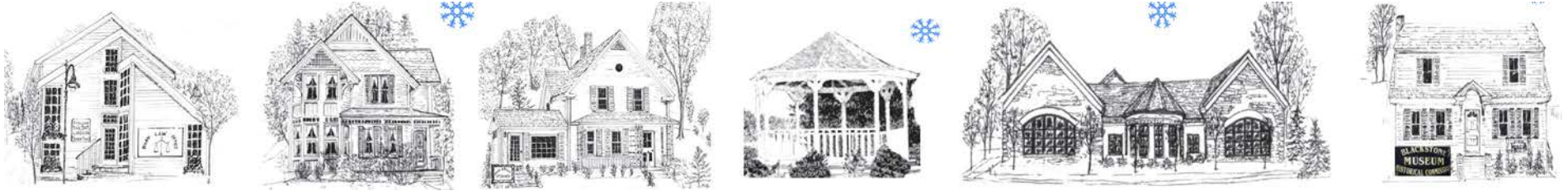


Blackstone Enlightener

www.blackstonema.com

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Blkstrn Enlghtnr
Permit #11
ECRWSS

POSTAL PATRON
Blackstone, MA
01504



Volume 32, Issue 8

Blackstone's Hometown Newspaper Since 1993

January 2026

Property Tax Abatement Forms

Property tax abatement forms can be found on the Assessors web page on the Town of Blackstone's Website.

Deadline to return Abatement forms is February 1, 2026. There are no extensions or exceptions.

For information call Assessors Robert J. Kluchevitz - Chairman, Jeremiah Carey - Vice Chairman, Joe Morin - Member.
Phone: 508-883-1500 Ext. 122.

Shoveling Snow in the Street... Is it legal?

According to the town by-laws (part 157-43 section C), if the snow impedes the flow of traffic it would violate the by-law. See below:

No person, other than an employee in the service of the Town of Blackstone or an employee in the service of an independent contractor acting for the Town of Blackstone, shall throw, pile, push, or plow snow or ice onto a Town layout, including but not limited to a street, roadway, lane, byway or sidewalk so as to impede the flow of traffic on such ways. Whoever violates this section shall bear the cost of cleanup and shall be punished by warning on the first offense; not more than \$50 on the second offense; and not more than \$100 for any subsequent offenses. Such provisions to be enforceable by the Blackstone Police Department under the provisions of MGL c. 40 § 21D.



APRIL 2026 TOWN ELECTION

Nomination Papers will be available in January. Check with the town Clerk at 508-883-1500 x 116 on availability and which elected positions will be open.

Be Part of Blackstone's Semiquincentennial Celebration!

The Town of Blackstone is preparing for America's 250th anniversary, and we are looking for volunteers to assist with everything from planning to support on the day of our community celebration.

If you would like to lend a hand and be part of this historic milestone, please complete our short volunteer application form: Semiquincentennial Volunteer Application, located on the town website.

Your participation will help create a memorable and enjoyable experience for all. Even a few hours of your time will make a big difference—thank you for helping us make history!



Bellingham Electric
Since 1953
APPLIANCES
APPLIANCE SALES & REPAIRS
(508) 883-7235
WWW.BELLINGHAMELECTRIC.COM

AMERICAN BUILDING & REMODELING

- Custom Homes
- Renovations
- Bathrooms
- Finished Basements
- Kitchens
- Sunrooms
- Additions

Licensed & Insured
508 883 9701
www.Americanbuilding.com

ADC SEPTIC
"Will meet or beat all competitors discounts Guaranteed"

- Portable toilet rentals
- Excavations
- Title 5 Inspections
- Sewer Connections
- System Installations
- Engineering
- Repairs
- Underground Camera Inspections

WWW.ADCSEPTIC.COM
Email: adcseptic@gmail.com
508-883-9000

Blackstone • MA

Like us on **facebook**

VISA MasterCard DISCOVER

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com



Blackstone Historical Museum
23 Main Street

Historical Notes

by Hellen Murray

After a year that saw the replacement and improvement to the Blackstone Historical Museum's entrances, the building is now ready to welcome all visitors! Three floors of exhibits from Blackstone's past are available for viewing. There is no admission charge, and all are welcome.

The Museum is located at 23 Main Street and has plenty of off-street parking behind the building. It's open every Thursday from Noon until 3 PM. In the month of January, there will be Saturday openings on the 17th and 31st, from noon until 3PM. In case of inclement weather, museum staff will follow town hall and school decisions to close.

Donations to the museum in the month of December included a winner's trophy from the 1976 Blackstone farm-league baseball team, donated by Ken Paulhus. Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sharp made a donation to the museum's gift fun in memory of the late Bill Kelly, who was a long-time resident of Blackstone. Thank you on behalf of the Blackstone Historical Museum.

Winter Sand and Salt Mix for Residents Salt Mix Notice

FOR RESIDENTS ONLY

Sand/salt mix is available outside the salt shed. Residents of Blackstone are allowed to fill up to two 5-gallon buckets for use on their own property.

The filling of pick-ups, SUV's, other vehicles, and use by contractors is prohibited.

BYOB-Bring your own bucket (and shovel)
Location is 6 Rear Mill Street - Behind the Polish Hall. If you have any questions, please contact the DPW at 508-883-9331.

Important Information for Properties Connected to Town Sewer

The Blackstone Sewer Department has spent thousands of dollars on expenses to remove prohibited items that are clogging the municipal sewer system. Our biggest problem is "flushable" wipes. Residents are asked NOT to put these in the sewer system.

The sewer system collects wastewater from the toilets, showers, sinks, washing machines and dishwashers. The only items that should be put into the sewer system are human waste, wastewater and easily degradable toilet paper. Sewer systems are not designed to handle anything other than that. Some products that have been labeled as flushable, biodegradable or septic safe have also been known to cause damage or clogs and should never be introduced into the system. Please see Sewer Notice for items that should never be used.

Thank you for your cooperation.

BLACKSTONE
SEWER DEPARTMENT



Residents Concerned about Brown Water

If you had a problem with brown or rusty water. You can contact the Blackstone Water Department at 508-883-9331.

If you have a question on the quality you can contact the Board of Health at 508-883-1500. x 129.

Water & Sewer Abatement Forms Available

Abatement forms for the Water & Sewer bills are available online at the town website. <https://www.townofblackstone.org/DocumentCenter/View/1994/Abatement-Application-Form>.

For questions you may call the Water Sewer Department at 508-883-9331.

The Water Sewer Commissioners are:

Bruce Paterson- Chairman
Rob Paterson-Vice Chairman
Tommy Devlin-Member
Jacob St. Amant-Secretary
Harry Martin-Member.


Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

Twice Treasured
THRIFT STORE
HOURS:
**Mondays & Fridays
& Saturdays
8AM to NOON**
(508) 861-0065

Divine Mercy Parish Blackstone
JANUARY SPECIAL
**Wall Art, Wreaths &
Picture Frames
50% OFF**


**Tax Bills
Are Out.**

**Dog License
renewals are
due.**

 **Salon Fox**
Men~Women~Children
508.883.8309

Wishing all a
Happy, Healthy
& Prosperous
2026!

*Arlene & Debbie
Tina & Lynn*



157 Main St. Blackstone HOURS: Tues 9-1 & 5-7, Wed 10-5, Thurs 9-7, Fri 9-6, Sat 9-2

 **BETTY'S**  508-883-3472
COFFEE SHOP
Happy New Year!
3 Main Street • Blackstone
BREAKFAST • LUNCH • BAKERY

January 2026 Special
**Buy any coffee receive a muffin
with this coupon ONLY!**

See Shop for details Expires 1/31/2025

DRIVE THRU →
DOORDASH →

CHECK OUT WEEKLY SPECIALS ON FACEBOOK!
Tues - Sat 4 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., Sun 5 a.m. -Noon

**NEW ENGLAND
CHIMNEY & ROOFING**



- Roofing
- Chimneys
- General Contracting

Licensed & Insured
269 Main Street
Blackstone, MA

Dan Keefe, Supervising Contractor
Cell: 508-294-3757

MASS License
#078916
RI License #13222

Blackstone Millville Regional High School

Monthly Project Update

The Blackstone-Millville Regional School District, in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), is currently working on a feasibility study for the existing high school.

The presentation materials for each meeting, meeting minutes, and summaries related to the Project are all available on our District's website: <https://www.bmrtd.net/>, including a recording of our November community presentation. Project information is also available at Blackstone Town Hall, Millville Town Hall, MES Elementary School, FWH Middle School and the BMR High School.

The School Building Committee voted on 12/17/25 to approve the Preferred Schematic Option 7.4 New Construction for 7-12 Enrollment as the Committee's Preferred Solution and to authorize Colliers Project Leaders to submit the PSR Submission to the MSBA.

PROJECT TEAM:

- Design Team: Drummey Rosanne Anderson, Inc. (DRA)
- Owner's Project Manager: Colliers Project Leaders (CPL)

PROJECT MILESTONES:

Module 1: Eligibility Period - COMPLETE

- December 12, 2022 - Voted into Eligibility Period
- April 24, 2024 - Began our Feasibility Study Agreement with MSBA

Module 2: Forming the Project Team

COMPLETE:

- September 17, 2024 - Hired Colliers Project Leaders as our Owner's Project Manager
- December 30, 2024 - Hired Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc. as our Design Team

CURRENT

During this phase of the project, the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) will submit two major milestone reports to the MSBA on behalf of the District and its design team: the Preliminary Design Program (PDP) and the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR).

The project is currently working on the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR). This report will summarize all work completed to date, including the evaluation of various design options, and will formally present the District's recommended Preferred Solution for the future of Blackstone-Millville Regional High School.

Key Dates Below:

- February/March 2025 - Visioning Group workshops
- April 28, 2025 - Preliminary Design Program submitted to the MSBA
- June 12, 2025 - SC/SBC Meeting with a Public Hearing: Voted on project grade alignment
- December 18, 2025 - PSR Submission to the MSBA *Target Date
- February 25, 2026 - MSBA Board Approval of the PSR *Target Date

Module 4: Schematic Design

- February 2026 - August 2026 *Target Date
- Module 5: Funding the Project
- May 2026 - October 2026 *Target Date

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

School Committee Meetings*:

- January 8, 2026
- February 5, 2026

School Building Committee Meetings*:

- Second Wednesday of the Month

All monthly School Committee (SC) and School Building Committee (SBC) meetings are held at the Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School, 35 Federal Street, Blackstone, MA in the Media Center, unless otherwise virtually posted.

*All dates are subject to change. Please check the District's website for the most up to date information. Want more information? Want to stay involved? Have questions or comments?

Email us at admin-sbc@bmrtd.net.

Stay tuned for the next monthly update!

Submitted by

The School Building Committee

Relationships matter, especially in government & business.

Attend the BVCC's Love Your Legislator Breakfast and connect face-to-face with elected officials

over breakfast at Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern on

February 6, 2026.

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

It's your money, get it early!

Getting paid early can make all the difference!

Early Pay¹ from UniBank can help you:



Pay bills earlier



Take advantage of retail sales



Secure your weekend spending

UNIBANK
www.unibank.com • 800.578.4270



Learn more!

Call us at 800.578.4270 or visit unibank.com/early-payments today!

Member FDIC ¹With Early Pay from UniBank, UniBank may make incoming electronic direct deposits made through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) available for use up to two days before the scheduled payment date. Not all direct deposits are eligible for Early Pay from UniBank. Early availability of direct deposits is not guaranteed and may vary from deposit to deposit. Whether we make funds available early depends on when we receive the payor's payment instructions, any limitations we set on the amount of early availability, and standard fraud prevention screening.

Blackstone COA

Senior Center Updates

Tiziana Milano COA Director 508-876-5135

See our Newsletter online: townofblackstone.org/326/Newsletters.RSVP in person at the Blackstone COA, online @MyActiveCenter.Com, or by phone (508)883-1500 extension 151, or via email KCoffey@TownOfBlackstone.Org.

Please Note: Starting January 5th, the Blackstone Senior Center Hours are Changing: Mon- Thurs: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Friday: 8:30 AM - 12 Noon.

Weekly Programs & Activities: Please RSVP for meals one week in advance, see newsletter for menu. Suggested Meal Donation: Tri-Valley Tuesdays: \$3 Other Meals:\$4.

Monday: 10AM Game Day. 10AM Pound.
Tuesday: 9AM Walking Club. 9:15AM Strength & Stretch. 10:10AM Chair Yoga. 12 Noon Lunch. 1:15PM Strength Circuit.
Wednesday: 9:30AM Coffee Club. 9:30AM Tap Dance. 10:30AM Line Dance 11:30AM. Meditation. 12 Noon Lunch. 1PM Bingo. 2:15PM Zumba Gold.
Thursday: 9AM TaiChi Beginner. 9:30AM Cribbage. 10AM TaiChi. Intermediate. 11AM Journey thru Grief, 12 Noon Lunch. 12:30PM Yarnworks. 1:15PM Aging Gracefully.
Last Thursday of the Month: 11:30 - 12:30 Blood Pressure & Medication Clinic.
Friday: 9AM Walking Club. 10AM Mahjong. 10AM Pound. 1PM Painting @ Artful Dodger: next session starts Sept 5th \$24 for 6 weeks.

What's Happening:

We're now partnering with Tri-Valley Elder Services to help us serve lunch on Tuesdays! Tri-Valley suggests a \$3 donation for meals. See our newsletter for the menu & be sure to RSVP 4 business days in advance!

January 6th, 10 AM: AARP Presents "Social Security: We Earned It". Free, open to the public, RSVP recommended.

January 7th, 9:30 AM Bus: Travel Breakfast, Cracker Barrel of Wrentham.

See our website for additional information.

Millville COA

Tina Cook, Senior Center Director

The hours for the Center are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9-3. 508-883-3523. The Senior Bus is available Monday through Friday. Please call to set up an appointment between the hours of 8am to 3pm 774-573-6084. Medical trips are given priority. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

MONDAY:

January 5: Zumba for Seniors 9:30 am
January 12th : Senior Club Luncheon at 11:30 am.

January 19th: Zumba for Seniors 9:30-10:30 am, GAMES 10:30 – 11:30.

Bingo 1:00 pm no charge prizes awarded.

January 26th: Craft Class, Keyholder 10:00 am

TUESDAY:

January 6th : Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm

January 13th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm

January 20th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am NO CHAIR YOGA

January 27th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm

All Are Welcome

WEDNESDAY:

Hand, Foot & Knee Card Game is every week at 12:00 pm. Come and enjoy the fun. All Are Welcome

THURSDAY:

January 1st : CLOSED

January 8th: Painting starts at 10 am. Call to register \$5.00

508-883-3523. Lunch \$3.00 at noon tomato soup, meatloaf.

The class is sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council and the Millville Cultural Council.

You don't have to be a painter to come for lunch.

January 15th: Surprise Lunch noon \$3.00. COA Meeting at 1pm.

January 22nd : Surprise Lunch noon \$3.00 BINGO 1pm

January 29th : Movie 11:00am, lunch noon \$3.00 turkey sandwich

MISC Information:

SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) Please contact me if you need assistance signing up for this program.

Blackstone/Millville Food Pantry is open Tuesdays 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm and Saturdays 10:00am – 11:00 am at the Divine Mercy Parish Hall, St. Paul Street, Blackstone, Ma.

Senior/Veterans Tax Work Off Program: you can save up to \$1,000.00 from your property

tax bill by volunteering to help the town.

Please call for more information to sign up for this in January (2026). See our website for additional information.

The Silent Ticking Time Bombs of Aging

(That Most Women Aren't Told About)

By Carol Archambault

Aging rarely shows up with sirens and warning lights. Most of the time it sneaks in quietly, through little changes that we brush off as "normal". A bit more stiffness, poor sleep, extra weight around the midsection and feeling more tired than you used to.

Here's the thing that many women aren't told: Some of the biggest threats to healthy aging are happening silently... long before symptoms force our attention.

The good news? Midlife is the best time to actually do something about it!

Muscle Loss: The One No One Warns You About

Starting in our 30's, women actually begin to lose muscle. During perimenopause and menopause that muscle loss speeds up. Why does this matter? Muscle protects our metabolism; Keeps us steady on our feet; Keeps us independent as we age; Supports our bones. Muscle is the organ of longevity. The fix... Strength training 2-4x a week.

Bone Loss: Quiet Until It's Not

Bone loss doesn't hurt. You don't feel it happening. Many women discover it after a fracture. Around Menopause, women can lose bone more rapidly, due to declining estrogen. Strong bones are built by: Resistance training; Proper Nutrition (prioritizing protein); Doing impact exercises (heel drops is an example). Ask your doctor for a dexa scan (usually covered by insurance). This will reveal what your bone density looks like, so you can make changes and be in control.

The Metabolism Shift

Have you ever thought, "I am doing the same things I have always done, but why isn't it working anymore?" Hormonal shifts, poor sleep, stress, muscle loss all affect how our bodies handle blood sugar and fat storage. This isn't about will power... it's about working with your body instead of fighting it.

Stress

Many midlife women live in a constant state of stress, work, family, caregiving, lack of sleep. Their nervous system never gets a break. Over time, this impacts: Mood, Anxiety, Sleep quality, Inflammation and weight gain. Learning how to take care of your nervous system is foundational health care, it's a must.

Brain Fog Isn't Just Aging

Forgetting words, losing focus, feeling mentally drained. These are the most frustrating midlife symptoms. They are influenced by declining hormones, poor sleep, stress, and blood sugar, not a failing brain. Protecting your brain starts with daily habits, get better sleep, lower your stress, try new activities, and exercise. All of these habits are good for the brain.

As a Menopause Coach, I remind women often that: Midlife isn't the beginning of the end, it's a time to reset. Small consistent changes now can protect your strength, bones, brain and independence for decades— don't wait!

Carol Archambault is a Certified Menopause Coaching Specialist, who helps women navigate perimenopause and menopause with strength training, lifestyle, and nutrition, with compassion. You can reach her at 774-573-8030 or email at carolarch23@gmail.com or follow her on instagram @balance_in_midlife.



Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

AI's Tree Service

508.883.4900

FIRE WOOD

Tree Pruning, Trimming, Brush Chipping & Stump Grinding



TELLSTONE GARAGE INC.

78 Mendon St., Blackstone, MA.
508-883-6402



- Tires
- Oil Changes
- Repair Facility
- Front End Work
- Fuel Injection Work
- Complete Brake Work
- Engine Tune-ups

FREE ESTIMATES

TECH-NET Professional ASE CERTIFIED

VISA DISCOVER MasterCard

MASSACHUSETTS STATE INSPECTION

Hartnett Middle School

6th Grade High Honors

Ariel Acord, Mia Alvarez, Sarkis Apar, Emma Arruda, Sariah Augustin, Ryan Batchelder, Liliana Benjamin, Reid Benjamin, Colten Bouvier-Vito, Logan Brett, Yuri Campos, Noah Catalano, Kyden Chu, Alice Coelho, Alivia Costa, Alicy Da Silva, Jasmyne De Oliveira, Evelyn Gauthier, Kendall Gervais, Maxwell Gilligan, Cailyn Gledhill, Owen Gogone, Harrison Heistand, Sophia Iacofano, Jackson Ingham, Jayden Jordan, Kyle Kangethe, Elise Labonte, Ada Lafond, Ayden Laforte, Lilliana Lataille, Anna Latour, Emma Lebrecht, Kayleigh Lohmann, Jaycob Machado-Desouza, Alexander Maio, Elijah Martinelli, Noah Martinelli, Zachary Maxon, Maxwell McCann, Tegan McIntyre, Kaylee Medina, Brayden Mikulko, Michael Oliveira, Sophia O'Neil, Sophia Peterson, Kellan Rodrick, Jasper Rossi, Brayden Saunders, Anna Seffernick, Connor Sellers, Conner Steimel, Alivia Turner, Isabella Verrill, Jack Walsh, Julie Webber, Brooklyn Wills-St. Denis, Julie Wojcik, Lily Wojcik, Jasmine Zincone.

6th Grade Honors

Jadalynn Andrews, Emmitt Champagne, Travis Chassie, Owen Coffey, Nico D'Amato-Millette, Axl Gilmour, Abigail Gravel, Bryson Huffaker, Maci Keegan, Isabella King, Kennedy King, Charles Lally, Dean Lawrence, Faith Limburg, Brady Luchuk, Brody Morris, Lenin Pesantez-Maza, Alayna Tomasian, Gary Weng.

7th Grade High Honors

Khloe Alonzo, Ethan Arruda, Tenlie Barry, Masyn Bernard, Dylan Bernier, Catherine Bouley, Genevieve Bouvier, Abbey Brouillard, Benjamin Burgess, Malichai Carpenter, Greyson Copeland, Rielle DeOliveira, Daniel Dias, Kylie DiFabio, Evan Dubois, David Dupuis, Conor Evans, Alianna Garfield-Demontigny, Alayna Giraldo, Zachary Hardenbergh, Annabelle Howard, Thomas Lafayette, Ayla Leonard, Zoey Maycock, Matthew Morar, Josey Nantais, Jacob Nash, Emanuel Nogueira, Nolan Pacheco, Alexa Pereira, Makayla Poznanski, Julia Rebhan, Cody Richard, Parker Savard, Caleb Scibetta, Morgan Scott, Audrey Sinclair, Madison Symonds, Aisatou Touray, Hope Watson, Nicholas Yoos, Ava Zaki.

7th Grade honors

Oliva Banks, James Barzaga, David Bathgate, Kylie Brien, Maggie Castonguay, Kailee Coe, Maxney Dias, Anna Gonyon, Angelina Harvey, Ethan Hassell, Lucie Lariviere, Joseph Larosee, Jacob Matthews, Brayden Markle, Thomas Marks, Madeline McGovern, Noah Mclaurin, Colin Milette, Logan Myatt, Mason O'Connell, Isaiah Robles, Ryleigh Smith, Daniel Turner, Tyler Whitney, Ryleigh Zariczny.

Blackstone-Millville Regional High School Honor Roll Term 1

HIGH HONORS 2025-2026

Seniors

Seth Asante, Ella Barbato, Ty'Aja Bianco, Madelyn Billings, Grace Buzzell, Julia Desilets, Brooklyn Dullea, Kylie Frazier, Miya Gagne, Isabella Gaudette, Kelsey Goyer, Marya Grady-O'Neil, Adam Gravel, Caitlin Juba, Nathan Kaczor, Faith Livingston, Caden Lockwood, Ella McCourt, Ella McDonald, Kyla Moore, Ethan Parenteau, Marissa Pedorella, Turner Reeve, Ava Riley, Joshua Ryan, Julia St. Gelais, Jacob Stearns, Don Paul Thekkan, Taylor Truscott, Amber Whitner, Hailey Zuidema.

Juniors

Marren Berry, Kassidy Brinard, Elizabeth Dezeil, Boulin Fanous, Clover Maloney, Kevin Nash, Kaleb Nieber, Lilyana Pereira, Jacob Peterson, Ella Reilly, Mia Riley, Eve Wing.

Sophomores

Charlotte Castonguay, Ava Doyon, Brendan Folster, Alexia Graham, Kaitlyn Harper, Sarah Korencsik, Joseph Lafayette, Ruo Yan Lin, Maura McCourt, Natalia Morais, Carter Pacheco, Reka Surfus.

Freshmen

Christopher Ahearn, Gabrielle Asante, Karma Attia, Rosalie Briar, Zachary Catalano, Connor Difabio, Benjamin Gilligan, Aralyn Holmes, Emma Kauker, Xiao Yi Lin, Ivy Maloney, Lana Perez, Jenna Phipps, Kavan Rodrick, Danielle Saunders, Brandon Shippee, Macie Webber

Eighth Grade

Kaydence Anderson, Benjamin Briar, Mason Carroll, Hadley Collette, Maria Isabely Ferreira, Dave Frances Drackett, Brayden Gaudette, Nicholas Gilligan, Riley Laberge, Brooklyn Lamoureux, Christopher Liggett, Corey Livingston, Payton O'Neill, Savannah Perez, Tatum Robinson, Ashley Schena, Kennedy Sellers, Jayden Stearns.

HONORS

Seniors

Evabelle Bandy, Madison Bartlett, Kamiyah Bianco, Brianna Chalas, Aryanna Dunscomb, Jayden Gilbert, Madison Healy, Savannah Klopff, Julia Korencsik, Beatrice Korj, Sophia Lafrenaye, Abigail Loc, Rowan Mahan, Mattheus Pinto, Aidyn Randor, Nathan Rodriguez, Shelby Scoggins, Logan Surfus, Thomas Tomasi, Brandon Vanhorne.

Juniors

Yasmin Araujo, Sofia Bouley, Peyton Brannigan, Farleigh Davis, Sofia Demers, Brooke Durand, Brayden Duquette, Cody Fletcher, Braeden Hopkins, Emily Kmiec, Gianna Larosee, Kaiden Mahan, John Myatt, Olivia O'Brien, Jaclyn Phipps, Kenneth Remillard, Maya Ridlon, Isabella Smith, Jack Smith, Ryan Smith, Raquel Stockdale, Gavin Warecki.

Sophomores

Judah Blakeney, Nathan Burden, Lily Charette, Robert Dubovsky, Anna Dupuis, Lila Favreau, Ava Federico, Haley Gibbs, Lilyana Giraldo, Cole Greenwood, Kylar Hovik, Maddelyn James, Ryleah Lazarus, Hannah Lockwood, Bentley Morin, Mackenzie Ranucci, Matthews Rocha, Elizabeth Steere, Cassidy Sullivan, Jarrod Ward, Cody Zaricny.

Freshmen

Macey Billings, Kaylee Burke, Julia Buzzell, Julia Delaney, Brooke Ethier, Gunivery Fanous, Charlotte Foley, James Giampietro, Haley Graham, Olivia Guy, Sanchez Raul, Jeudy, Raylen King, Raelyn Pytka, Maci Rodenhiser, Gabriella Roody, Stephen Simmons, Dustin Turner, Arianna Whyte, Savannah Williams.

Eighth Grade

Gabreilla Askew, Noah Bouvier-Vito, Kevin Burgess, Ava May Carney, Melodie Carter, Josiah Cotto, Mya Daniel, Kennedy Desjardins, Liam Euglow, Isabella Gird, Isabella Greene, Arela Gutierrez, Lillian Harrington, Alexander Hebert, Caden Howarth, Alexandra Kanellis, Savannah King, Adalyn Landry, Catherine McCrum, Adrianna Midgley, Lillian Molloy, Jackson Ortiz Sacco, Juliet Peterson, Sadie Robidoux, Abbygail Santos, Anna St. Gelais, Madalynn Tampsett, Tyler Thibeault, Ava Trusas, Josmeli Vallejo, Coral Wojcik, Andrew Zahner.

Drane Sworn In as Officer for Worcester County



[Paxton, MA] – On Friday, December 5, 2025, Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis administered the Correctional Officers Oath to the 12 graduates of the Sheriff's Office 64th Basic Recruit Training Academy (B.R.T.A.) in the Zecco Auditorium at Anna Maria College. Among the graduates was Officer George Drane of Millville.

The Worcester County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to protecting the residents of Worcester County and building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. The graduates of B.R.T.A. #64 form a capable group of new correctional officers, bringing unique skills and experiences to the department. This class comes from eight Massachusetts towns, as well as towns in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and includes four individuals with current or prior service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Sheriff's Office Academy offers a paid, full-time 13-week training program designed to prepare recruits for maintaining the care, custody, and control of inmates at the Worcester County Jail & House of Correction. Training combines classroom instruction with hands-on practice.

Recruits receive instruction in key areas, including de-escalation, the duty to intervene, fire safety, defensive tactics, and first responder procedures, along with significant training on suicide prevention, mental health, and substance abuse awareness. Training also includes daily physical fitness, weekly academic assessments, and guest instruction from various WCSO staff.

"After 13 demanding weeks, I am proud to present some of the best and brightest in corrections," said Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis. "Our Training Department is among the strongest in the state, and these graduates are ready to serve as full-time correctional officers and support our mission. Congratulations to them as they begin their careers."

Applicants must complete a written exam, physical fitness test, background check, and psychological screening. The Sheriff has also implemented hiring policies to ensure fairness, including banning political recommendation letters and giving preference to those who have served in the military.

The Worcester County Sheriff's Office is now accepting applications for its 65th Basic Recruit Training Academy, beginning in Spring 2026. More information is available at www.WorcesterCountySheriff.com/Careers/Correctional-Officer-Academy/.

Community Service, Grant Success, and Civic Engagement Go Hand in Hand

Community has always been at the heart of why I volunteer. Over the years, I've worked alongside residents, nonprofits, and local leaders who care deeply about Blackstone and its future. Volunteering isn't just about showing up for an event — it's about listening, learning, and helping move our town forward together.

A key part of that work has been successful grant writing. Through my volunteer roles, I've helped secure funding for community projects by identifying opportunities, assembling strong applications, and coordinating across multiple agencies. These grants help turn ideas into reality — supporting infrastructure improvements, preservation efforts, public spaces, and local initiatives that might not otherwise be possible.

Serving on multiple volunteer boards and committees gives me first-hand knowledge of upcoming grant programs and changes in state and regional funding priorities. Being at the table early allows me to prepare projects in advance, position them competitively, and ensure Blackstone is ready when funding opportunities become available. This proactive approach is critical in today's highly competitive grant environment.

I'm also honored to have recently been appointed to the Blackstone Chamber of Commerce. This role allows me to support local businesses, strengthen partnerships, and encourage sustainable economic growth. A strong business community and a resilient town are deeply connected, and thoughtful planning helps both succeed.

My approach is grounded in service, transparency, and accountability. Whether volunteering, writing grants, or serving in a civic role, my goal is always the same: to leverage experience, relationships, and hard work to deliver real benefits for the community.

As we begin a new year, I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. I'm looking forward to continuing this work in the months ahead — collaborating with residents, organizations, and local partners to keep Blackstone moving forward together.

Mary Bulso



BVT Class of 2026, 73 Adams Scholar Recipients

UPTON – The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is a merit-based program that provides tuition at a Massachusetts state college or university. Seventy-three Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) seniors are the proud recipients of an Adams Scholarship. The award allows these students to further their vocational and career training with additional education, advanced training, and credentials.

The first-time score on a high school MCAS exam determines eligibility for an Adams Scholarship. Adams Scholar recipients receive free tuition for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts public college or university, renewable for eight consecutive semesters or four years. Recipients must use the tuition credit in the first fall semester following their high school graduation and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better.

"The Adams Scholarship reflects our students' commitment, dedication, and desire to put forth their full effort on exam day," said BVT Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele, II. "We're proud of their accomplishments and excited for our career and life-ready seniors to benefit from this scholarship." The following members of the Class of 2026 have earned a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship (students are listed alphabetically by town):

BELLINGHAM

Gracie Clinton, Olivia Dalton, Evan Donlon, Evan Gerrish, Justyn Hayes, Gavin Jacobson, Charlie Leighton, Ericka Lizotte, Nicholas Russell, Andres Silva, Madyson Voss, and Justin Walsh.

BLACKSTONE

Jack Marino, Isabella Olsen, Ella Ruth, and Jake Thibault.

DOUGLAS

Jayce Boyko, Leopaul Gamelin, Reagan Guthenberg, Caitlin Kelly, Zachary Mitchell, and Sophie Rivard.

MILLVILLE

Maxwell Durand and Genevieve Kovolyan.
Congratulations, BVT Class of 2026 John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipients!

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills. For more information about the school, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us.

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

250 PULASKI BLVD.

Bellingham Electric
Since 1953

APPLIANCES

BOSCH	FRIGIDAIRE
	LG Life's Good
SAMSUNG	KitchenAid

APPLIANCE SALES & REPAIRS
(508) 883-7235
WWW.BELLINGHAMELECTRIC.COM

OSTRANDER INSURANCE
Established in 1979

Need a Local **MAPFRE** Insurance Agent?

MAPFRE INSURANCE

Call or visit us to make Ostrander your dedicated **MAPFRE** agent!

Paul@OstranderInsurance.com | 508.966.1116
OSTRANDERINSURANCE.COM

• FOR SALE BY BUILDER - NEW CONSTRUCTION

65 Oakland Ave, Oakland, RI 02858 (Burrillville) CALL PAUL @ 401-464-1870

Condo-1831 sqft of living space/ 1000 sqft of Storage/ Huge Attic plywood floor

4 Bedrooms – 2 Master size units/ 1 full bath in master, walk in closet

3 Bathrooms – 2 Full, 1 Half 1st floor

Chefs Kitchen- 9ft Island, upscale appliances- Double Wall oven/Microwave wall unit

Extra large Refrigerator, 36" electric Cook-top, with an upscale 42" hood, Garbage disposal, Dishwasher, 12'x12' back deck. Extra large Pantry. This Condo was built with high quality materials and a focus on maximum sound integrity.

Includes a whole house Generator- Never lose power!!!! Hydro powered central air for heat, also full AC

1 Car garage, Incredible side yard with option to fence in for privacy at 18,400sqft wide open to split in half

HOA Fee \$150 - (Includes only the Master insurance Policy that covers the whole condo). No additional insurance needed unless wanted.

Taxes- 2025- \$4591.50

LIST PRICE = \$545,000

Which will include a possible 4% loan rate AND \$5000 towards closing costs.

Other options available as additional down payment money. The pictures say it all.

Beautiful Finish Work and Accents.



Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

BMR High Happenings

By Kelsey Goyer
BMR Correspondent



The Seniors form a pyramid at the conclusion of their Pep Rally performance. At the top of the Pyramid is Julia St. Gelais while from left, Madison Healy, Ella McDonald and Ella Barbato support her. Firing the confetti cannons are Ethan Parenteau (far left) and Nathan Kaczor.



Eighth grader Benjamin Briar fights Darth Vader, aka Brayden Gaudette during the Pep Rally lip-sync. This year was the first time the eighth grade ever participated in the Annual Pre-Holiday Pep Rally. Photos by Mark Juba

Blackstone Millville High School's December was busy with great events. Coming into December, members of the BMR Student Council (Stuco) and National Honors Society prepared meals in a bag with the Stuco advisor, Mrs. Nicole Sacco. These bags contained foods such as ramen, pot pie, soup, and more. They were then distributed to families in need for Thanksgiving.

The BMR fun continued as the Yearbook Senior Superlatives winners were released. Some great people were selected for things such as most likely to forget their own birthday, best artist, best smile, most likely to become an influencer, best dressed, and over 30 more! Superlative pictures took place in the second and third weeks of December and will be released in the BMR 2026 Yearbook.

BMR kicked off its winter sports in December and this year we have some new and exciting things planned. The BMR Basketball teams, which include Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Middle School squads, had tryouts and released their rosters for both the girls' and boys' seasons. Sports continue with BMR junior Ryan Smith joining the Bellingham boys hockey team and BMR senior Marissa Pedorella continuing to participate in Swim this year as a co-op athlete for Grafton High School. That's not the only new and exciting thing happening this winter. For the first time in years, BMR High School will have an indoor track team.

The BMR Wind Ensemble and Concert Band hosted its annual holiday concert, which took place on Dec. 10, and the BMR Jazz Band and Chorus had a wonderful performance on Dec. 17.

The High School continued the holiday joy with a fun-packed spirit week based on the 2025 pep rally theme, Disney! It included days

such as Marvel, Monochromatic, class colors, white lies, and even Star Wars and Toy Story. BMR students also showed their spirit with Door Decorating, where advisory classes competed to make the best door based on their Pep Rally theme.

BMR hosted the High School Drama Club's performance of "Clue". Performances took place on Dec. 19 and 20. This play was followed by English teacher Mrs. Sara Cruz's holiday play, "A North Pole Mystery". Although it was mainly written by Mrs. Cruz, she also says her whole performance literature class collaborated on ideas together. The final play was performed in front of the whole school by the Performance Literature Class on Dec. 22.

One of the last, but definitely not least, events of December was the annual Pep Rally. This year we have a new addition, the 8th grade class. Commonly, the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders perform a lip sync dance, make a banner, play games, and show their spirit to earn points to gain the #1 spot at the pep rally. But this year, the 8th graders joined the competition and fared well.

Winning the Pep Rally were the Seniors with 83 points, second place the Juniors with 68 points, finishing third were the Freshman with 39 points, fourth place the 8th graders with 32 points, and last place went to the Sophomores with 27 points.

For more coverage of these and other BMR stories, check out the Pony Express, BMR's Official School Newspaper. Stories and photos on these events and more will be in the school's January Edition. To check out any story written in the Pony Express the last 20-plus years, Google "BMR Pony Express Past Years" and find your issue.

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

A+ Plus

TIRE AND AUTO CARE

aplustireandautocare.com

Get your
MA
Inspection
Here!

MASSACHUSETTS
MOTOR VEHICLE
INSPECTION STATION

The Massachusetts Enhanced Emission & Safety Test

EXPIRES

1

2024

MA INSPECTION STATION NO. P800038

COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS

<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">MA State Inspections Oil & Filter Change Tires - All Brands Computer Engine Analysis</p>	<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Mufflers Shocks & Struts Brakes & Tune-ups Axles & CV Joints</p>
--	--

"Support Blackstone Businesses"

633 Rathbun Street
Blackstone, MA 01504

508-883-8881

Serving Blackstone and surrounding towns
Since 1991!

VALLEE'S EXTERIOR HOME IMPROVEMENT, INC.

Siding & Windows

Call for your Free Estimate!

508-883-7912

Insured MA
MA License

Main Street

Business of the Month

Oscar J. Ryan Agency

The Oscar J. Ryan Agency has been servicing our community for over 72 years. Located at 132 Main Street, Blackstone, Jerome M. Ryan, Enrolled Agent (EA), is a registered IRS tax preparer and tax consultant with over 45 years of experience. He has completed the necessary education and examinations to ensure that he is qualified to assist taxpayers and small business owners with their tax filing needs.

Jerome's passion is helping people save money on taxes. For years he's worked with individuals and business owners, employing tax strategies and strategic tax planning. All of the services Jerome provides are tailored to fit your unique needs. He strives for 100% customer satisfaction and stands by his work wholeheartedly. Jerome offers E-File and Direct deposit at no additional charge. Call today, or text or email Jerome at 774-573-5834 or at ojrins@comcast.net.



Jerome Ryan
A Reliable Choice

Got rewards?

With Dean, you could have 5,000!

When you open a checking account with Dean Bank, we'll reward you with **5,000 Uchoose rewards points** to redeem however you like; think travel, gift cards from more than 50 retailers, merchandise and so much more.

We're right around the corner:

- 📍 8 Main Street, Blackstone • (508) 883-2122
- 📍 411 Pulaski Boulevard, Bellingham • (508) 883-2000

When others leave you high and dry, Dean Bank will always be here with the financial advice you need and special offers to keep you going!

¹ Owners of non-Dean Bank ATMs may impose a surcharge.



Free Checking

- + Unlimited free ATMs, point-of-sale, and Debit Mastercard® transactions anywhere your card is accepted¹
- + No monthly fees or minimum balance requirement
- + All deposits fully insured, regardless of the amount, through both the FDIC and DIF

Open your account and get rewarded!



DEAN BANK

It's my bank.™

deanbank.com • (508) 883-2000



Member FDIC Member DIF



Cookie Walk Resounding Success But Not Without its Bakers

The staff of the Blackstone Public Library would like to thank those who baked the scrumptious treats, those who volunteered their time, and those who patronized the annual Cookie Walk fundraiser. Your kindness, your generosity and your dedication is yet another prime example that a library is only as great as its community. We would also like to thank the Law Office of Daniel T. Doyle, for donating a substantial portion of the ingredients made available to bakers

Children's Story Times

by Tressy N. Collier

The Blackstone Public Library will soon begin its 2026 winter session of story times.

For preschoolers and kindergartners ages 3 – 5, two Story Time & Craft classes will be held on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. and Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. Each class consists of two stories and a simple craft and can accept up to 15 children. The Monday class will last six weeks and will begin on Monday, January 26. The Thursday class will also last six weeks and will begin on Thursday, January 29.

For babies and toddlers ages 6 months – 3 years, we offer Toddler Story Time on Friday at 10:15 a.m. In this six-week program, we'll read board books, sing songs and fingerplays, play games, and also play with books and toys. This story time lasts 45 minutes and will begin on Friday, January 30.

Registration for the above programs begins on Monday, January 5 for Blackstone residents and Monday, January 12 for all library patrons. Space is limited and registration is accepted on a first come, first serve basis. As always, patrons are welcome to attend drop in story time every Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, please call 508-883-1931 or email Tressy Collier at tcollier@cwmar.org. When emailing, please be sure to include your child's full name, age, and the caregiver's email and phone number.

Adult Programs

Help with Jenna Gouin

Monday, January 12 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Thursday, January 29 from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Jenna Gouin will provide assistance with MassHealth, fuel assistance, Medicare and referrals to other community organizations. Registration is required. Call the Blackstone Public Library to register for a 30-minute time slot.

Village Shaker, Puzzle Maker with Christian de Rezendes.

Monday, January 5 at 6:30 pm. Discover the nearly two-decade process that has gone into the making of the Emmy® Award-winning docu-series Slatersville: America's First Mill Village in Village Shaker, Puzzle Maker, a presentation by the film's Director Christian de Rezendes. Registration is required. Register using the library's event page or call for more information. This presentation is sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

Quilting Club

Thursday, January 22 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Join other quilters to share ideas, tips, tricks, and do some quilting. This club is sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

Photography Club Reception

Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 pm. Please join these talented individuals, peruse the photographs, and ask the photographers questions about their work. The public is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served. Registration is not required, but is helpful for planning refreshments. Please call the library at 508-883-1931 for more information. The reception is sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

Conquering Clutter with Janine Cavanaugh

Monday, January 27 at 6:30 pm. It's easy to accumulate things and fill our spaces, but letting go can be much harder. Ready to conquer clutter with confidence? In this presentation, Janine Cavanaugh will share practical solutions for controlling clutter and regaining control of your spaces. Registration is required. Register using the library's event page or call for more information.

This presentation is sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

Ongoing Book Groups

New members are always welcome. Books are available for pickup at the library.

Horror Book Club

Thursday, January 8 at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Tressy Collier at tcollier@cwmar.org.

Evening Book Group

Tuesday, January 13 at 6:30 pm. Contact Renee Milliken at rmilliken@cwmar.org.

Senior Center Book Club

Tuesday, January 20 at 11 a.m. Contact Ellen Goudreau at egoudreau@cwmar.org.

Afternoon Book Club

Tuesday, January 27 at 3:00 pm. Contact Donna Foster at dfoster@cwmar.org.

Young Adult Programs

Mexican Tin Art with Pop Up Art School
January 15 PM Registration is required. Open to 5th-12th grade students.

Taste Test Challenge

Chips & Doritos! January 29 at 6 PM Registration is required. Open to 5th-12th grade students.

Choose Your Own Adventure Book Club

Join your fellow adventurers as we read a Choose Your Own Adventure book and decide together which path our group should take! Meetings are held every Tuesday at 4 PM. Registration is required. Open to 5th-8th grade students.

Teen Advisory Board

Share your opinions on books, materials, and programs at the library! Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5 PM. Registration is not required. Open to 5th-12th grade students

YA Cursive Club

Learn/practice cursive writing! Meetings are held every Thursday at 5 PM. Registration is not required. Open to 5th-12th grade students

For more information or to register for these programs, call (508)883-1931 or email Mandi at mwhipple@cwmar.org

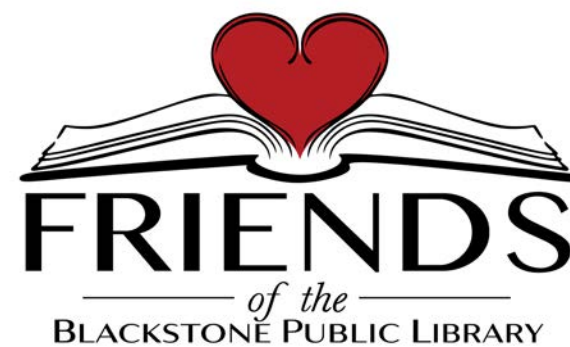
Music & Movement Class for Tots & Preschoolers

By Tressy N. Collier

Join us for a free enrichment series facilitated by Deb Hudgins. Deb's Sing & Swing Pre-K Music & Movement program features singing, guitar music, dancing, rhythm instruments, stories and variety of fun props, including a parachute, beanbags and scarves. Appropriate for ages 1-5.

Classes will be held on the following Friday mornings from 11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.: January 23 & 30, February 13 and April 10 & 17. Registration is required and begins on Monday, January 12. To register, please email Tressy at tcollier@cwmar.org or call 508-883-1931. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to join in the fun during class!

Sponsored by the YMCA Family & Community Partnership (YFCP), a grant program funded by the MA Department of Early Education & Care and administered by the YMCA of Central Massachusetts.



by Lee Holfelder

Happy New Year everyone. Winter is the perfect time for curling up with a hot cup of cocoa, coffee or tea and a good book! The Friends of the Blackstone Library's ongoing book sale has a great selection of fiction, non-fiction, biographies and DVDs for adults, young adults and children.

Open during regular library hours, the ongoing book sale is located to the right of the front desk and just before the Children's Library. We have a nice selection of jigsaw puzzles too!

The next Friends of the Blackstone Library meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 10th at 6:30 pm. New members are always welcome! We thank our community for their support!

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email: enlightener@blackstonema.com

We are Here to Serve Our Community!
Heating • Air Conditioning • Installations



FAWCETT ENERGY
25 Montcalm Avenue • Blackstone
508-883-6010



John Leahy, Blackstone's Play-by-Play Man

by Elizabeth McGeough

John Leahy, from Blackstone, MA, is an award winning broadcaster, podcaster, narrator, and musician, with experience on the air since 1995. He is the radio play by play voice of UMass Lowell men's hockey. For over 30 years he's used his voice to make a living broadcasting all sports – baseball and hockey at the professional and Division 1 level, minor league professional baseball from 2005-2019, in addition to everything from football, basketball, and wrestling, adding audio book narration to his gift for entertaining audiences. See <https://www.johnrleahy.com/tv-radio>.

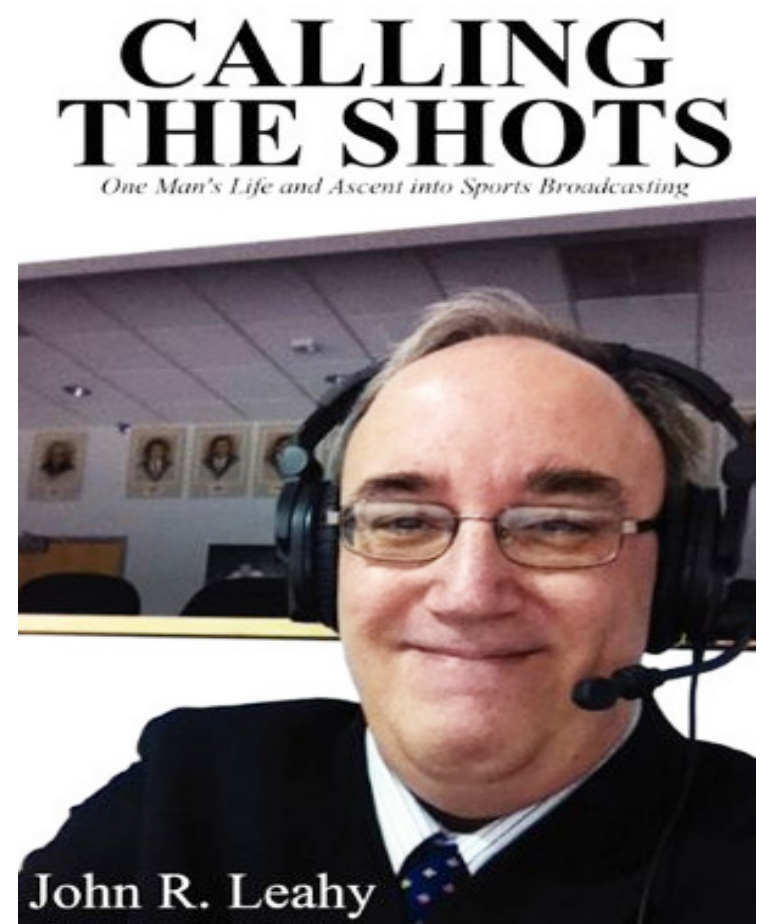
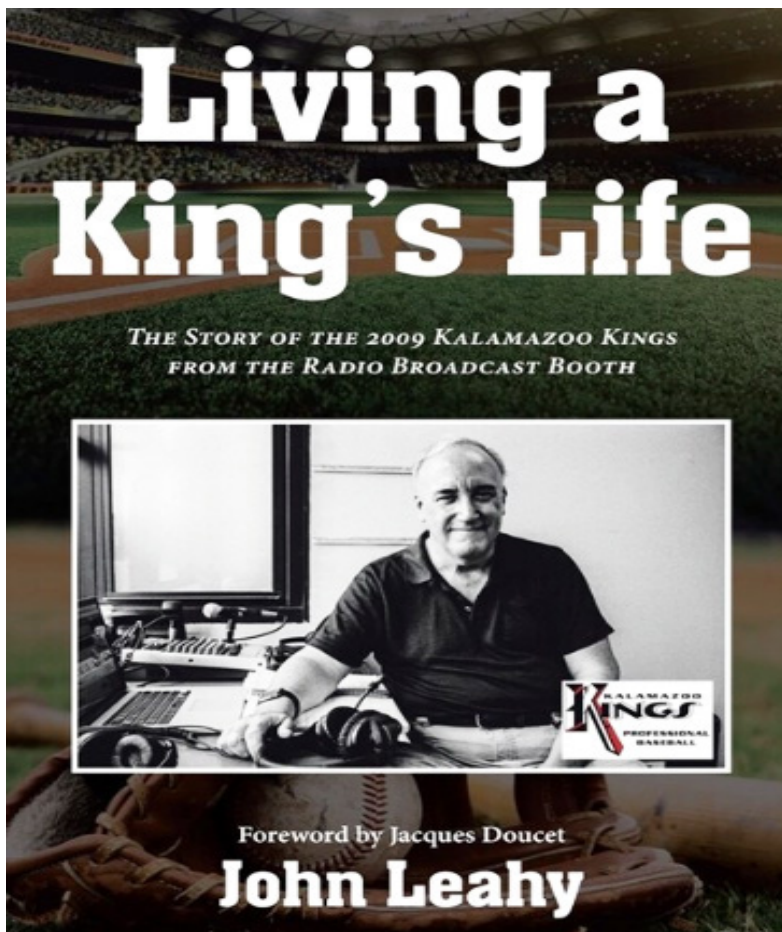
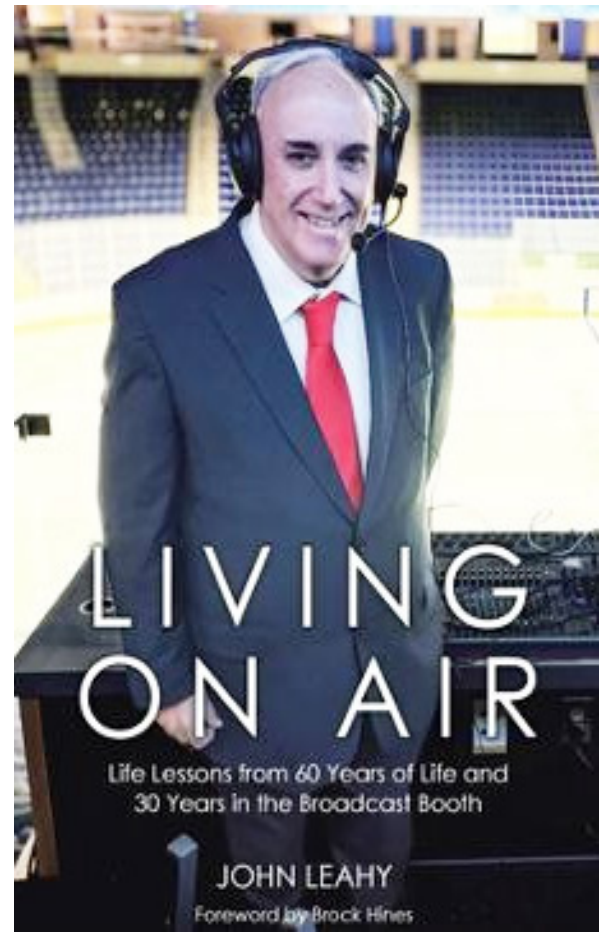
In 2020 he launched his first podcast. Initially called "Airing It Out, Files From Leahy's Locker Room", and now

called "Airing It Out, Files From Leahy's Broadcast Booth", it is available on iTunes, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Breaker, Overcast, PocketCasts, and Radio Public. Podcasting, being a close cousin of broadcasting, is something John is very passionate about. See his podcast's website, <https://www.johnrleahy.com/podcasting>.

Adding to his array of talents, John has written four books covering his career in sports broadcasting and the day-to-day experiences of sportsmen; Living A Kings Life, Calling The Shots, Breakaway Wisdom and, his latest, Living On Air—Life Lessons From 60 Years of Living and 30 Years in the Broadcast Booth. See <https://www.johnrleahy.com/books>.

John is also a music enthusiast. His love of music stems from his strong family background. Though he enjoys almost all kinds of music, he's especially partial to Irish folk – his uncle had a Boston based Irish band. As of late, he's discovered tropical sounds, Jimmy Buffett "island tunes" – stemming from loving the ukulele so much! He posts songs on the Internet and Facebook primarily with live shows and songs to his FB group, "Leahy's Live Music-The Rafters Are Ringing.", as well as his YouTube channel.

For more information on our very own award-winning Blackstone resident, John Leahy, check him out at the above links and www.johnrleahy.com.



Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

Parks and Recreation

by Celeste Langlois

As we leave 2025 behind us and look forward to 2026, we want to simply say thank you! Thank you for attending our events, for helping when we asked, and for being a community we love to serve!

Most importantly, we want to thank Adam Robidoux for continuing to be the Rock of Parks and Recreation. We couldn't accomplish what we do without him!

In 2026, you will see some new, fun events along with some tried and true activities. We look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Parks and Recreation Team
 Celeste Langlois - Chair
 Bob Gilbert - Vice Chair
 Don Cox - Treasurer
 Kim Briggs - Commissioner
 Sara Peters - Commissioner
 Deb Bissonnette - Secretary
 Adam Robidoux - Head Groundskeeper



Legal Considerations When Starting a Small Business

Starting a small business is exciting—but it's also full of legal details that can make or break your success. Here are some key steps every entrepreneur should take before opening the doors:

1. Choose the Right Business Structure

Your first decision is whether to operate as a sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or corporation. Each option affects liability and taxes. For example, an LLC offers personal liability protection, while a sole proprietorship does not. Professional guidance is a must when determining what type of business model to choose.

2. Register Your Business Name

If you plan to use a trade name instead of your personal name, you'll need a "Doing Business As" (DBA) certificate. In Massachusetts, this is filed with your local town clerk. It's a simple step that makes your business official.

3. Secure Licenses and Permits

Depending on your industry, you may need state or local permits—especially for food service, re-

tail, or home-based businesses. Always check zoning laws to ensure your location is approved for your type of business.

4. Understand Employment Rules

Hiring employees? Massachusetts has strict wage and hour laws. You'll also need workers' compensation insurance and must correctly classify workers as employees or independent contractors. You'll also need to obtain a business tax ID number from IRS.

5. Put Agreements in Writing

Handshake deals can lead to headaches. Draft clear contracts for vendors, clients, and partners. Written agreements protect everyone and reduce disputes.

6. Protect Your Brand

Consider trademarking your business name or logo. It's an investment that safeguards your identity as you grow.

7. Get the Right Insurance

General liability insurance is essential. Depend-

ing on your business, you may also need professional liability, property coverage, products liability if you are manufacturing and/or selling things, Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance if your business is an LLC or a corporation, commercial automobile, or if you use your car for both business and pleasure, then a business use rider on your auto insurance, etc.

8. Keep Accurate Records

Good bookkeeping isn't just for taxes—it helps you stay compliant and organized. Set up a system before you start.

Bottom line: A little legal planning now can save you big problems later. If you have questions, consult a local attorney and CPA familiar with Massachusetts business law and business taxation. You'll be spending money to get started but that is the cost of doing business. Starting smart means starting strong.

The author, Christopher J. Ryan, is an attorney at Ryan Law Office, 181 Main Street, Blackstone, MA 01504 – www.ryanlawoffice.com.

Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com




TeachUCPR.com
 A division of Torrey Enterprises, LLC

FIRST AID & CPR TRAINING

Sign up in seconds!

Blackstone Senior Center
15 St. Paul Street
Blackstone, Massachusetts 01504



Join us for a comprehensive First Aid and CPR training session designed to empower you with the knowledge and hands-on skills to respond effectively in life-threatening situations.

SATURDAY
01-24-2026



TIME
9AM-1PM



FOR MORE INFORMATION

EMAIL



\$40.00 per person

dtorrey@teachUCPR.com

Proclaiming Hope through the Good News of Jesus Christ

Come to Christ Community Church of Blackstone to enjoy friendly fellowship and hear Pastor Joe Overly expound on the word of God. You will be encouraged, uplifted and challenged to live a Godly life. If you are unable to attend in person, please navigate to: Christ Community Church of Blackstone You Tube and join us as we live stream the service. Telecast begins at 9:25 a.m.

Notes from Pastor Joe: A New Year could be a New You! As the decorations come down and the excitement of Christmas fades into memory, the new year often arrives with a quieter question: Now what? Many of us respond with resolutions—promises to eat better, do better, or be better. While these goals can be worthwhile, they often rely solely on our own strength, which can fade as quickly as the holiday cheer. A new year invites reflection, not just on habits, but on the deeper direction of our lives and what truly brings lasting hope and purpose.

This year, I invite readers to consider a resolution that reaches beyond self-improvement: Opening your heart to God through faith in Jesus Christ. The message of Christmas does not end on December 25—it points to a Savior who offers forgiveness, renewal, and a personal relationship that transforms lives from the inside out. In a world full of uncertainty, Jesus offers peace, purpose, and hope that does not expire with the calendar. Perhaps the most meaningful change this new year could begin with a simple step of faith. God Bless. Pastor Joe Overly

Pastor Joe is available to meet by appointment. Please phone or email: Email: pastor.joe@cccob.org or phone: 508-883-7885.

Visit our website at <http://www.cccob.org> or our Facebook page at "Christ Community Church of Blackstone" to learn more about us!



How Martin Luther King Became an American Hero

by Elizabeth McGeough

Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight for equality did not end with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In his last years, King's focus shifted toward achieving economic equality and combating poverty in the United States, denouncing the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, and contending with the rise of The Black Power Movement.

Although King is increasingly thought to be THE Black leader of his time, King tried not to gain too much attention after the Montgomery Bus Boycott ended. While King moved cautiously, southern black college students organized sit-in protests during the 1960's. King sympathized with the student movement and spoke at the founding meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April 1960, but he was soon criticized by SNCC activists who were determined to be independent from King. Conflicts between King and younger militants were also evident when both the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and SNCC assisted the Albany (Georgia) Movement's campaign of mass protests during December of 1961 and the summer of 1962.

King did not achieve many of his objectives in Albany and recognized the need to organize a successful protest campaign separate from the SCLC and SNCC. During the spring of 1963, King and his staff guided mass demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. Clashes between black demonstrators and police using police dogs and fire hoses generated newspaper headlines throughout the world. In June, President Kennedy reacted to the Birmingham protests and the obstinacy of segregationist Alabama Governor George Wallace by agreeing to push Congress for broad civil rights legislation (which resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Resulting mass demonstrations in many communities came to a high point in a march on August 28, 1963, that attracted more than 250,000 protesters to Washington, D. C. During the year following the March, King's public recognition grew as he became Time Magazine's Man of the Year and, in December 1964, the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

However, King was limited in resources due to divisions among blacks, and also by continued resistance he had from national political leaders. FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, increased his efforts to undermine King's leadership in 1967 as urban racial violence escalated and then King had criticized American intervention in the Vietnam war. He began to lose much support from white liberals, and his relations with the Lyndon Johnson administration were at a low point by 1968.

On April 4, 1968, while seeking to assist a garbage workers' strike in Memphis, Martin Luther King was assassinated on the balcony of his hotel room. Although Martin Luther King was a strong leader, he was considered too controversial for his time. It wouldn't be until later, that this man would become a visionary for all people.

"If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long... Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize—that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards—that's not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school...

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others.

I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody.

I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question.

I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry.

And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked...

I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison...

that I tried to love and serve humanity.

Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice... for peace... for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter... But I just want to leave a committed life behind. And that's all I want to say."

Excerpted from a sermon delivered on Feb 4, 1968 at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

As Other States Cut Taxes for 2026, Massachusetts Doubles Down on High-Cost Status Quo

Wall Street Journal Highlights Growing Tax Divide as Beacon Hill Falls Further Behind

BOSTON — As nine states ring in 2026 with lower income tax rates, Massachusetts continues to move in the opposite direction, clinging to policies that make the Commonwealth less competitive, less affordable, and less attractive to workers and employers.

In a New Year's Eve editorial, The Wall Street Journal praised some states such as Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, and Nebraska for enacting permanent income tax rate cuts rather than temporary rebates. The editorial warned that high-tax states like Massachusetts and New York are "constantly grasping for more of other people's money," accelerating interstate migration and economic decline.

"While other states are cutting income taxes to attract workers, retirees, and investment, Massachusetts is busy doing the opposite. Beacon Hill has at times paid lip service to our declining competitiveness, but its actions tell a very different story," said Paul Diego Craney, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance.

According to the Journal, Ohio will enter 2026 with a flat 2.75 percent income tax rate, down from more than 5 percent a decade ago. Nebraska, Kentucky, Georgia, and several others are also cutting rates or moving toward flatter tax systems. In total, 14 states will soon have a single-rate income tax, and nine states will impose no tax at all on wage income.

Massachusetts, by contrast, recently adopted a surtax on income over \$1 million and continues to advance costly mandates that raise the cost of living and doing business.

"These states understand a basic truth Beacon Hill refuses to accept: lower marginal tax rates encourage work, reward productivity, and keep people from leaving. High taxes don't just punish success. They drive it away," noted Craney.

The diverging paths have real consequences. Businesses weigh tax burdens when deciding where to expand or relocate, families consider taxes when choosing where to settle down, and retirees on fixed incomes are especially sensitive to finding states that take less of their savings. Those pressures are no longer theoretical for Massachusetts. As the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance recently highlighted in response to New Hampshire lawmakers promoting their state's no-tax advantage, neighboring states are actively marketing themselves as better alternatives while Beacon Hill gives employers and residents every reason to look elsewhere.

Voters in Massachusetts will soon have an opportunity to begin reversing this trend.

"A successful income tax reduction ballot question would be a clear signal that Massachusetts is ready to rejoin the national conversation on growth and affordability. If lawmakers won't follow the successful examples set by other states, voters should lead," said Craney.

The Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance urged State House leaders to take note of the growing national consensus around lower, flatter taxes and warned that continued inaction will only deepen the Commonwealth's competitive disadvantage.

"Other states are planning for growth in 2026. Massachusetts is planning to stand still, and taxpayers are paying the price," closed Craney.

Scouting News

by Matt Catalano

The Cub Scouts of Pack 3144 Blackstone/Millville have been busy working on so many fun adventures! The Pack recently explored the natural phenomenon known as Purgatory Chasm. They learned about hiking safety as well as plants and animals that are known to live in the area. In December, they spent the night on the USS Massachusetts along with their senior co-parts of Troop 1 Boy Scouts. While they were there they learned about the history of the ship and explored every inch of the battleship. The Cubs celebrated with a fun Holiday Party full of ornament making, hot cocoa bar, and even a visit from SANTA! They then finished off the season by donating Christmas Wreaths door to door at the Blackstone Senior Housing developments!

Troop 1 Boy Scouts were not going to be outdone. The Scouts spent a chilly weekend camping out in 25 degree weather and celebrating their annual "Scouts" giving. The boys cooked Trashcan Turkeys with all the fixings. The Troop then held a pancake breakfast on December 14th with all proceeds donated to the newly established Youth Ministry at Divine Mercy Parish! Next up for the young men of Troop 1 is the annual Klondike Derby at Buckhill Scout Reservation with a "lock-in" gaming night overnigher to build friendship and brotherhood.

Troop 1 has seen TWO Scouts finish their Eagle Scout Projects. James Walsh built information kiosks along a 5-mile trail at the George B Parker Woodland Reserve in Coventry, Rhode Island. Kevin Burgess chose to rehabilitate the deck outside the Hartnett MS lunch room. Both projects were designed, budgeted and managed by the respective scouts and serve to better the community they reside in. Congrats to all their hard work!

The Scouts of Blackstone/Millville would like to give an enormous THANK YOU to our community. Over the past year you all have helped us collect over 6000 LBS of food for the Blackstone Millville Food Pantry, raise much needed money for youth of Divine Mercy Parish, and volunteered over 350 collective hours in service and conservation for the community! It's because of our amazing community that we are afforded such a thing.... THANK YOU!



Thank You to all our residents for your continued Support!

Blackstone Millville Food Pantry



Divine Mercy Parish Hall, St. Paul Street, Blackstone

Thanks to the generosity of our communities, we assist approximately 100 families each month.

January 2026 Food Pantry Needs

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Instant potatoes | Shampoo |
| Canned pasta | Toothpaste |
| Cereal | Laundry/dish detergent |
| Brownie mix | Body wash |
| Grape jelly/fluff | Deodorant |
| Pork & beans | Toilet paper |
| Pudding cups | Tissues |

Your \$DONATION IS NEVER TOO SMALL!

Mail your check to: BM Food Pantry-Ann Lesperance,
PO Box 738, Millville, MA 01529

Memorial Donations in lieu of flowers do consider making a donation to the B-M Food Pantry in memory of your loved one.

Hours: Tuesdays - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Saturdays - 10:00 am - 11:00 am

For information contact
Ann at 508-883-6873

Blackstone Millville Food Pantry is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.



Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com



Over 72 years of Service to the Community!

Oscar J. Ryan Agency
Ryan Tax Consultants
Jerome M. Ryan EA
Proprietor

774-573-5834

email:ojrins@comcast.net

Homeowner's Insurance

Cancelled by your Insurance Company?
Call us today,
to see how we can help!

Personal Tax Returns
call, text or email
for an Appointment

EFILE & DIRECT DEPOSIT
at NO additional charges
Confidentiality Assured!
Available all year

5/2025

Blackstone's Window On The Past

Anna's Sad Tale

© 2026 Helen Murray

Anna Garrity was born in Ireland in the year 1856. She was the daughter of Ellen and John Garrity. Her parents immigrated to America when she was a small child. At that time, mill owner Welcome Farnum was advertising for Irish families relocating to America to work in his mills. He promised employment and the chance for a better life. Farnum knew that if he could get entire families to move to Blackstone, he would have a more stable work force.

Anna's father was employed in Farnum's mills and by the age of fourteen, Anna also was sent to work in the mills. It seems that at some point in 1870, Anna was reprimanded for a minor infraction of the factory rules. There were many rules, and the mill with its noise, dust and rigid schedule must have been confusing for the young girl. It was likely a minor infraction with only a warning as Anna was allowed to continue working.

Work began in the mills at six in the morning and continued until 6 at night. In the winter, workers went in while it was still dark and left in the dark. Sometimes they had to work overtime with no expectation of overtime pay. In July 18, 1870, Anna violated another rule. The young girl was told to go home and not come back!

The sad little girl could not bear the thought of facing her parents and telling



Photo of Saranac Mill, formerly Welcome Farnum's Mammoth Mill. Photo courtesy of The Blackstone Historical Museum.

them she had lost her job. Instead, Anna went to the canal that powered the mill and jumped in! She didn't know how to swim and jumped to her death on July 20, 1870.

When she didn't return home at the usual time, her parents and neighbors set out to look for her. Her hat was found by the side of the canal and her body was retrieved from the water.

No record of a funeral or burial has been found. It appears Anna would have been denied a religious service because of her suicide. No grave location has been found, and it is likely the girl was buried by the town in a pauper's grave. A sad ending for a young girl whose life ended in such a cruel way.

NASA's Day of Remembrance

NASA's Day of Remembrance is observed annually on the last Thursday of January and this year will be marked on January 22. Space exploration is perilous, yet scientists and astronauts accept this challenge bravely, while furthering the cause of exploration and discovery. This day commemorates the members of NASA's family who gave up their lives to advance the cause of space discovery. These include the crew members of the space missions Apollo 1,

Challenger, Columbia, and the tragedy of Apollo 1, which occurred 59 years ago. Three of the four tragedies – the Apollo 1 test capsule fire in 1967, the Challenger space shuttle explosion minutes after take-off in 1986, and the Columbia space shuttle failure during re-entry in 2003, all occurred in the same calendar week, decades apart.

The Day of Remembrance is not only for the NASA "family"; it invites the public to pause, think about the risks of spaceflight, and remember those who gave everything to help humanity reach farther.



Local Mortgage Lending. Trusted Guidance.

Whether you're buying your next home, building your dream house, or refinancing, UniBank's local mortgage lenders are here to help.

We'll put our expertise to work for you – offering personalized guidance and making the mortgage process feel a little less overwhelming and a lot more approachable. From your first home to your forever home – we're here to help.

UNIBANK

Connecting all offices: 1.800.578.4270
www.unibank.com

Let's Connect!

Visit unibank.mymortgage-online.com or scan the QR code to connect with one of our trusted lenders today.



Member FDIC · NMLS #583135 *Homeowners insurance required. Subject to credit approval. Other terms, fees, and conditions may apply.

RYAN LAW OFFICE



A General Law Practice

- ~ Mortgage Closings
- ~ Real Estate Law
- ~ Wills, Estates, Trusts
- ~ Land Use, Zoning
- ~ Form Corporations and Limited Liability Companies

181 Main Street
Blackstone, MA 01504
508-883-6000
Christopher J. Ryan
www.RyanLawOffice.com

DYAN'S

BARBER - STYLIST

Men • Women • Children

43 Farm Street • Blackstone, MA



25th Anniversary! Diane Ryan

508.883.9917 *By Appointment Only!*

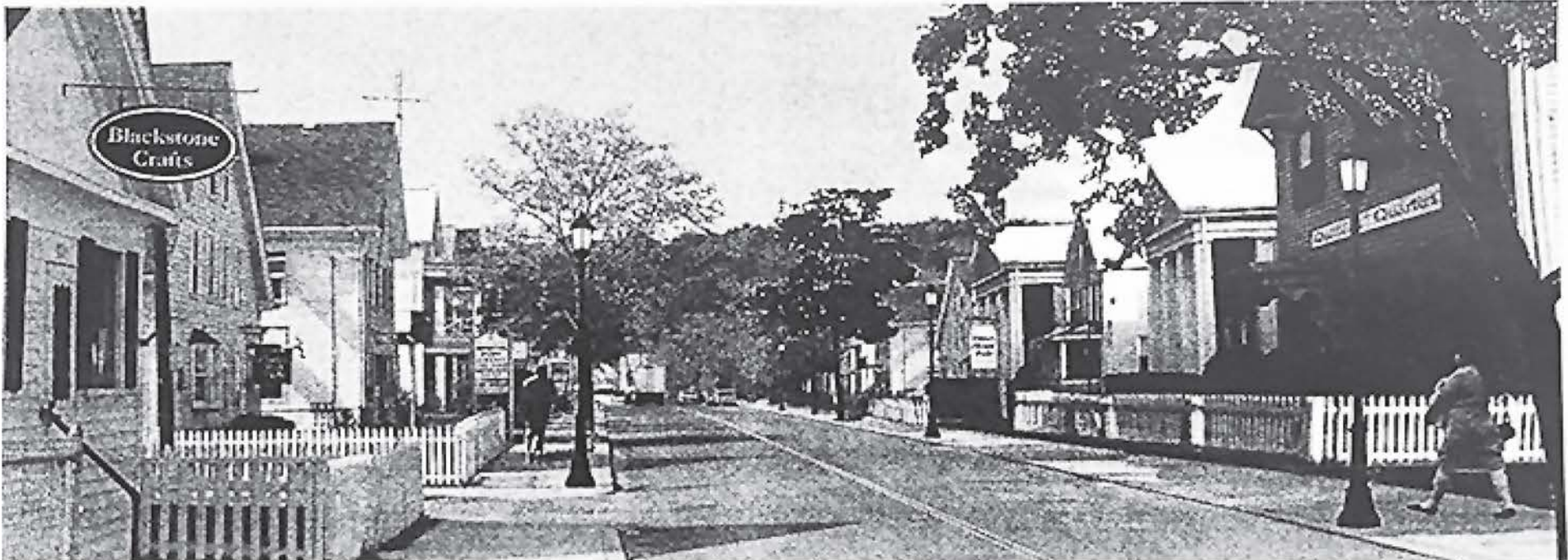
DSJ Heating & Air Conditioning LLC

401-692-1590

684 Rathbun Street • Blackstone MA
dsjheatandair@gmail.com



OIL HEAT SERVICE
DUCTLESS AND DUCTED HEAT PUMPS
TUNE-UP AND MAINTENANCE ON ALL SYSTEMS
CENTRAL AIR INSTALLS AND REPAIRS



Invest in Our Community, Shop Local!



Blackstone Enlightener January 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

ANIMAL ARTS

Professional Dog & Cat Grooming

New Location!

397 Cass Ave.
Woonsocket, R.I.



508-876-9900

Owner: Kim Giguere

P.A.C.C.

Polish American Citizen Club

6 Mill Street, Blackstone, MA

(Follow Farnum St. to Mill St. then through Arches)

EVERY SPORTS SEASON

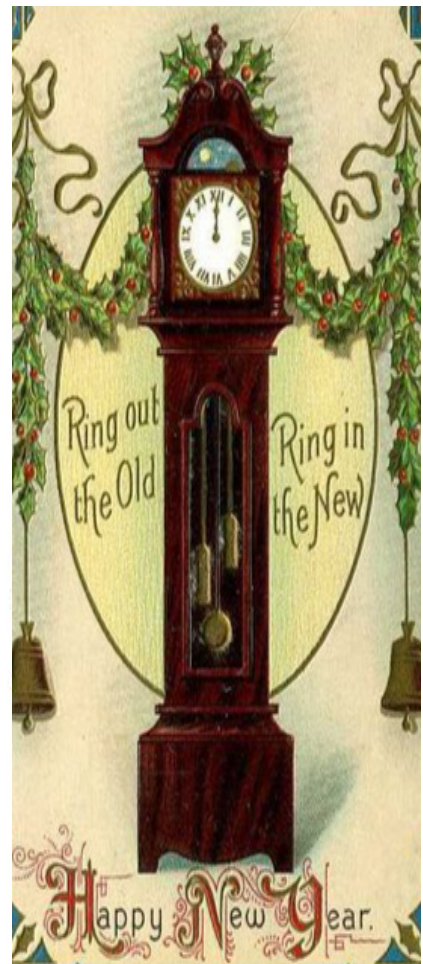


HEADQUARTERS!

Open daily at Noon!

"Proudly Supporting Our Community Since 1911"

Public is Welcome



COPELAND ROOFING CORP.

ALL TYPES OF ROOFING - REPAIRS

Covering Blackstone and neighboring communities for over 35 years!

1-800-286-3684

Richard Copeland
Proprietor

MA Reg# 177070
CSL # 100413
RI # 33729

BLACKSTONE Automotive

Est. 1986

700 Rathbun St • Blackstone • MA

COMPLETE AUTO & TRUCK REPAIRS

COMPUTER DIAGNOSTICS, GENERAL REPAIRS
FACTORY SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE ON ALL
DOMESTIC, FOREIGN & LIGHT DUTY TRUCKS

ASE CERTIFIED MASTER TECHNICIAN & I1 EMISSIONS CERTIFIED

508-883-6811

Pre-Owned Vehicles For Sale

Monday -Thursday from 8-5p.m.; Friday 8-4p.m.

www.blackstoneautomotive.com

Find us on Facebook