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Volume 32, Issue 12

Blackstone's Hometown Newspaper Since 1993

MAY 2026

## Blackstone Memorial Day Program

Residents are invited to join local officials and veterans as the town observes Memorial Day with a wreath-laying procession on Sunday, May 24, 2026, beginning at Town Hall at Noon and concluding with an official ceremony at the Civil War Monument.

Participants will gather at Town Hall and move to each monument for wreath placement in a designated order.

Wreath laying schedule:

1. WWII Monument - Town Hall
2. Veterans' Monument - Mendon and Main
3. WWI Monument - Town Common
4. All Services Monument
5. 1:00 PM Monument Square - Civil War Monument (official closing ceremony)

The event concludes at the Civil War Monument with an official ceremony recognizing the meaning of Memorial Day and honoring service members who made the ultimate sacrifice. All are welcome. Those planning to attend should anticipate brief traffic impacts near the monuments during the procession and consider walking if possible. Visitors are also encouraged to bring small American flags to display along the route. For additional details, including the start time and any weather-related updates, residents may contact Blackstone Town Hall Memorial Day Committee at Memorialday@townof-blackstone.org.

## Pedorella and Gagne BMR's Academic Elite



Marissa Pedorella



Miya Gagne

BMR's Elite see page 3

## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

May 26, 2026

7:30 PM at  
BMR High School  
Auditorium

You can view the Warrant  
Articles on the town website  
under the Town Town Clerk's  
Department.



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Blackstone Historical Museum

## Historical Notes

by Hellen Murray

Davis Bates, singer and storyteller will be appearing at the Blackstone Historical Museum. Bates is a Parent Choice Award Winner and his performance is suitable for all ages. The program begins at 1p.m. on Saturday, May 2nd, 2026. There is no admission charge and light refreshments will be served following the performance.

Linda Suss recently donated citations and awards presented to her mother, the late Doris Suss. Doris was well known in town. She became the first woman to hold the position of town clerk in 1971. Doris was also a member of the town charter commission. The Historical Commission is grateful for these reminders of Doris.

Besides the performance on May 2nd, the museum is open to the public every Thursday from noon until 3 p.m. One more Saturday in May will be opening on May 16th. May 16th is Armed Forces Day and a perfect time to visit the museum's military room that has items of interest from the Civil War to present day. This room is set aside in recognition of the Blackstone men and women who served their country.



## From Chief Gilmore's Desk

### ATV Complaints Increase

With the warmer weather approaching, our department is starting to receive the yearly complaints of ATV's riding on private property or disturbing the peace of their neighbors. Please remember that ATV use is strictly regulated by the Environmental Police and by our department.

We will be conducting ATV enforcement efforts all summer. Our areas of coverage will be the entire town, but we will focus more directly on areas that we constantly receive calls about. These include Edgewater Drive, the old airlines, the fields off Elm St (Veterans Park), the old dump area off Farm Street, and the new dump area off Chestnut Street. ATV use is strictly prohibited on any town owned land (Veterans Park, town land at the Rocco Drive and Federal Street intersection, recycling center area, etc.). We encourage all ATV riders to heed the laws that have been passed that strictly limit ATV operation in Massachusetts. Our enforcement officers will be looking for written permission documents, registrations/inspections documents, and age verification documents.

### No Dogs Allowed!

Blackstone Police Department would like to remind residents that **dogs are not allowed on school grounds or in posted recreation areas.** The school department has taken steps to increase the signage indicating these bans, and we would like to reinforce these restrictions in advance.

Chapter 63 of the Town of Blackstone by-laws specifically addresses these areas and outlines the fines that can be imposed if these by-laws are violated. Please respect your neighbors and fellow residents by adhering to these prohibitions. If you

are on school grounds and the by-law is being violated, feel free to call our department so we can respond accordingly.

### Spring Scams Just Say No

Residents should be aware that scammers seem to get more active as the weather warms up. With the change of seasons, new scams pop up involving such things as yard cleanup, mowing, general landscaping, etc. It is generally perpetrated by men asking residents, often the elderly, if they would like this type of work done. They often try to get cash in advance. Or they do a minimal amount of work and demand money before the job is completed.

Always be on guard when someone you do not know knocks on your door offering services. Demand to see their proof of insurance and business license, and never pay cash. Use established, well referred contractors. When in doubt, call the police right away so we can further investigate the situation. It can be tempting to accept the offer of help from a stranger that is "down on their luck" or "just trying to make a few bucks" but don't do it.

Also, it's not just the scammer that knocks on your door that citizens need to be aware of. Phone scammers will try to con people out of money in dozens of devious ways. There are some red flags to listen for, though. Whenever someone asks for personal information over the phone (social security number, dates of birth, bank information) you can almost guarantee it's a scam. Legitimate businesses will never do this unless you, the customer, initiate the call. Another big red flag is Western Union. If someone calls and asks you to wire money (a relative is in jail; the IRS is after you; they sent you a check for the wrong amount) NEVER do this. The best bet is to hang up the phone. If you're uncertain, call the police.

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

**Memorial Day**  
**MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND**  
**SUNDAY MAY 24th**  
Starting at 1PM

**Meat Raffle & Gift Raffles**  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize, Outdoor Stowaway Rocker/Chair  
\$250 Gift Certificate/Butcher Brothers

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize, 2 in 1 Firepit & Grill  
\$150 Gift Certificate Butcher Brothers

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize, A Case of Beer  
\$100 Gift Certificate Butcher Brothers

Food for Sale - Hot Dogs, Burgers  
& Sausage Sandwiches

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# BMR'S Valedictorian Elites

## Marissa Pedorella

In a graduating class filled with accomplished students, Marissa Pedorella stands out, representing both academic excellence and meaningful contribution to her school community. Known for her focus, ambition, and curiosity, she has distinguished herself through both her achievements and the impact she has made.

Marissa's academic journey reflects rigor and curiosity. In AP courses, she developed strong independent learning habits and confidence in mastering complex material, while in Spanish she built fluency and earned the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. What sets her apart is her ability to balance this drive with a full and active life, as her days extend beyond the classroom with athletics, leadership roles, work, and service.

A natural leader, Marissa has taken on key roles as Treasurer of the National Honor Society, Solicitor for Student Council, and Assistant Editor of the school newspaper. She also created and coordinated a tutoring program that expanded support for her peers. Whether leading at work, stepping up when school staff asks her to help someone or mentoring teammates, she brings confidence and initiative to every role.

Her commitment to others is evident through her service, including volunteering at the Blackstone Food Pantry, mentoring younger students, and coaching for Special Olympics, where she combines her passion for swimming with supporting others.

Swimming has been a cornerstone of her high school experience. A varsity athlete since freshman year, she has competed at the state level and earned recognition as a Central Mass and Telegram & Gazette All-Star, reflecting her perseverance and competitive drive.

Reflective and goal-driven, Marissa has grown in learning to balance high expectations with perspective. Inspired by Albert Einstein's words, "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity," she approaches challenges as opportunities for growth.

She plans to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, inspired by her hospital internship experiences and the impact of compassionate patient care.

Marissa Pedorella leaves behind a legacy of excellence, leadership, and service. She has consistently pushed herself to achieve at a high level, making a strong and lasting impact on her school community.

## Miya Gagne

Miya Gagne: Valedictorian of the Class of 2026. Throughout her high school career, Miya has demonstrated exceptional intellectual ability and perseverance, consistently challenging herself through rigorous AP and dual enrollment courses. By excelling in these academic environments, she has proven not only her strong work ethic but also her readiness for college-level work.

Beyond the classroom, she has made a meaningful impact as a student leader. She currently serves as Secretary of both the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils (MASC) and the Capital District MASC, where her voice, organization, and commitment have helped strengthen student leadership across the region. She is also an active member of Student Council, National Honor Society (NHS), and Mock Trial, and dedicated four years to the volleyball program, demonstrating teamwork, discipline, and commitment.

Over the years, she has also shown personal growth, stepping out of her comfort zone, coming out of her shell, and building connections with peers and the school community.

This fall, she plans to pursue a double major in government and a space-related field, an ambitious path that highlights both her intellectual curiosity and her determination to make a meaningful impact.

We congratulate Miya on this incredible achievement and look forward to all she will accomplish in the future!



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# Blackstone COA

Senior Center Updates

**Tiziana Milano COA Director 508-876-5135**

Hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Fri: 8:30AM – 12 Noon RSVP in person at the Blackstone COA, by phone (508) 883-1500 ex 151, or via email KCoffey@TownOfBlackstone.Org.

Please RSVP for Meals and Trips at least one week in advance, see newsletter for menu. Suggested Meal Donation: Tri-Valley Days: \$3 Other Meals: \$4.

Please Note: The Senior Center will be Closed on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.

### Weekly Programs & Activities:

Mondays: 10am: Pound Fitness, Game Day. 12pm – 4pm: Artist Alley

Tuesdays: 9:15am: Strength & Stretch. 10:10am: Chair Yoga. 11am: Walking Club. 12pm: Lunch. 1:15pm: Strength Circuit.

Wednesdays: 9:30am: Coffee Club, Tap Dance. 10:30am: Line Dance. 11:30am: Meditation. 12pm: Lunch. 1pm: BINGO. 2:15pm: Zumba.

Thursdays: 9am: Tai Chi Beginner. 9:30am: Cribbage. 10am: Tai Chi Intermediate. 11am: Journey Through Grief. 12pm: Lunch. 1pm: Aging Gracefully.

Fridays: 10am: Mah Jong, Pound Fitness. 9am: Walking Club.

### May Happenings:

May 1st: MahJong Party: Snacks & Fun to celebrate National MahJong Day a day late.

May 4th: 11:45 AM: Join Mrs. Gorden for tea and a lively commentary on her recent shopping trip to Boston, circa 1908! Fashion, corsetry, and the headlines of the day makes for wonderful gossip. RSVP Required. (Made possible in part by the Blackstone & MA Cultural Council).

May 6th: 9:30AM Bus: Travel Breakfast: Gram's Griddle & Grill of Uxbridge.

May 7th: 2 PM, RSVP by May 5th: Craft with Celest: Upcycled Decorative Garden Stakes.

May 11th: 10:30AM Bus: Mystery Lunch "Best Seats in the Stadium" American Family Restaurant. Pizzas \$16+; Sammies & Subs: \$15-\$19; Mains: \$15-\$30. RSVP by May 5th.

May 12th: 10 AM; Presentation "The 5 Wishes." Ensure your wishes about the end of your life are known and honored. The presentation includes a workbook, practical steps to record and communicate your wishes, and ways you can help your loved ones avoid guesswork and guilt when the time comes.

May 13th: 12 Noon: Join us for a POTLUCK LUNCH. RSVP by May 12th.

May 18th: 9:30 AM Bus: Bus to Adventure:

Mini-Golf at Trombetta's Farm & Lunch at 99 Restaurant. Trombetta's has been a family-friendly destination since 1978. The ice cream is made fresh each week and comes in about 40 flavors – plus frozen yogurt, sugar-free, vegan options and more! The Mini-Golf Course is under a roof – heated on the coldest days – and decorated with flowing fountains and lush greenery. Trip is Rain or Shine, Mini Golf is \$9 per person for 18 holes. RSVP by May 8th.

May 19th: 3-4:30 PM: BMR Students Hosts a Senior Citizen Tea! Come as you are to the BMR Cafeteria and enjoy your choice of teas and handmade snacks, and performances by both the Chorus and Drama Club. RSVP Required with the Blackstone Senior Center by May 14th.

May 20th: 11 AM: Medication Safety Presentation from the NA College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences. This presentation will cover proper medication use, understanding prescription labels, avoiding drug interactions, recognizing side effects; and tips on organizing medications, safe storage, and proper disposal.

May 26th: 11 AM: Dan Kirouac's "The Music of McCartney: The World's Most Successful Songwriter" This program, delivered on piano and vocals, will explore the music of Paul McCartney from the Beatles years through Wings and into the '80s, highlighted by informational commentary. Dan Kirouac is a 40-year veteran of the New England music scene, and has appeared in two long-term Beatles tribute bands from 2000 to 2022. Funded in part by the MA & Blackstone Cultural Councils. RSVP by May 18th.

May 26th: Birthday Lunch: Join us for Pasta Bar with all the toppings, and to celebrate our friends with May Birthdays!

May 28th: 12:30 PM Mosquito and Tick Bite Lab Talk: Learn about ticks and mosquitos-their habitats, behaviors and role in nature- while discovering simple ways to stay safe for ours.

### June Save-The-Dates:

June 1st: Movie Monday.

June 3rd: Travel Breakfast.

June 4th: Lunch w/ School Building Committee.

June 8th: Mystery Lunch.

June 9th: Trip to Hopkinton Arts Center.

June 10th: Memorial Butterfly Release.

June 16: Bday Bash & Concert.

June 18th: I'm Too Old to Change, & Other Therapy Myths.

June 22nd: Pop Up Beer Can Museum.

June 23: AARP Presents: 6 Pillars of Brain Health.

# Millville COA

**Tina Cook COA Director**

**508-883-3523**

The hours for the Center are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9-3.

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.

### MONDAY:

May 11th: Senior Club Meeting and Lunch 11:30 am. Entertainment: Robert Black, Elvis Impersonator 12:30 am. If you can't come for lunch, join us for the entertainment!

This is sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council and the Millville Cultural Council.

TRIP: May 15th: Manicure/Pedicure at BVT. Bus leaves at 10:00 am. \$3-\$15 for manicure; \$15 for spa pedicure; tips not included. \$5.00 donation for the bus ride.

May 18th: Craft Class – Key Chain Wristlet, 10 am.

Mothers' Day Tea, 12:00 pm. With entertainment. The class is sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council and the Millville Cultural Council.

May 25th: Senior Center Closed. Memorial Day.

### TUESDAY:

May 5th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm.

May 12th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm.

May 19th: Line Dance 9:30 am, Pitch 10:45 am, Chair Yoga 1:30 pm.

May 26th: 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:

May 7th: BINGO is the first Thursday of the month at 1 pm. Come for the fun and snacks. Lunch is at noon \$3.

May 14th: Painting starts at 10 am. Call 508-883-3523 to register - \$5.00. Lunch at noon, \$3. 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.

May 21st: Lunch at noon, \$3. COA Meeting at 1 pm.

May 28th: Movie: "50 to 1" as about a long shot 2009 Kentucky Derby winner. Wear your best Derby hat as we head for the races! Lunch at noon, \$3. May Birthday Celebration at 1 pm. Come Join Us.

### 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.

The Millville Senior Center has a drop off box to dispose of unused or expired prescription and non-prescription drugs. We are also collecting used eyeglasses for the Lions Club. Feel free to come in to drop off these items. Medical equipment is available for loan, such as wheelchairs, canes, and shower chairs. Please call for more information. 508-883-3523.

Thanks to Holliston Sand and Gravel for their generous donation!

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

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FREE ESTIMATES

## WANTED SENIOR DIRECTOR

The Millville Senior Center is looking for a new Director as of July 1, 2026. This is a part-time position 18 hours per week.

If you are interested in applying for this job, please send a copy of your resume to the following email: sr.center@millvillema.org. You can ask for a copy of the job requirements at that time.

# Annual Spring Plant Sale

By Mary Jane Benjamin

It's that time of year for planting. That being said, come down to Divine Mercy Parish, 48 St. Paul Street for Saint Vincent de Paul's Annual Spring Plant Sale, Saturday, May 16th from 10 am until 5 pm and Sunday, May 17th from 7:30 am until Noon.

We will have hanging plants, patio plants, an assortment of flats with vegetables, and flowers, geraniums, and small and medium oval planters with an arrangement of flowers in them, good for the cemetery.

All proceeds help Saint Vincent de Paul help people and families in need in our town of Blackstone.

Come and see what we have and meet new people while you get the plant to start your gardens.

## COA Fundraiser

The Friends of the Blackstone Council on Aging is selling a ceramic Patriotic coffee mug (11 oz.) to celebrate the country's Semiquincentennial Anniversary. The cost is \$10.00. You can purchase at these events.

May 9th---District of One event at BMR High School from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

May 16th---Stop & Shop, Bellingham, Mass from 10:00 am-1:00 p.m.

May 16th & 17th---Divine Mercy Parish, 48 St. Paul Street in conjunction with Saint Vincent de Paul Annual Spring Plant. Saturday from 10:00- 5 p.m.; Sunday, 7:30am-Noon. Monday thru Thursday from 11:am-1:00p.m at the Blackstone Senior Center, 15 St. Paul Street. See ad on page 12.

All proceeds go to enhance the welfare of our Senior Citizens age 60+.



L-R: John and Sharon Douglas parents of graduate John Anthony with Blackstone Fire Chief Kevin Roy. submitted photo

## Douglas Graduates from Academy

by Fire Chief Kevin Roy

John Anthony Douglas, a lifelong resident of Blackstone, proudly graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy as a member of Class 337 on Friday, March 20. He was one of 34 recruits to complete the demanding full-time recruit program, which provides the foundational training required for a career in today's fire service.

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's program is known for its rigorous, hands-on instruction, preparing recruits to respond to a wide range of emergencies. During the course, Douglas received training in fire suppression, search and rescue operations, ladder work, hazardous materials awareness, and emergency response procedures. The academy emphasizes both physical endurance and classroom learning, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to serve their communities safely and effectively.

Douglas is a graduate of Blackstone-Millville Regional High School and has long been committed to serving his hometown. After completing

his Emergency Medical Technician--Basic certification, he began his career with the Blackstone Fire Department as a full-time EMT/ firefighter. His dual training in firefighting and emergency medical services allows him to respond to both fire-related incidents and medical emergencies, an increasingly important role in modern public safety.

Douglas expressed enthusiasm about beginning his career and serving the residents of Blackstone. He also looks forward to continuing his professional development in the fire service and has set a goal of advancing his medical training to become a paramedic in the future.

Douglas brings with him a strong sense of community pride and a commitment to public service. His graduation from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy represents not only a personal achievement but also an investment in the safety and well-being of the Blackstone community.

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com



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# BVTi Open House May 6<sup>th</sup> Tours Available for Prospective Students

UPTON – Adults (18+) and recent high school graduates interested in launching a career in the skilled trades are invited to attend the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi) Open House on Wednesday, May 6, at 6:00 p.m.

The event offers an opportunity to tour the facility at 65 Pleasant Street in Upton and learn how BVTi supports adult learners. Attendees will meet staff, tour training spaces, speak with instructors, and explore 200-hour, hands-on training programs in HVAC, plumbing, welding, CNC machine operation, and electrical.

Attendees will also learn about program requirements, industry certifications, and how BVTi connects students to employment opportunities. Information will be available on application support and grant-funded training opportunities, which may allow eligible students to gain valuable skills and certifications at no cost.

Those interested in attending should reserve a spot by emailing [info@bvtadulthood.org](mailto:info@bvtadulthood.org).

# Mother's Day Around the World

by Elizabeth McGeough

Mother's Day is a special day celebrated worldwide to honor and appreciate mothers, grandmothers, and motherly figures for their love, care, and dedication to their families. Although the date and traditions may differ, the sentiment behind the holiday is universal.

In the United States, Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of May. It's a day to show gratitude and to celebrate the mothers in our lives. The holiday was first celebrated in 1908, when Anna Jarvis held a memorial for her deceased mother. In 1914 Jarvis' efforts established Mothers Day as a national, official holiday.

In the United Kingdom, Mother's Day is known as "Mothering Sunday", and is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent. It has its roots in the 16th century when people returned to their "mother church" for special services.

In many other countries, such as Australia, Canada, and India, Mother's Day is also celebrated on the second Sunday of May. In China, Mother's Day is combined as well with International Women's Day (March 8th). In Ethiopia, "Antrosht" is a three-day celebration in the fall to honor mothers with outdoor festivities.

No matter when or how it is celebrated, Mother's Day is a special day to recognize and thank mothers all over the world for their love and dedication. There are many ways to celebrate, but the most important thing is to spend time with your mother and honor her; let her know how much she is loved and appreciated.

Have you ever had someone in your life whose nurturing presence felt just like a mother's love, though not your biological parent? It's a perfect opportunity to honor those incredible women who have played a maternal role in your lives.

Do something in honor of these special women if you can't be with them; volunteer at a nursing home, hospice, or shelter; support mothers in need; visit seniors or isolated mothers; offer to babysit, help with household chores, or run errands to give moms a break.

Whatever you do, ensure that no mothers and motherly figures are forgotten. Happy Mother's Day! "To the world you are a mother, but to your family you are the world".

# Why Heart Disease Risk Rises in Midlife Women and What You Can Do About It

by Carol Archambault

For many women midlife brings on lots of changes... sleep disruptions, weight gain, brain fog and mood changes. But there is something often missing from the conversation —Your Heart.

Heart disease is the **#1 cause of death** in women, yet many of us are still concerned about breast cancer and osteoporosis; while those matter, the reality is this:

**Your cardiovascular risk rises significantly in perimenopause and menopause.**

**Why Does the Risk Increase In Midlife?**

As estrogen declines, your body undergoes changes, that directly impact heart health:

- \*Increased LDL ("bad cholesterol")
- \*Decreased HDL ("good cholesterol")
- \*Higher Blood Pressure
- \*Increased insulin resistance
- \*More abdominal fat (visceral fat)
- \*More inflammation

Estrogen once played a protective role in your cardiovascular system, that protection fades as estrogen declines.

**The Statistics That Women Need to Hear**

- \*1 in 3 women will die from heart disease
  - \*After menopause, a woman's risk of heart disease equals or exceeds a man's
  - \*Nearly 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable with lifestyle changes
- And yet, many women are never told this.

**Symptoms Don't Always Look The Same**

Heart disease in women can present differently than in men. It's not always the "chest pain" we hear about.

Women may experience:

- \* Unusual fatigue
- \*Shortness of breath
- \*Nausea or lightheadedness
- \*Jaw, neck or back pain
- \*Sleep disturbances

These symptoms are often dis-

missed or misdiagnosed.

**What You Can Start Doing Now?**

**1. Strength train consistently.** Muscle is metabolic gold in midlife. It improves insulin sensitivity, supports weight management and reduces cardiovascular risk.

**2. Walk daily.** Consistent movement supports heart health, circulation and reduces stress.

**3. Eat for your heart.**

- \*Leafy greens
- \*Berries
- \*Healthy fats (Olive oil, avocados and nuts)
- \*Omega 3 rich foods (salmon)

\*Fiber rich foods (Beans, oats, vegetables, chia seeds)

Reduce ultra processed foods and excess sugar, which drive up inflammation.

**4. Prioritize Sleep.** Poor sleep increases blood pressure, insulin resistance and inflammation.. all risk factors for heart disease.

**5. Manage Stress**

**What To Ask Your Doctor**

- \*Can we go beyond basic cholesterol and look at a full lipid panel?
- \*What is my fasting insulin level?
- \*Can we check my HbA1C and inflammation markers like CRP?
- \*How is my blood pressure trending over time?
- \* Based on my stage of menopause, how is my cardiovascular risk changing?

Remember, you are your own best advocate for your health – you know your body best. If something doesn't feel right, speak up!

You don't need to over complicate it, small changes can make a big impact on your health.

*Carol Archambault is a Certified Menopause Coaching Specialist who helps women navigate perimenopause and menopause through lifestyle, nutrition, strength training and mindset. You can reach her at 774-573-8030, email [carolarch23@gmail.com](mailto:carolarch23@gmail.com) or instagram [@Balance\\_in\\_midlife](https://www.instagram.com/Balance_in_midlife).*

## Saint Vincent dePaul Annual Spring Plant Sale



Spring has Sprung and  
it's time for planting.



Join us on May 16 & 17  
at Divine Mercy Parish, 48 St. Paul Street,  
in Blackstone for our annual plant sale.

Choose from an assortment of patio plants,  
hanging plants, flowers, geraniums, and  
your favorite vegetable flats. Small and  
medium cemetery planters.

Saturday, May 16th 10a.m. - 5p.m.  
Sunday, May 17th 7:30a.m. - Noon.

All proceeds help Saint Vincent de Paul  
support families in need in Blackstone.

*Thank you for your support!*



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# Parks & Rec Looking for Spring!

by Celeste Langlois

Thanks to everyone that came out to the Annual Easter Egg Hunt! It was a great event with a large number of egg seekers. The Easter Bunny had a wonderful time taking pictures with all the children!

We also want to thank all of our Town Cleaners that helped pick up trash during our Earth Day Event and special thanks to the Blackstone PACC for providing a fantastic lunch for our cleaners! We had so many people come out to pick up litter that we want to recognize them. They are: Gail and Kirk VanDyke, Joyce and Matt Bourgeois, Bob and Diana Gilbert, Isabella and Elizabeth Verrill, Stephanie, Alex, and Macie Waeger, Norma Laren, Andrew Gabrielson, Chris Raymond with Amber and Conner, Tina Brouillette-Smith with David, Reid, and Isabella, Zach and Noah Catalano, Sherman and Matt Lodge, Rahul, Hanish, and Aarvi Maniya, Gary, Maxon, and Huaying Wang, and Sarah, Brianna, and Harper McKiel, Adriana Salvias, and Tom

Bik. I apologize if I missed anyone or did a poor job with the spelling of your names!

Extra special thanks to Gerry Wetmore for travelling around town to pick up all the bags, rugs, car parts, traffic signs, chicken wire, and so much more!

Once our Blackstone Derby Days is done, we will be focusing on our Ice Cream Social happening in June. Watch our Facebook page for more information.

Other upcoming "Save The Date" events are listed below and we hope you'll join us:  
May 24 - Memorial Day Ceremonies at the monuments in Town - Check the Town Website for more information

May 26 - Annual Town Meetings

June 20 - Ice Cream Social

July 23, 24, 25, and 26 - Blackstone's 250th Semiquincentennial Celebration

Our meetings for May are on the 11th and 18th in the Main Meeting Room at the Municipal Center at 6:00 pm. Please join us!

# Spring Projects, Costly Mistakes: What Massachusetts Homeowners Should Know Before Hiring a Contractor

Spring brings longer days, warmer weather—and a long to do list for homeowners. Roof repairs, decks, additions, kitchens, and outdoor projects often move from "someday" to "right now." While spring is a great time to improve a home, it's also when many contractor disputes begin. Most legal problems don't come from bad intentions. They usually start with skipped steps. Here are some common contractor hiring mistakes—and how Massachusetts law affects them.

## Mistake #1: Not Having a Written Contract

In Massachusetts, home improvement contractors are generally required to provide a written contract for residential work. That contract should include the contractor's registration number, a clear description of the work, the total price, and payment terms. A written agreement protects both sides—but especially the homeowner if a dispute arises.

## Mistake #2: Paying Too Much Up Front

Massachusetts regulations limit how much a contractor can legally collect before work begins. Large upfront deposits are a red flag, particularly for smaller projects. Payments should be tied to progress, not promises. Once the money is gone, so is much of the homeowner's leverage.

## Mistake #3: Not Understanding Licensing vs. Registration

Many homeowners are surprised to learn that a Home Improvement Contractor (HIC) registration and a Construction Supervisor License (CSL) are not the same thing.

An HIC registration is required for many types of residential remodeling, but it has limits. A contractor with only an HIC registration cannot perform—or pull permits for—more complicated or structural work (for example, deck replacement).

A licensed Construction Supervisor is authorized to supervise and be responsible for more extensive construction, including structural alterations, additions, decks, and other work that requires a

building permit. For larger or more complex projects, homeowners should confirm that the contractor holds a valid CSL—not just an HIC registration.

## Mistake #4: Failing to Verify Insurance Coverage

Homeowners should also make sure the contractor carries proper insurance before work begins. This means more than taking the contractor's word for it. Homeowners should request a current certificate of insurance issued directly by the contractor's insurer. The certificate should list the homeowner's name and property address and show active general liability (and, if applicable, workers' compensation) coverage for the project. This provides important protection if there is property damage or an injury on the job.

## Mistake #5: Vague Descriptions of the Work

"Remodel the bathroom" or "replace the deck" sounds clear—until it isn't. Contracts should spell out materials, finishes, dimensions, and scope. Massachusetts law favors clarity, and vague language often leads to disputes that the homeowner loses in court.

## Mistake #6: Assuming Permits Are Optional

Many common spring projects require permits and inspections. Even if a contractor says they will "handle it," homeowners should confirm that permits are actually applied for and approved—and by someone legally authorized to do so. Unpermitted work can create serious issues when selling or refinancing a home.

Spring projects should add value—not headaches. A little caution on the front end can prevent major frustration later. Before the first hammer swings, ask questions, verify credentials, and make sure you know who is legally responsible for the work on your home.

*Attorney Christopher Ryan of Ryan Law Office has over 35 years of extensive experience with construction contract issues in both the residential and commercial fields. He can be found most days in his office at 181 Main Street, Blackstone, or see his website at: [www.ryanlawoffice.com](http://www.ryanlawoffice.com).*

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# Springtime at BMR

By Caitlin Juba  
BMR Correspondent

Spring is a busy time of year at BMR, especially for the graduating Class of 2026. Their high school experience comes to an end on Friday, May 29th when they graduate, but before that, there are lots of exciting things to look forward to for all grades.

Students were inducted into the National Honor Society Wednesday, April 29th. Those students are a mix of sophomores and juniors, including Kassidy Brinard, Charlotte Castonguay, Aubree Dufaut, Elizabeth Deziel, Ava Doyon, Brendan Folster, Sarah Korencsik, Joseph Lafayette, Gianna Larosee, Ruo Yan Lin, Hannah Lockwood, Maura McCourt, Natalia Morais, Carter Pacheco, Lilyana Pereira, Raquel Stockdale, Cassidy Sullivan and Eve Wing. In addition to the new inductees, current junior members will be taking over the senior officer positions and will hold those titles for the 2026-2027 school year. Clover Maloney will be President, Kaleb Nieber as Vice President, Jaclyn Phipps becomes Treasurer, Jocelyn Haggerty takes on Historian and Ella Reilly will be Secretary.

Prom is being held Friday, May 1st at Crystal Lake Golf Club located in Burrillville, Rhode Island. Juniors and seniors were able to purchase tickets for themselves and a guest if they chose to. The theme is Under The Lanterns, and students will be enjoying a vast buffet of foods followed by a night filled with pictures, dancing, and memories.

As for the Class of 2026, their banquet is going to be on May 20th, the same day they will be volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club to fulfill their graduation requirement. Their last official day of school will be one week before they graduate, which is Friday, May 22nd. On that day, they are welcome to decorate their cars for a parade through the parking lot, which families often line the sidewalks to watch. Then, everyone goes into the auditorium for a viewing of the Senior Slideshow, a display of what all the graduates are planning to do after high school.

The week after that will be an eventful one, with not only graduation but also their class trip to go white water rafting on May 27th as well as Awards Night on May 28th. Congratulations to the Class of 2026 and the BMR community is looking forward to celebrating.

One of the Middle School's old traditions, which is now being carried out at the high school,



This is the BMR eighth-grade group that went on the D.C. trip. They are pictured in front of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

was continued in April as the Eighth Graders had their annual trip to Washington, D.C.

From April 8-10, 48 eighth graders and five chaperones travelled to our nation's capital for a thought-provoking learning experience. Among the sites that were visited were the Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and The Holocaust Museum. Students also went to The National Archives to see the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and other foundational documents. Students also saw the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Students on the trip were Abbygail Santos, Adrianna Midgley, Adrien Membrino, Alexander Hebert, Ashley Schena, Benjamin Briar, Betty Stapleton, Brayden Gaudette, Brooke Visocchi, Brooklyn Lamoureux, Bryan Dow, Callum Reilly, Cameron Cades, Chase Johnson, Colton Croteau, Colton Luchuk, Corey Livingston, Dave Francis Drackett, Dayton Barrette, Dexter Therrien, Grayson Welch, Harrison Martin, Henry

McCourt, Jackson Ortiz Sacco, Jayden Cleveland, James Allen, Josiah Cotto, Josmeli Vallejo, Juliet Peterson, Kevin Burgess, Lacie-Lee Maloney, Liam Euglow, Logan Joyal, Logan Odoardi, Madison White, Mason Duquette, Mason Lanoie, Michaela Duffy, Noah Bouvier-Vito, Payton O'Neill, Riley Laberge, Ryan Correa, Samuel LaPlante, Savannah King, Savannah Perez, Tucker Laberge, Tyler Thibeault and Vega Nisil. The adults that chaperoned were Kristin Briar, Emily Turgeon, Brendan Fitzgerald and Jack Keefe.

The current Pony Express, the official school newspaper of BMR, has a story about the planned new school being proposed to replace the current BMR structure. The May edition and a special on deadline Graduation issue, where pictures from the event will be taken and paper copies of the edition will be handed out immediately after the ceremony as guests and new alums leave, will be made available online soon. To view, search "BMR Pony Express" and click the link to an issue you want to read.

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com



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### Adult Programs

**A Night Through the Ages: Adult Trivia Night**  
Monday, May 4 at 6:30 pm. Call the Blackstone Public Library to register or for more information

**Manage the Chaos with Calm and Grace:** Parenting Group with Cheryl Marino-Page. Tuesday evenings, May 12 & 19, June 2 & 9 6:30 pm. Parenting is one of the toughest jobs you may ever have. Please join us to learn about the 5 Cs of parenting and how to manage other challenges facing parents today. Call the Blackstone Public Library to register or for more information.

**Help with Jenna Gouin**  
Thursday, May 14 from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm  
Jenna Gouin will provide assistance with Mass-Health, 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.

**Photography Club**  
Tuesday, May 19 at 6:30 pm. Join other photographers to share ideas, tips, tricks. This club is sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

**Quilting Club**  
Thursday, May 21 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.

**Ongoing Book Groups**  
New members are always welcome. Books are available for pick up at the library.

**Horror Book Club**  
Thursday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m.  
Contact Tressy Collier at [tcollier@cwmars.org](mailto:tcollier@cwmars.org)

**Senior Center Book Club**  
Tuesday, May 12 at 11 a.m.  
Contact Ellen Goudreau at [egoudreau@cwmars.org](mailto:egoudreau@cwmars.org)

**Evening Book Group**  
Tuesday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m.  
Contact Renee Milliken at [rmilliken@cwmars.org](mailto:rmilliken@cwmars.org)

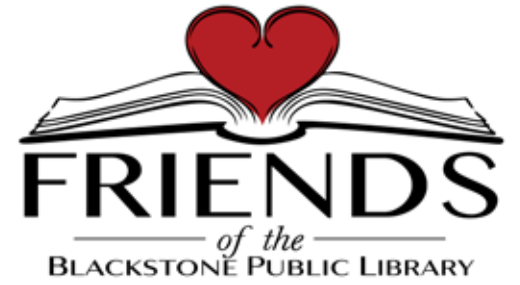
**Afternoon Book Club**  
Tuesday, May 26 at 3:00 p.m.  
Contact Donna Foster at [dfoster@cwmars.org](mailto:dfoster@cwmars.org)

**“Library of Things” May Spotlight**  
Plan ahead for your upcoming graduation parties! With your library card, you can check out an outdoor canopy, balloon filler, an assortment of outdoor lawn games, an inflatable outdoor screen, a karaoke machine, and for your baking needs you can check out assorted cake pans.

### Summer Reading Program for Kids, Young Adults, Adults Coming Soon to the Blackstone Library

by Tressy N. Collier  
Avoid the summer slump while keeping occupied with a variety of fun and exciting activities! This year’s theme is all about planting seeds, both in the dirt and in your imagination! There’s something for everyone with the library’s 2026 Summer Reading Theme, “Plant a Seed, Read”.  
Registration for the Summer Reading Program will begin on Monday, June 8 for Blackstone residents and Monday, June 15 for all library patrons including children, young adults and adults. Registration must be done in person. The last day of registration is Saturday, June 27. Summer reading schedules will be available on the library’s website and Facebook page beginning in June. Children ages 10 and 11 have the option of participating in either the children’s or young adult reading program. For more information, please call 508-883-1931, visit the library’s website at [www.blackstonepubliclibrary.org](http://www.blackstonepubliclibrary.org) or visit the library’s Facebook page. “Plant a Seed, Read” is sponsored by the Blackstone Library, the Massachusetts Library System, the Boston Bruins, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Friends of the Blackstone Library and the Board of Library Trustees.

**Blackstone Library Hosts Blood Drive**  
On Saturday, May 9, the Blackstone Library will be hosting a mobile blood drive with the Rhode Island Blood Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Meeting Room. Interested donors are encouraged to register at [ribc.org/drives](http://ribc.org/drives) and use code 5246. Donors must be 17+ or 16 with a parental consent form and have a photo ID.



By Lee Holfelder  
Welcome May! Spring is on the way! Thank you to our Friends president, Denise Daignault for sharing information on all our library has to offer!

Did you know that the library is more than just books? Patrons have access to ebooks and audiobooks as well as online tools such as Mango Language Learning, the New York Times online, Library Chef, and Cypress Resume. You can borrow laptops and hotspots for internet access, borrow items such as launchpads, yard games, puzzles, bakeware and camping equipment from the Library of Things. All ages can be entertained by performers, attend informational sessions and create crafts. There are book clubs for book discussions and story time for kids.

Did you know that programming in the library’s operating budget for fiscal 2027 will drop from \$2,000 to \$200? It will be difficult to keep the same high level of programming with cuts in the budget. The majority of programs are currently funded by grants, donations, Friends of the Library and some State Aid.

Did you know that the annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, 2026? If you have benefited from the Town Library, please attend the Town Meeting to support the Library’s budget and warrant articles. If you haven’t been to the Library in awhile, stop in and take a look around this vital community gem.


Our next Friends meeting will be Tuesday, June 9th at 6:30 pm. All are welcome!

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com

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# Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech (MBI) & The Blackstone Public Library

On April 3, 2026, the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech), announced the distribution of nearly 27,000 internet-enabled devices through the Connected and Online Program to improve quality of life for Massachusetts residents by providing access to essential services and resources online.

The Blackstone Public Library is an awardee of this program and has received 16 Dell laptops, 10 Dell tablets, 10 Dell Chromebooks, and 18 Dell desktops for patron use. Two of the Dell desktops will be situated at the Blackstone Senior Center for resident use.

Funded through the U.S. Treasury's Capital Projects Fund, the Connected and Online Program is a \$28.5 million initiative that will provide Massachusetts-based organizations with nearly 27,000 devices, including laptops, tablets and desktop computers. In addition, more than 20,000 pieces of supporting equipment including monitors, assistive technology and remote patient monitoring tools will be made accessible to more than 200 of these organizations statewide, including nonprofits, hospitals, libraries, and elder and youth aid organizations. Devices will be used in public spaces such as schools, libraries and learning centers, or incorporated into free-to-borrow lending programs.

"Massachusetts residents rely on the internet every day to find work, take classes, access health care and build stronger community ties," said Governor Maura Healey. "The Connected and Online Program helps residents improve their lives by equipping them with the capacity to directly access services and opportunities."

"The Connected and Online Program is an example of how Massachusetts is focused on expanding economic opportunity for all our residents," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "By supporting local organizations that serve as anchors for connection and learning, the program meets residents where they are and invests in communities."

The Connected and Online Program is designed to increase access to education, workforce development and health care services with a particular focus on Gateway Cities and rural communities. Devices will be offered through lending programs or at locations accessible to the public. Organizations will conduct public outreach to notify people of opportunities to borrow and use devices.

"Access to digital tools is essential for connecting people to opportunity," said Economic Development Secretary Eric Pailey. "The Connected and Online Program helps residents access jobs, training and essential services while supporting a stronger workforce across Massachusetts."

"MBI is expanding access to devices in order to empower residents and enable them to take full advantage of opportunities in today's economy," said MBI Program Executive Jody Jones. "By putting devices in people's hands, we are opening up new pathways to trainings and resources that can accelerate careers. With digital access, residents will have the ability to pursue new offerings like the free online AI training now available through the Grow with Google partnership with the Massachusetts AI Hub."

The Connected and Online Program builds on MBI's broader digital empowerment strategy and complements broadband infrastructure investments through the Gap Networks Grant Program, Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program and Residential Retrofit Program to expand affordability and access statewide.

The complete award breakdown by organization can be found on the MBI website at [broadband.masstech.org/connected-online](http://broadband.masstech.org/connected-online).

*About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech*  
A division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is working to extend high-speed internet access and availability across the state. To achieve this, MBI uses state and federal funding to launch infrastructure expansion programs that target areas of the state that lack high-speed internet access as well as digital equity programs that tackle barriers to internet adoption and increase availability, addressing critical issues around affordability, enhanced public Wi-Fi, the need for internet-enabled devices, and digital literacy training. Learn more at [broadband.masstech.org](http://broadband.masstech.org).

# BVT Band & Choir Host Concert for All Evening Performance Celebrates Diversity Through Music

UPTON – The music program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) goes beyond teaching students how to play instruments and sing. It provides a transformative experience that deepens students' understanding of music—its origins, influences, and theory, and encourages them to apply these concepts in performance.

The Band & Choir will present its Concert for All on June 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the Competition Center at BVT, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. Conducted by Dr. Colton Cox, students will showcase their musical talents in a dynamic performance. The ensembles will perform a diverse selection of music spanning genres from folk and classical to pop and movie soundtracks and incorporate singing in multiple languages.

The music program has received instrument donations from Hungry for Music, as well as grant funding from local cultural councils. This support is instrumental in building a sustainable program that increases equitable access to a broad range of musical instruments for students. Each instrument placed in a student's hands represents an opportunity for learning and increased participation in the school's band program. By removing financial and other barriers, the program ensures greater access to music education for students who might otherwise be unable to participate.

Students, families and community members are invited to attend the free performance, which is open to the public. This program is funded in part by grants from the Grafton, Northbridge and Upton Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

*About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):*  
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](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us).

# BMR Class of 1971 Confirms Reunion Date September 2026



The Blackstone-Millville Regional High School Class of 1971 will hold its 55th reunion on Thursday, September 24, 2026. Classmates and guests are welcome to attend the celebration at 5:00 P.M. at Crystal Lake Golf Club, located on 100 Bronco Highway, Mapleville, RI. Tickets are \$55 per person.

Class members are encouraged to join the class Facebook site, Class of 1971 Blackstone-Millville Regional HS. For more information, please contact Liz McGeough at [noisomeness4@gmail.com](mailto:noisomeness4@gmail.com) or call 508.883.0038. **Please RSVP by July 20th, 2026.**

If any readers are familiar with or related to any of our missing alumni listed below, please contact me with information. Thank you!

Tom Barnett  
Louis Benjamin (Worral)  
Christine Harpin (Thompson)  
Billy Pinheiro  
Valerie Rais (Kitching)  
Leo Savageau  
Steve Shugrue

Nancy Strocky  
Charles Ashworth  
Rose Bougeouis  
Deborah Ernest  
Lou Lowell Auger

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# Blackstone Millville Regional High School Monthly Building Project Update

The Blackstone–Millville Regional School District (BMRSD) is partnering with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to explore the possibility of a new high school.

The project is now in Module 4: the Schematic Design (SD) Phase. During the Schematic Design Phase, the building design, project budget, and construction timeline are further developed and refined.

## SCHEMATIC DESIGN MILESTONES:

- June 25, 2026 - Schematic Design Submission \*Target Date
- August 26, 2026 – MSBA Board Approval of the SD Submission \*Target Date
- Fall 2026 - Project Scope & Budget Agreement with the MSBA \*Target Date

After these steps, the communities will vote in the Fall 2026 to determine whether the project will move forward.

## SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

All meetings are held at the Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School, in the Media Center, unless otherwise virtually posted. All meetings begin at 5:00 PM. \*All dates and times are subject to change. Please check the District website for the most up-to-date information.

- May 13, 2026 – Finalize Exterior Materials
- June 10, 2026 – Cost Estimate Review
- June 17, 2026 – Vote on Schematic Design Submission

## UPCOMING DECISIONS:

- Schematic Design Submission: June 2026
- Community Project Vote: Fall 2026

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

- Visit: [www.bmrtd.net](http://www.bmrtd.net)
  - Facebook Group: BMRSD School Building Project
  - Questions or comments? Email us at [admin-sbc@bmrtd.net](mailto:admin-sbc@bmrtd.net)
- Stay tuned for next month's update!

— The School Building Committee

# Massachusetts Welfare Spending Skyrockets as Oversight Declines and Fraud Surges

BOSTON — The Fiscal Alliance Foundation today released a new study examining Massachusetts's welfare programs, with a particular focus on rising fraud risks, weak oversight, and rapidly growing enrollment in key programs. The study, authored by the Foundation's visiting policy analyst Hayden Dublois, is the organization's first comprehensive analysis of welfare spending in Massachusetts and highlights significant concerns about growth, oversight, and long-term sustainability.

The study finds that SNAP enrollment in Massachusetts has increased by an astonishing 40 percent over the past decade, rising from just under 785,000 recipients in 2015 to more than 1.1 million in 2024. At the same time, more than \$1 billion in benefits were issued improperly between 2022 and 2024 alone, a staggering level of waste that raises serious concerns about program integrity.

Massachusetts now has a SNAP error rate of 14.1 percent, significantly higher than the national average of approximately 11 percent and every other New England state. The Commonwealth now ranks among the worst-performing states in the nation on payment accuracy, while neighboring New Hampshire ranks among the best.

Beginning in FY2028, federal rules will require states with error rates above 6% to begin sharing the burden of costs, leaving taxpayers to pick up the tab. The study also finds that between 65 and 75 percent of able-bodied SNAP recipients are not working, while state policies continue to allow individuals to bypass federal asset limits and remain eligible for benefits regardless of accumulated wealth.

The report cites a whistleblower account describing "rampant" and "unabated" fraud within the system, along with a workplace culture that discourages basic verification of eligibility.

"More than a billion dollars in improper SNAP payments in just two years is not a rounding error, it is a complete failure of oversight. Taxpayers are being asked to fund a system where fraud is ignored, safeguards are weakened, and accountability is treated as optional. That is unacceptable," said Paul Diego Craney, Executive Director of the Fiscal Alliance Foundation.

The study also finds that broader welfare spending continues to grow rapidly, with Medicaid now consuming nearly one out of every four state budget dollars and total costs rising sharply over the past decade. Medicaid spending has increased by nearly 50 percent since 2015, while state taxpayers have financed tens of billions in program costs. The report also highlights rising expenditures tied to non-citizen emergency care and expanded state-funded benefits.

Reform is long overdue, and it starts with restoring basic accountability and putting safeguards back in place," said Craney.

Blackstone Enlightener May 2026 email:enlightener@blackstonema.com



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

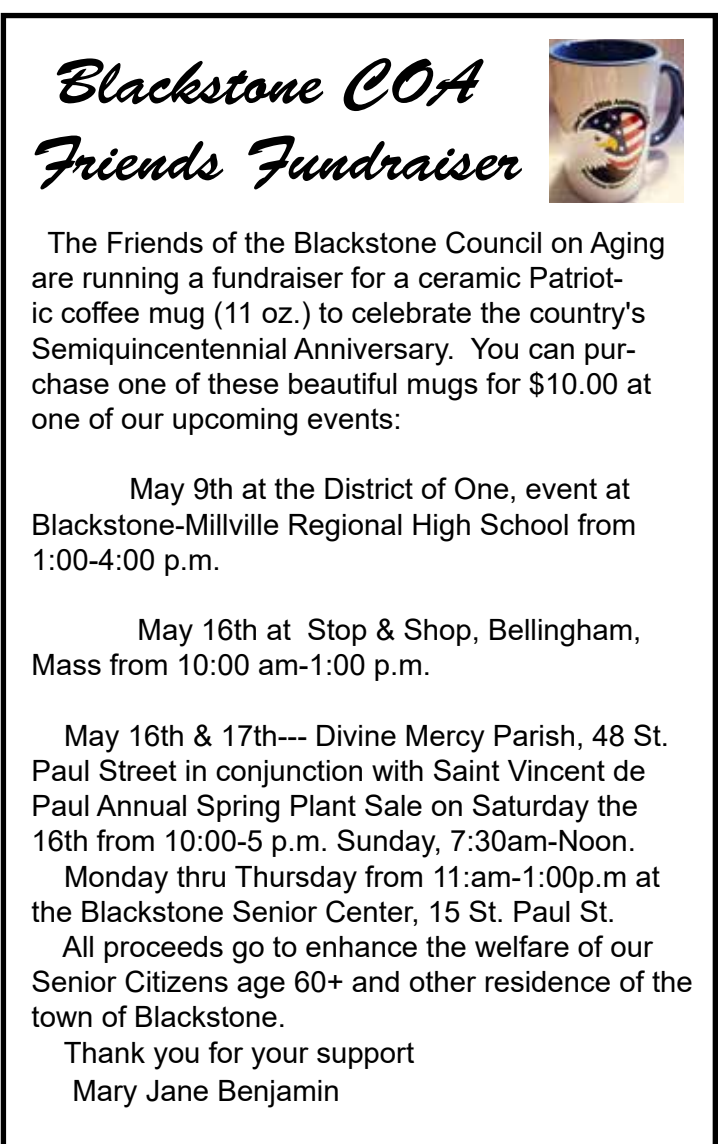
**TUESDAY** 05-05-2026

**TIME** 5:00PM TO 7:00PM

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**EMAIL** [dtorrey@teachUCPR.com](mailto:dtorrey@teachUCPR.com)

**\$40.00 per person**



## Blackstone COA Friends Fundraiser

The Friends of the Blackstone Council on Aging are running a fundraiser for a ceramic Patriotic coffee mug (11 oz.) to celebrate the country's Semiquincentennial Anniversary. You can purchase one of these beautiful mugs for \$10.00 at one of our upcoming events:

May 9th at the District of One, event at Blackstone-Millville Regional High School from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

May 16th at Stop & Shop, Bellingham, Mass from 10:00 am-1:00 p.m.

May 16th & 17th--- Divine Mercy Parish, 48 St. Paul Street in conjunction with Saint Vincent de Paul Annual Spring Plant Sale on Saturday the 16th from 10:00-5 p.m. Sunday, 7:30am-Noon. Monday thru Thursday from 11:am-1:00p.m at the Blackstone Senior Center, 15 St. Paul St.

All proceeds go to enhance the welfare of our Senior Citizens age 60+ and other residence of the town of Blackstone.

Thank you for your support  
Mary Jane Benjamin

## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 26, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Article 1 is the town's overall operating cost for FY 27. This is the article that affects your real estate tax bill. The Board of Selectman, working closely with the Administration, all Departments and Regional School District has had to navigate through various increases that were driving the budget to the point of unsustainability. A major driver of the increases for both the Town and The School District is the cost of healthcare. The Town's increase for healthcare for FY 27 is a whopping 11.38%. Recognizing that such increases are not sustainable and not being able to find more favorable rates, the Administration and Board of Selectman have recommended certain cuts necessary for the Town to be able to live within its means. As a result, I am happy to announce that the Board of Selectman's recommended overall increase to the FY 27 budget is 1.97%. This represents the lowest increase in decades.

There is a total of 43 Warrant Articles slated for this year's ATM which can be found on the Town's Website. The Articles vary from the typical standard articles necessary for the town's year over year operations, to Articles that require major investments such as new radio infrastructure for the town's emergency services and transferring the AFM portion of the JFK/AFM complex to the Town for municipal use. Also included are 2 citizen petitions.

The Finance Committee will have a Public Hearing addressing all the Articles on the Annual Town Meeting warrant on May 4th, at 6:00pm in the John Eldrige Meeting Room, Blackstone Municipal Center, 15 St. Paul St. All residents are encouraged to attend.

Additionally, The Blackstone Library in collaboration with the Board of Selectman, Town Administration, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Finance and Capital Outlay Committees will be hosting "It's your Town Meeting" at The Blackstone Library on May 13th at 6:30pm. This event is intended to be both educational and informational for the residents. It will include protocols and the important role residents play at Town Meeting. We are hopeful that many residents will attend and dialog will be encouraged. This event will be livestreamed and interactive for those who cannot attend in person. We hope to see you there.

Daniel P. Keefe  
Chairman  
Board of Selectman

## Less 1984, More 1776

As our town prepares to vote on a warrant article to establish a Special Celebrations and Events Revenue Fund and appropriate \$80,000 for a multi-day Semi-Quincentennial celebration, we should take a step back and ask what we are really doing here. This anniversary is supposed to represent the founding principles of this country. It should reflect liberty, limited government, and a resistance to unnecessary taxation. Instead, we are being asked to fund a celebration of those ideals by doing the exact opposite.

The irony is hard to ignore. The American Revolution was sparked in part by events like the Boston Tea Party, where colonists pushed back against what they viewed as unjust taxation and government overreach. That moment was about drawing a line. It was about saying that government does not get to take from people simply because it can. Fast forward 250 years and we are now being asked to approve \$80,000 in taxpayer funding for a multi-day event. That should give everyone pause.

This is not happening in a vacuum. People in this town are feeling real financial pressure. Costs are up across the board. Families are making tradeoffs every day just to keep up. Small businesses are dealing with tighter margins and less room for error. In that environment, asking taxpayers to fund a large-scale celebration does not feel responsible. It feels disconnected from reality.

What makes this even harder to justify is that other towns around us, including larger ones with more resources, are not going this far. Many are planning more modest events or relying on private fundraising efforts that build community involvement without forcing the burden onto taxpayers. That approach makes sense. It keeps the celebration aligned with the spirit of voluntary participation instead of mandated contribu-

tion. It's also worth asking whether we explored or applied for available funding, such as the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism's (MOTT) Massachusetts 250 Grant Program, before placing the financial burden on residents.

There are also real questions about how this would come together from a planning standpoint. An event of this size requires a clear plan, defined scope, realistic timeline, and an understanding of total costs beyond the initial appropriation. Without that foundation, there is a real risk this turns into an expensive effort that does not meet expectations. Committing funding before those pieces are fully in place shifts that risk directly onto taxpayers.

Even if fundraising is part of the plan, timing and preparation matter. Many towns have been building toward this over time with structured planning, defined budgets, and consistent fundraising efforts. We are approaching this much later in the process and now trying to stand up a large-scale, multi-day event without that same runway. That raises valid questions around feasibility, coordination, and whether the full scope of costs and effort has been thought through. If this is something we want to do well, it should be approached deliberately, with a clear plan and strong community backing, not compressed into a short timeline.

Local businesses have already stepped up to help. Two local cannabis shops offered \$12,500 in donations, which ultimately passed by a 4-1 vote. But one member still voted against accepting those funds. Are we really in a position to turn down support from legal, legitimate businesses based on personal beliefs? That does not reflect fiscal responsibility or putting the town's best interests first. Decisions like that risk discouraging future donations and shifting even more of the burden back onto taxpayers.

None of this is to say that we should not celebrate. We absolutely should recognize this milestone. But there is a right way to do it. It should be driven by the community, supported voluntarily, and scaled to what makes sense for our town. It should bring people together, not place additional strain on them.

This vote is about more than a single event. It is about how we think government should operate and what we believe taxpayers should be responsible for funding. If we are serious about honoring the principles behind this anniversary, then our actions should reflect those principles.

I am not telling anyone how to vote on this article. What I am asking is that we all take the time to understand what is being proposed and think critically about it before walking into town meeting on Tuesday, May 26th. This is shaping up to be one of the largest town meetings in recent memory in terms of spending, with millions of dollars in appropriations on the table.

Every article deserves real scrutiny. Every dollar matters. And those dollars could be put toward lasting needs, like easing financial strain or investing in something sustainable for residents, such as a community garden on unused town property to support local families and our food pantry. A celebration lasts a few days. A thoughtful investment in our community could keep giving back long after the banners come down.

Sincerely,  
TJ Polak, A Fellow Libertarian at 10 Meadow Lane

**Thank you for  
supporting the  
Blackstone Millville  
Food Pantry!**

# East Blackstone Quaker Meeting House Association Schedule for 2026

by Fran Kelly

The first ecumenical service of the 2026 season will be held on Sunday, May 31, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., at the East Blackstone Quaker Meeting House, 197 Elm Street, Blackstone, Mass. The Annual Business Meeting of the Association, which will include the election of officers and directors, will take place immediately following the service.

Reverend Patricia Hatch will serve as guest pastor. Rev. Hatch serves as a community minister specializing in rites of passage ceremonies (such as funerals and weddings) and is also an itinerant preacher, having led worship for over fifty congregations. Rev. Hatch has a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University and has served as a parish minister, a Minister of Christian Education, and a hospice chaplain. She enjoys poetry, nature, and inspiration of all kinds.

Music for the service will be under the direction of John Staples, organist and pianist at Mathewson Street United Methodist Church.

The May 31st service will be followed by three additional services this year -- the first on Sunday, September 13th; the second, a Thanksgiving service on Sunday, November 22nd; and, lastly, the Association's Annual Candlelight Christmas Caroling Service on Friday, December 18th (snow date of December 20th).

*The Meeting House is 214 years old and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Association has been active for over 70 years, sponsoring services in the Meeting House over that time. Anyone interested in further information regarding the service, or in learning more about membership in the Association, should visit the Association's website at: <http://www.blackstonequakermeetinghouse.org/>. Membership is open to all persons interested in the preservation of the historic meeting house and cemetery, and the Association welcomes any level of participation.*

## In Flanders Fields

In Flanders Fields the poppies grow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place. While in the Sky  
The larks still bravely singing,  
fly Unheard, amid the guns below.  
We are the dead, Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawns, saw sunsets glow;  
Loved and were loved – but now we lie  
In Flanders Field  
Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you from falling hands we throw  
The torch, Be yours to bear it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep  
tho' poppies blow  
In Flanders Field

Colonel John McCrae

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SMALL ENSEMBLES PERFORMING BEFORE 2PM

# 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 YouTube and join us as we live stream the service. Telecast begins at 9:25 a.m.

Notes from Pastor Joe:

Seeking Something Greater: In a world that often feels uncertain and divided, many people in our community are quietly searching for something steady—something true. For Christians, that foundation is found in knowing God through Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that God is not distant or unknowable, but personal and loving, revealed clearly through the life and teachings of Jesus. His message centers on grace, forgiveness, and a call to live with humility and purpose.

Knowing Jesus is not simply about religion or tradition; it is about relationship. The Gospels show a Savior who met people where they were—offering hope to the weary, truth to the confused, and compassion to the broken. His teachings challenge us to love our neighbors, seek justice, and walk in faith even when it is difficult. These are not just ancient ideas, but practical truths that can shape stronger families, kinder communities, and more meaningful lives.

Each of us must decide what we believe and what guides our lives. The invitation of the Bible is open to all: to seek, to ask, and to discover who Jesus is. For those willing to explore, that journey may lead not only to answers, but to a deeper sense of peace, purpose, and belonging that extends beyond circumstances. It is a message worth considering, and perhaps, worth following.

God Bless,  
Pastor Joe Overly

*Pastor Joe is available to meet by appointment. Please phone or email: Email: [pastor.joe@cccob.org](mailto:pastor.joe@cccob.org). 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!*

**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.

## MAY 2026 Food Pantry Needs

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Canned chicken      | Pudding cups           |
| Canned pasta        | Brownie Mix            |
| Pancake mix & syrup | Instant rice           |
| Juice               | Cereal                 |
| Ketchup             | Laundry/dish detergent |
| Mustard             | Body wash              |
| Mayonnaise          | Toilet paper           |
| Fluff               |                        |

**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.

# TAPS ACROSS AMERICA



by Elizabeth McGeough

Taps Across America 2026 will take place on Memorial Day, May 25, 2026 at 3:00 PM local time, uniting musicians nationwide to honor fallen service members. The Taps Across America tribute debuted on national television in 2020 when CBS news "On the Road" correspondent Steve Hartman teamed up with retired Air Force bugler Jari Villanueva, founder of Taps For Veterans. The two men invited buglers and musicians to sound Taps from their front porches all at the same time as a part of the Taps Across America tribute. The massive, simultaneous event replaced picnics, parades, and other celebrations cancelled due to the 2020 pandemic.

The response was overwhelming: More than 10,000 musicians joined in a nationwide salute to remember fallen service members. Taps Across America brings the country together, offering everyone an opportunity to honor, remember and reflect in the true spirit of Memorial Day.

To register for TAPS please go to [www.tapsacrossamerica.org](http://www.tapsacrossamerica.org). There is no cost to register to sound Taps during the tribute. Taps Across America encourages all musicians of any category to participate by sounding Taps at 3 pm on Memorial day. You may sound taps at any location you feel is appropriate. Your front lawn, back yard, a local cemetery or Veterans organization are some places that participants have performed in the past.

Taps Across America provides also a repository of videos made by participants on their YouTube channel. Instructions for uploading are provided once you register.

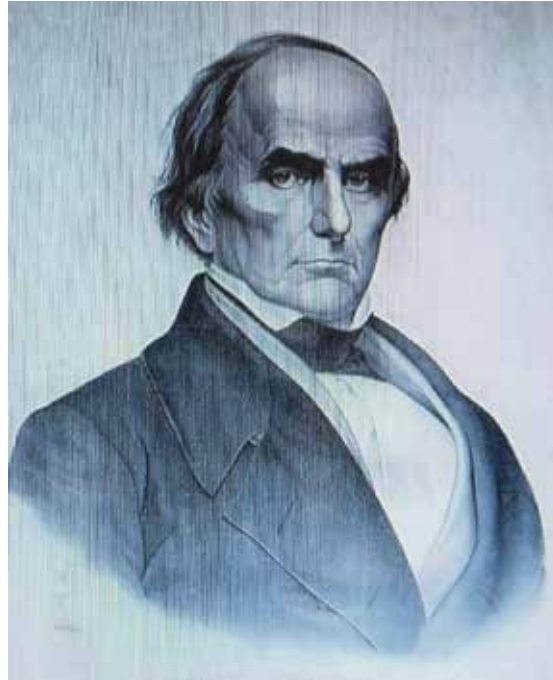
The National Moment of Remembrance is an annual event that asks Americans, wherever they are at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day, to pause for a duration of one minute to remember those who have died in military service to the United States. The time 3 p.m. was chosen because it is the time when most Americans are enjoying time off from work for the national holiday. The Moment of Remembrance was first proclaimed in May 2000 for Memorial Day that year, and was put in law by the United States Congress in December 2000. See also [www.tapsforveterans.org](http://www.tapsforveterans.org).

## Blackstone's Window On The Past

© Helen Murray 2026

### Farnum & Webster

Daniel Webster was a famous statesman and litigator. He had served in both the New Hampshire and the Massachusetts legislatures. Webster was secretary of state for both Presidents Harrison and Madison.



Born in New Hampshire he later resided in Massachusetts. Daniel first argued before the United States Supreme Court in 1814. As his fame grew he was in great demand.

When Welcome Farnum had a serious problem he knew who to hire. He and his brother Darius sued the Blackstone Canal Company when they raised the level of their dam in Woonsocket so that the water level of their canal would raise. However, the higher water level caused damage in the Farnum mills up stream. The Farnum's first filed a suit in the Rhode Island courts. In 1828, the U.S. Circuit Court of Rhode Island in case number 4,675, ruled in favor of the Canal Company.

Welcome Farnum made the decision to continue the fight and he wanted "the best". Daniel Webster agreed to take the case. In F. case Vol. 8 of the United States Supreme Court of United States, "Farnum vs. the Blackstone Canal Co.", the results are clear. In this case Webster argued "the plaintiffs" rights as riparian owners & the binding nature of the indenture executed by the canal company."

The high court agreed with Webster's argument and the Canal Company was ordered to pay the Farnum's eighty thousand dollars. This was quite a high amount in those days.

There is a note from Blackstone judge Authur Putnam that Daniel Webster had told him that Welcome Farnum was the "ablest client he ever had worked with."



## Remember: Town Meeting May 26, 2026 at 7:30 PM



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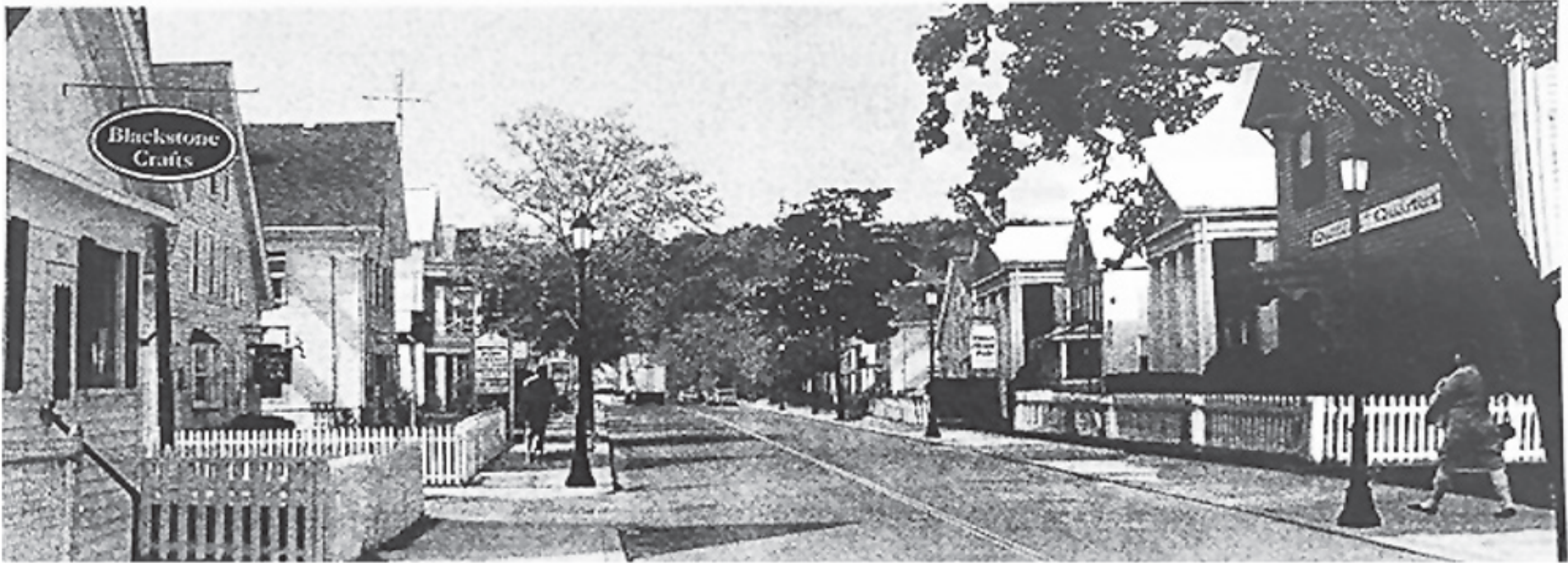
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