-related call for service (the three selectmen, Villani, Public Health Director Jacqueline Murphy and Community Impact, Inc.) and outlining how police respond to incidents involving overdoses of narcotics. (July 13)

• Granted a Common Victualler license to the Cafeteria & Restaurant of Doña Blanquita, Inc. – a new restaurant located at 163 Main St., open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. all week – pending a final inspection by the Board of Health. (July 27)

• Ratified Villani’s decision to grant licenses for outdoor alcohol service to Taqueria La Canoa.

• Accepted the resignation of Christopher Williams, the town’s Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer, as of July 24. Williams said he was relocating out of state. (July 27)

• Villani reported that while the Senior Center is closed due to the COVID19 pandemic, it is serving the town’s senior population with two shows each weekday on Milford TV. (July 27)

• Villani reported the town has received a grant of up to $42,500 to renovate Draper Memorial Park from MassDevelopment, the state’s finance and development agency. The town will receive $21,500 at first, and if it raises $42,500 through crowd-funding, will receive an additional $21,500, he explained. The grant application was prepared by the Downtown Revitalization Committee and its grant consultant, Tillrock Consulting, LLC, Villani said. (July 27)

• Villani reported that National Grid will be conducting helicopter-based inspections of its electrical distribution towers and power lines through September, with a utility truck to be driving the inspections routes in parallel with the helicopter. (July 27)

• Approved Warren Heller’s request to obstruct a public way by temporarily blocking sidewalks on Exchange Street and Congress Street when his 61 Exchange St. office building is painted between August 3 and 17. (July 27)

• Accepted the resignation of Christopher Williams, the town’s Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer, as of July 24. Williams said he was relocating out of state. (July 27)

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Lisa Tamagni Named Assistant Director of Public Health

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Health voted on July 27 to appoint Lisa Tamagni as the town’s Assistant Director of Public Health. Tamagni has been a Health Inspector in the department since 2013. Kevin Rudden photo

Planning Board Approves National St. “Parcel Hub”

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

After months of back-and-forth with engineers and consultants for Milford National, LLC, the Planning Board voted unanimously on July 14 to approve an amended site plan to allow a “parcel hub” warehouse operation or trucking distribution center at the 1 National St. site of the former glass bottle manufacturing plant. Amazon.com has expressed interest in using the site, which will have 79 loading docks.

“I think we’re in pretty good shape,” attorney Joseph Antonelli – representing Milford National, LLC, said. Milford National, LLC will post a $150,000 bond, with $35,000 to be used if needed to change the traffic light timing at the intersection of Cape Rd. (Rt. 140) and South Main St. and $115,000 to be used to reconfigure the intersection of South Main and Depot Streets, Antonelli explained. In addition, trees and roadside vegetation will be trimmed at the intersection of National St. and Depot St. to allow better sight lines, and signs will be erected to warn trucks not to make right turns out of National St. onto Depot St., Antonelli said.

The site’s owners also agreed to board member Patrick Kennelly’s requests that no refrigerated trucks be allowed on the site, the owners will address truck noise if that becomes an issue, and traffic counts will be taken over the next three years, the attorney said.

Board member Joseph Calagione suggested installing a permanent traffic counter mechanism for at least three years from Kennelly is being incorporated into the board’s final approval, Town Planner Larry Dunkin explained.

The only issue not covered in the special permit, board member said, was getting an easement from Pinz to allow construction of a handicapped-accessible pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Depot and South Main Streets. Calagione noted that Pinz will be before the board in the near future to gain approval for its expanded patio area and the easement could be addressed at that time.

Niro’s Non-Reappointment Protested

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Selectmen’s 2-1 vote in June not to reappoint Jeffrey Niro to the Finance Committee was criticized by several people at the board’s July 13 meeting. Selectmen Michael Walsh and Thomas O’Loughlin voted on June 22 to replace Niro with David Levine.

Finance Committee Chair Christopher Morin presented a letter signed by more than half of the 15-member committee asking the board to reconsider its action. During “one of the most difficult financial crises we’ve ever faced,” Morin said, “You’ve just taken one of our aces out of the deck.” Citing Niro’s chairmanship of the school budget subcommittee, Morin noted, “He has an unbelievable knowledge of that budget. His not being there is a huge hindrance for us.”

Niro may have been difficult for school officials to deal with, Morin continued, because that is the role of a Finance Committee member. “We are difficult. The reason we’re difficult is for the taxpayers of Milford. That’s our job,” Morin said. Many Finance Committee members and town department heads were “stunned and disappointed” by the selectmen’s action, he added. “It’s just not right,” Morin continued. “There’s nothing he did wrong.”

Niro’s wife, Donna, also spoke to selectmen and questioned whether her appointment to the Police Chief Selectmen Committee – replacing Walsh on that board – played a factor in Walsh and Calagione’s decision. Her husband, she pointed out, was “the only board or committee member who was not reappointed that night.”

Jeffrey Niro himself told the selectmen about “how disappointed I am not to be reappointed to the Finance Committee.” His subcommittee found what he termed “inconsistencies” in the school budget request and was working to resolve those issues. “Please consider me to serve again if the opportunity arises,” he asked.

Selectmen Chair William Kingkade, who voted against replacing Niro with Levine, said his board also received letters from George and Beverly Swymer, Harold Rhodes and Scott Johnson criticizing the decision not to reappoint Niro.

Walsh and O’Loughlin made no comment about their decision at either the June 22 or the July 13 meetings.

O’Loughlin criticizes Police Department Staffing

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

Selectmen Thomas O’Loughlin criticized Police Chief Michael Pighetti for adding a position in the Milford Police Department’s staffing. O’Loughlin said the position was never discussed with the Board of Selectmen or approved by the Finance Committee prior to the Fiscal Year 2021 budget being approved at the Annual Town Meeting held on June 29. “I don’t think any department head has the authority to create a new position,” O’Loughlin said at his board’s July 13 meeting. “I think it should have been fully vetted.”

Because he did not know about that new position, O’Loughlin said, he gave false reassurances at the Annual Town Meeting that the Police Department’s staffing was unchanged. “I don’t know how it occurred. I don’t know who was involved,” O’Loughlin stated.

Acting on his request, the board voted 2-1 – with Chairman William Kingkade dissenting – to put a “hold” on $117,939 in the Police Department’s salaries and wages budget, an amount O’Loughlin said covered creation of a 50th sworn officer position in the department. The Police Department should only have 49 sworn officers, O’Loughlin said.

“Actions were taken that were not approved,” O’Loughlin stated. “Set the money aside and we can always put it back.”

Pighetti was not present at the board’s July 13 meeting. O’Loughlin brought the issue up under the “New Business” section of the meeting agenda.

“I do plan on staff ing it,” Pighetti said about O’Loughlin’s criticism when contacted later by the Town Crier for comment. Regarding staffing, he said, “I have not increased the numbers in the budget at all.”

Selectmen Appoint Public Art Policy Committee

By Kevin Rudden
Staff Reporter/Columnist

The Board of Selectmen adopted the Milford Cultural Council’s recommendation to support public art projects in town by voting on July 27 to form a seven member committee tasked with researching and creating a policy that will specify the standards and guidelines for both temporary and permanent art installations in Milford.

“We believe public art adds exceptional value to the community at large,” Council Chair Geri Eddins told selectmen. “Milford pride is on the rise,” she noted.

But, with the exceptions of the statues of “Dewey” the dog at Milford Town Library and General Draper in Draper Memorial Park, “There is not much public art in Milford,” Eddins said. “Public art” encompasses things such as murals, painted utility boxes, sculptures and temporary installations, she explained.

The Cultural Council recommended the policy committee have seven members: two from its ranks, three art professionals, a member of the Board of Selectmen and a member of the Planning Board. Selectmen immediately appointed six volunteers: Eddins and Christine Daddario from the Cultural Council, Ashley MacIver, an artist and artist teacher at Valley Tech, Patty Salomon, and artist and art teacher at Milford High School; C.C. Chapman, a storyteller, educator and photographer; and Selectman Michael Walsh.

Selectmen Chair William Kingkade called Eddins’ presentation to the board “very impressive” and commented, “This is something that we’re long overdue for.”

“I’m so excited to see this presentation,” Walsh said. “I think it’s a great thing.” He volunteered to be the board representative on the policy committee/
USDA Seeks Help Collecting Unsolicited Seeds Packages

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is collecting as many unsolicited seed packages sent to homes across the country as possible to determine whether they present a threat to U.S. agriculture or the environment. APHIS asks anyone who receives an unsolicited package of seeds to go to the APHIS webpage, APHIS.usda.gov, to review the question and answer document and support the collection efforts.

The seeds, already identified, are not uniform or of any particular type. They include a mixture of ornamental, fruit and vegetable, herb, and weed seeds. It is important that as many seeds as possible be collected to determine whether they could introduce damaging pests and diseases that could be harmful to American agriculture.

USDA is committed to preventing the unlawful entry of prohibited weeds. Visit the APHIS webpage, APHIS.usda.gov, to review the question and answer document and support the collection efforts.

Sample of the seed packets sent from China that the USDA is collecting. University of Kentucky Extension Service photo
Board of Health Awards Annual Scholarships

Each year, the Milford Board of Health awards scholarships to high school graduates pursuing higher education in the health and science fields. The scholarships are funded through the board’s trash removal contract with E.L. Harvey & Sons, Inc.

MRMC Auxiliary Scholarships

The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Scholarship is annually awarded to students who have gone above and beyond to volunteer at the hospital, often planning to pursue a career in healthcare. This year awards were given to Adam Brand, who wants to go into biotechnology; Thrusa Putteraju, who wants to be a pediatrician; and Tyler Vining, who aims to be an anesthesiologist.

By Scott Calzolaio
Staff Reporter

After months of planning and a final three-hour discussion, the Milford School Committee voted to put a hybrid model in place for the reopening of schools.

The School Committee held an in-person Special Meeting on Thursday, August 6, to go over the fine details and to pose more questions as the school year approaches. Six members voted in favor of the hybrid model, while one member stood opposed.

The hybrid model would split the students into two “cohorts.” Cohort one would meet on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Cohort B would meet on Thursdays and Fridays. The opposite cohort will be learning remotely when the other is in class.

Wednesdays are reserved for cleaning the building, and all students will attend classes remotely.

Milford Superintendent Kevin McIntyre said the number of changes and regulations is staggering, but he hopes everything will go according to plan.

“The mechanisms we have in place, we’re doing everything we can to make sure the space is disinfected,” he said. “I want to make that clear because we had some staff that were unsure about how this would work.”

Milford Health Officer, Jackie Murphy said there are some things that parents and returning students should know.

She said the town currently has an infection rate of about 2 percent, a small but still credible risk. For those still on the fence about sending their children back to school, a full remote option is also available for parents.

In the case of an infected student, every student in the classroom including the teacher would be required to quarantine for at least two weeks.

Faculty and staff will be given the option of what kind of mask to wear – surgical, cloth, and even a transparent so that children can see the teacher’s lips. He said they will also be offering face shields if requested.

The best way to keep the virus at bay is to wash hands, Murphy said. The discussion led to ideas for further discussion, such as the possibility for touch-free sinks or portable sinks.

“My plan is to not go too overboard with the hand-sanitizer in the elementary schools,” McIntyre said. “Where we have hand-washing available, it’s probably the best way to go.”

That being said, every classroom will still be equipped with hand sanitizer, and will be disinfected every night.

McIntyre said the situation clearly is not ideal, and nothing can replace school as it was, but the district must move forward somehow.

“There are so many benefits to having students live in the classroom with a teacher, and we lose some of that,” he said. “There is no replacing that.”

BVT’s National School Lunch and Breakfast Program Policy

ValleTech.k12.ma.us/freereducedmeals. Please be aware paper applications require up to five days to allow for mail delivery and manual processing. Households must answer all applicable questions as incomplete applications cannot be processed.

All meals served must meet the meal requirements as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Students who a doctor has determined to have a disability which would prevent them from eating the regular school meal (or alternate), BVT staff, in conjunction with doctor recommendations, will make substitutions at no extra charge. Please contact the school for further information if your child needs to make substitutions because of a disability.

The non-discrimination statement explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992.

BVT’s National School Lunch and Breakfast Program Policy

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By Scott Calzolaio
Staff Reporter

Blackstone Valley Tech has announced its policy for free and reduced-price lunch and breakfast for those students who are unable to pay the full price for meals and snacks under the National School Lunch & Breakfast Program.

Federal income guidelines for the program, including household size and income criteria used to determine eligibility, are available on the school website.

Students from households that meet federal guidelines are eligible for free or reduced-price meal services. If you received a letter stating that your child(ren) are eligible for free meals via the direct certification process, you do not need to complete an application to receive free meal benefits.

Those needing to complete an application, are encouraged to apply online at ValleyTechSchoolLunchAPP.com, with results available within 24 to 48 hours. Only one application is needed per household for all children who attend the same school district.

Those without access to a computer, can arrange to pick up a paper application from the main office or business office. A paper application maybe printed by visiting

ValleTech.k12.ma.us/freereducedmeals. Please be aware paper applications require up to five days to allow for mail delivery and manual processing. Households must answer all applicable questions as incomplete applications cannot be processed.

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Suhabia Amir receives her $500 scholarship from Board of Health members, l-r, Paul Mazzucchelli, Kenneth Evans and Lenard Izzo. She plans to study nursing at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Contributed photo

Kathleen Mendoza plans to study biology at Boston University. Here, she receives her $500 scholarship from Board of Health members, l-r, Paul Mazzucchelli, Kenneth Evans and Lenard Izzo. Contributed photo

MRMC Auxiliary Scholarships

The Milford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Scholarship is annually awarded to students who have gone above and beyond to volunteer at the hospital, often planning to pursue a career in healthcare. This year awards were given to Adam Brand, who wants to go into biotechnology; Thrusa Putteraju, who wants to be a pediatrician; and Tyler Vining, who aims to be an anesthesiologist.

The Auxiliary consists of volunteers from the area towns. New members from any community are invited to join this group. The Auxiliary usually meets the second Tuesday of each month from September through June. For more information on how to join this group, please call 508-422-2099.
BVTs Practical Nursing (Post-Secondary) 2020 graduates recently achieved a 100 percent pass rate for first-time test takers on their National Council Licensure Examination-Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

“This achievement speaks volumes about our PN program and the quality of nursing education they received here at Bates,” said Practical Nursing Coordinator JoAnn Monks, MBA, MSc, RN, BC, RMA. “It is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders who all work together to support the growth of our students into nursing professionals through education.”

The Practical Nursing program at Blackstone Valley Tech, consistently ranks among the best nursing programs in Massachusetts. Its adult students develop the knowledge, skills, and strategies to integrate safety and quality into nursing care. It proudly serves in district, out of district, and out of state adult learners. Applications for the fall of 2021 are being accepted, for information, visit ValleyTech.edu/12.11.us/practicalnursing.

Dean’s List

The following Milford residents were named to the Dean’s List at their respective schools for the Spring 2020 semester.

**Bates College**, Lewiston, Maine: Paul Spielhaks, majoring in biological chemistry at Bates.

**Bryant University**, Smithfield, R.I.: President’s List for a GPA of 4.0 or higher, Jordan Silverman, Class of 2022. Dean’s List Samuel Louback, Class of 2023.

**Endicott College**, Beverly: Jennifer Levine a Liberal Studies/Education major.

**Fairfield University**, Fairfield, Conn.: Nadia Hamid and Lucia Rolo.

**Roger Williams University**, Bristol, R.I.: Alexandra Atenzio, Zoe Flanagan, Jacob Balzarini, Daniela Caratrambone, Adam Cavanaugh, Anthony Cheschi and Amanda Rosadio.


**Milford Federal Scholarships Awarded**

Milford Federal Bank has awarded several scholarships to local high school graduates. “Milford Federal Bank is pleased to help each student pursue their dream of higher education,” said Paul Gilbody, President and CEO of Milford Federal Bank. “As a community bank, we are committed to supporting the communities we serve. An investment in education is an investment in the future, and these bright students are the future of their communities.”

The Milford Federal scholarship program has awarded $10,000 annually, for over 10 years. Each school selected a scholarship recipient based on need, academic standing, and involvement in school and extracurricular activities.

The 2020 scholarships of $1,000 each were to: Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School: Sage Hurtieau, attending Coastal Carolina University; Hopedale High School: Taylor Maddalena, attending University of Tampa; Milford High School: Reese Dutcher, attending Pace University; Nipmuc Regional High School: Casey Costello, attending Bryant University; Northbridge High School: Hailey Borer, attending Hofstra University; Uxbridge High School: Somila Murati, attending University of New Hampshire; Whitinsville Christian School: Hadley Koeneman, attending Calvin University and Camily De Oliveira Sena of Douglas High School.

All BVT’s 2020 Practical Nursing Grads Pass NCLEX-PN

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Riders ‘Reimagine’
The 2020 Pan-Mass Challenge

By Chris Villani
Staff Reporter/Columnist

If you noticed an uptick in cyclists in the area last weekend, it’s probably because the participants in the 2020 Pan-Mass Challenge were out in force for an event that looked very different from the one that has come to be a hallmark of August’s first weekend.

This year, amid the ongoing pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus, the ride was “reimagined” in the words of founder Billy Star.

Instead of sending thousands of riders off from the same locations in Sturbridge and Wellesley — the former route makes its way through Mendon every year — cyclists were left to their own devices and came up with their own rides around the Commonwealth. Typically a two-day event, one local rider decided to spread her PMC out over three days, finishing up along the Cape Cod Rail Trail in blistering heat.

“As the heat rose to 90, and we were getting hot and tired, I thought about everyone who is fighting so hard to beat this beast,” Jill Levine wrote on Facebook. “I will continue to do what I can to help find a cure so one day we can live in a world without cancer.”

One of my teammates on the “Stem Cell Cyclists” posed a video just before embarking on a ride near Hunt, monthly senior dinners, town beautification projects and community cleanups. The club’s funds come from donors and from event proceeds such as auctions, father/daughter dances, golf tournaments and others. As with other organizations, the club’s ability to raise funds has been impacted by this pandemic. This golf outing is the one opportunity to raise the funds to support the club work. To sponsor the event or register golfer, visit UptonMenClub.org and use the CART. To donate items for the raffle or for more information, contact Bill McCormick, BillMcproperty@gmail.com.

Milford Falls in
Worcester League Playoffs

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Milford’s summer league baseball team lost to Northboro in the double-elimination playoff, bringing its season to an end with a 7-9 overall record. But for the team and manager Steve DiVitto, just having the chance to play in the Worcester County Baseball League — which was formed after the American Legion season was canceled — was a “normal” years, it would represent a remarkable financial boost for Dana-Farber’s life-saving mission in a time when people have less disposable income and many donations are benefiting worthwhile causes related to the pandemic.

As incredible as the ingenuity of this year’s riders has been, there is no question that so much of the event’s character lies in the unity of so many people coming together for a common cause. Sharing dorm rooms at Mass. Maritime or sleeping on the ship docked in Buzzard’s Bay, getting up at dawn on Sunday to ride along the canal and being supported by thousands of spectators and volunteers make the PMC what it is.

They all rode on this year separately with a passion for the fight against cancer and holding on to the hope that next year, they can ride together once more.

Online and Mobile Banking offers a convenient, contactless and secure way to bank... Anywhere, Anytime!

› 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.
› Mobile Wallet — pay with just a tap — no need to swipe or insert your card.
› Sign up for e-statements through online banking.
Fall High School Sports Season Still in Limbo

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has scheduled a delayed, tentative start date for fall high school sports, pushing the beginning of the season to Monday, September 14 to allow for schools, athletes and coaches to get used to new safety guidelines that would be in place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

But whether the season gets off the ground at all or ends up being canceled, as the spring season was, hinges on the Massachusetts Department of Education and Gov. Charlie Baker and various districts’ plans for returning to school in the fall.

Milford Athletic Director Mark King has been a “pleasant surprise” coming out of the bullpen, DiVitto said. “Everyone was pleasant to be around and I thought they grew through the course of the season.”

The usual American Legion season spans about 22 to 24 games, but this year the team played 13 regular season games, finishing with a record of 6-7.

“It’s such a small sample size, 13 games,” DiVitto said, “we are now starting to see some changes in some of the guys with guys getting more at bats and pitchers throwing more.”

Milford has been helped by a large contingent of Nipmuc and Blackstone Valley Tech players. BVT graduate Justin Metcalfe took the mound for the Legionnord playoffs and BVT’s Tyler King has been a “pleasant surprise” coming out of the bullpen, DiVitto said.

Monday’s lineup also included Nipmuc graduate Jack Paine in left field and Nipmuc rising senior Lucas Baiste in center. DiVitto praised Jack Paine and his brother Devon as players who “don’t show flashy stats in the box scores, but they are tough outs and tough kids who do things right.”

Nipmuc’s Dominic DeCarlo has been a mainstay on the mound along with Warriors’ graduate Andrew Griewold and rising senior Patrick O’Connell. Nipmuc grad summer junior Noah Curley and BVT grad Tim Haastick have also been key contributors for the team, which played in an independent youth league this summer when the pandemic forced the cancellation of the legion season.

There was not a set starting lineup for Milford, instead DiVitto and the coaching staff tried to get everyone playing time, not typical of legion season. DiVitto said they he owed it to the players who decided to come out for the team during the health crisis and who missed out on their high school or collegiate baseball seasons this spring.
O’Connor Adapted to Life in MLS Bubble

By Chris Villani
Sports Reporter/Columnist

Milford’s Glenn O’Connor had to find ways to pass the time while working with the New England Revolution in Major League Soccer’s COVID-19 “bubble.” He watched a lot of Netflix, checked out games between the other teams in the league, and posed a stuffed manatee named Manny around the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort.

O’Connor, the Revs’ massage therapist, was part of the traveling party that spent nearly a month in Orlando. Like the NBA and NHL, MLS chose to send all of its teams to select sites in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus and still resume competition.

“It got kind of boring, it was like the same day over and over again,” O’Connor said. “But we were also really busy, everything was scheduled out every day. We were always on the same bus with the same seat.”

Two of the teams, Dallas and Nashville, had positive COVID-19 cases before departing for Orlando and chose not to join the rest of the league. But once the teams and their staffs were in the bubble, everyone was tested frequently and there were no positive results, O’ Connor said.

Most meals were served buffet style by people behind plexiglass with disposable containers and plastic ware. Occasionally, the team and staff were able to eat in one of the hotel’s restaurants, but their time was limited because the space needed to be cleaned and turned over for the next team to come in for a later meal.

The resort also transformed a convention space into a place for the athletes to train and get treatment. “They did a great job with the performance centers,” O’Connor said. “They brought in bikes and weights and resistance bands and we share it with a couple of other teams on a rotating schedule.” The Revs were able to advance through round robin play before falling in the opening game of the knockout round.

“We didn’t want to lose, but I know a lot of people were also anxious to get home, especially people with families and children,” O’Connor said.

The Milford High track and field coach kept in touch with his own family through the nearly four-week absence and took time to make sure Manny, a stuffed animal, given to him by his 15-year-old daughter Meghan, had the chance to see as much of the resort as possible. Asked whether his family was happy to have him back, O’Connor joked “kind of.” “My wife said she was enjoying the peace and quiet,” he said.

“All in all, we did exactly what we needed to do,” O’Connor said. “It was a great experience, just wish it would have been different.”

Manny, the stuffed animal, spent time in the MLS bubble with Glenn O’Connor at the Walt Disney Dolphin Resort in Orlando. Glenn O’Connor photo