

MERRIMACK
DOUBLES TESTING
AS STUDENTS
RETURN

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BAKER REFLECTS ON
SACRIFICES, PROGRESS
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ASHLEY CHIANGO
HELPS ANDOVER
GIRLS HOCKEY
START SEASON
STRONG
PAGE 9

OUR 131ST YEAR

Andover Townsman

Issue No. 13

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Local legislators laud governmental transition

By MADELINE HUGHES
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In the midst of a pandemic, the 2021 inauguration was always going to be more somber.

After the attack on the Capitol two weeks ago— where

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were sworn in — the unprecedented military presence in the nation’s capital made it an even more sober event.

It was an “extraordinary moment in history, but

extraordinary because it was ordinary” just like the 45 preceding presidential transitions, Congressman Seth Moulton said.

“It showed that democracy has prevailed, tradition has carried on, despite President Biden’s predecessor’s effort

to upset it,” Moulton said Wednesday shortly after attending the inauguration in Washington, D.C. “I think all of us believe America has a bright future ahead — and we weren’t always sure of that in the past four years.” Moulton — a Democrat

from Salem, Massachusetts, who represents part of the Merrimack Valley — was among the few people, including members of Congress, allowed to attend the ceremony at the U.S. Capitol. U.S. Rep Lori Trahan, a Westford Democrat, who was

struck by Biden’s message of unity and mending divisions. “Disagreement is American,” she said. “We can’t allow that to make us adversaries.”

Moving ahead
Trahan said she and others
See **TRANSITION**, Page 2

Stone Hill at Andover makes event of vaccination day



Courtesy photos

Stone Hill resident Frank Paladino, left, holds the hand of his wife, Marilyn, as she receives the vaccine from a CVS pharmacist.

‘A day filled with hope’

By MADELINE HUGHES
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The assisted living facility Stone Hill at Andover went all out for its senior residents and staff to celebrate getting vaccinated Jan.14.

It was festive day including balloons, a photo booth and stickers reading, “I’m See **STONE HILL**, Page 2



Stone Hill at Andover Executive Director Karla Rossi, dressed in a superhero cape and mask, receives her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Her superpower?: leading her community into a healthy new year, she said.

District considers ‘pool testing’

By MADELINE HUGHES
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Andover school officials are determining if the district should participate in a “pool testing” program offered by the state, which pays for six weeks of COVID-19 tests for students and staff.

“There’s a lot that will go into this,” said Rita Casper, director of nursing services and the process at a recent School Committee meeting.

“It’s not just the matter of resources,” Casper said. “Technology has to play a large part in this.”

Casper has been researching the “pool testing” process in which groups of students and staff are involved. As cases of the virus are identified, any individuals from the group of about 10 to 25 people who test positive are re-tested. The goal is to identify asymptomatic people and save on resources, Casper See **TESTING**, Page 2

Suicide enablers could face prison

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

Suicide enablers could face penalties and even prison under a proposal inspired by the case of Michelle Carter, who was convicted more than three years ago of using text messages to goad her boyfriend into killing himself.

A bill filed by state Sen. Barry Finegold, D-Andover, would set a maximum sentence of five years in prison See **SUICIDE**, Page 2



State Sen. Barry Finegold, D-Andover,

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Kids tackle pandemic challenges through theater

By MADELINE HUGHES
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It has been almost a year of having a hard time finding toilet paper at the store and doing most socializing over a screen.

This weekend elementary schoolers poke fun at the zany circumstances of living in a pandemic in the play “10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine.”

“It’s a big satire about everything happening over quarantine and all of the things we’ve been doing,” said Director Tim Gore of Londonderry. “The pandemic has been hard on everyone, but this show’s idea is that you can find some humor in every situation. And you can laugh at yourself, each other and the situation.” The comedy was

written in the middle of the pandemic, specifically to be performed remotely. The cast from Andover, Londonderry and Hampstead has been zooming nearly every day since the December auditions, hoping to perform with as few glitches as possible this coming weekend.

“Technical difficulties are the biggest challenge

with people’s internet cutting out,” Gore said. “But it’s definitely been really fun, regardless, for us to do this right now.”

Auditioning and rehearsing via Zoom, the 13-member cast has never met in person, but they have still worked on becoming a team, Gore said.

Gore had previously worked with Ovation

Theater Company out of Londonderry, and when he was home from college for winter break he decided to direct shows for children, so they would still have some theater exposure.

It’s been an interesting time in theater with many stages left dormant and having to move performances to the internet, Gore said.

See **THEATER**, Page 2



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TESTING

Continued from Page 1

said. All Andover school staff members and the district's nearly 7,000 students would be eligible. Should the program be extended beyond March 28, the district would need to assume costs, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "I'm very supportive of it, if it shows a clear path to health within our buildings

or offers the services we are trying to offer," said Shannon Scully, chairwoman of the School Committee. "I guess that's the piece I would appreciate you guys to make clearer to me as you are looking into this: How does it help?" Schools already doing pool testing identify only a handful of asymptomatic carriers a week, and those districts have still had to close school at times, Casper asserted. But the testing and the low number of positives

offer "peace of mind," she added. District staff are working on plans to expand in-person offerings, said Interim Superintendent Claudia Bach. "The reason (people) are safest in school is because we have the (proper social) distancing, and we don't want to change it until we feel that it's safe to do so," Bach said. "And in some cases without being able to change the distancing of 3 feet or 6 feet, until we can change that, there may be real limits to what schools can do."

The School Committee is sending a letter to Gov. Charlie Baker and Jeff Riley, state commissioner of elementary and secondary education, asking to address issues that keep students from spending more time in school. Andover uses hybrid learning, which has most students in classrooms two days per week and learning remotely from home the other three days. Many parents are calling for more time in classrooms, even a full-time return.

The School Committee letter identifies spacing, personnel and transportation issues as the main barriers. It asks for state support such as more money and providing vaccinations to teachers. The focus for school nurses is getting vaccinated. They will be vaccinating teachers and other school staff when it's allowed, Casper said. The district is also working with the town to vaccinate teachers as supplies become available, which is expected in mid- to late February, she

said. "Unfortunately I think there was no good plan at the federal level (for vaccine distribution) and what we are seeing is a result of that at the local level," Casper said. "Our local Board of Health is working as quickly and as fast as they can to get vaccines, to be able to store the vaccine, to put the clinics out and vaccinate our emergency providers as quickly as possible," she said. "But they can only go as fast as the vaccine comes in."

SUICIDE

Continued from Page 1

for anyone who "intentionally coerces or encourages that person to commit or attempt to commit suicide" by using physical acts or mental coercion that manipulate "a person's fears, affections or sympathies." The proposal is named after 18-year-old Conrad Roy III, of Mattapoisett, who killed himself in 2014 after a battle with mental illnesses. Finegold, a lawyer who filed a similar bill in the previous session, said Massachusetts is among a minority of states without a law making suicide by coercion a crime. "Most other states already have made it illegal to encourage or provide the resources for someone else to commit suicide," he said. "The tragic death of Conrad Roy made it clear that Massachusetts is not equipped to deal with scenarios like this."

Finigold said the law would send "a clear message that coercing another person to commit suicide is not only unacceptable, but subject to criminal liability." Carter, of Plainville, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in June 2017 following a bench trial that drew national headlines. A Superior Court judge determined she caused Roy's death when she told him to "get back in" his truck as it was filling with carbon monoxide in a parking lot in Fairhaven. Carter's attorneys

appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but it declined to take up the request.

The case highlighted what legal experts say are myriad difficulties in punishing those who encourage others to kill themselves.

Conrad Roy's mother, Lynn Roy, helped craft the bill named after her son. In a statement with the original proposal, she said she hopes it will "prevent future tragedies."

While Massachusetts has one of the lowest suicide rates in the nation, the number of suicide deaths has been increasing for more than a decade, according to the state Department of Public Health.

In 2018, there were 725 suicides in Massachusetts — more deaths than those attributed to car crashes and homicides combined, according to the department. That's a 6.3% rise from the previous year and a 67% increase from 2004, when there were 433 suicide deaths in the state.

Recent studies suggest the pandemic has put even more strain on the mental health care system amid rising levels of anxiety and depression, particularly among young people.

Finigold said he has refiled another proposal that would require training teachers and students to detect warning signs of isolation, interpersonal violence and suicide.

Christian M. Wade covers the Massachusetts Statehouse for The Salem News and its sister newspapers and websites. Email him at cwade@cnhi.com.



The 13-member cast of "10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine" are seen, along with Director Tim Gore in the bottom right corner. Courtesy photo

THEATER

Continued from Page 1

"10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine" was

written by playwright Don Zolidis. It features Julia Black, Charlotte Blaustein, Catie Gorecki, Avery Kinney and Rileigh Roux from Andover; Alaina Anthony,

Connor Burns, Meg Carroll, Sam Craigie, Grace McElroy, Malia Smith and Dylan Torre-Moody from Londonderry; and Mabel Backman from Hampstead.

Tickets to live-stream the performances of "10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine" at 7 p.m. Friday or 1 p.m. Saturday are available at ovationtc.com.

STONE HILL

Continued from Page 1

vaccinated." This all was meant to mark the beginning of the end of the pandemic that has hit facilities like Stone Hill particularly hard. "Vaccination day at Stone Hill was so amazing," said Karla Rossi, executive director of the facility.

"It was a day filled with hope and celebration for all. It provided hope for those looking forward to hugging friends, family and loved ones," she added. "Most importantly there was hope for our seniors who have been living a 'new normal' through countless holidays, birthdays and celebrations. We now have faith that the challenging times will finally come to an end."

Residents and associates at Stone Hill were smiling with their eyes and under their masks as they received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, Rossi said. Staff sent



Mary Almedia, a Stone Hill program assistant, gives two thumbs up as she receives her vaccine. Courtesy photo

photos to residents' families as they received their shots. "I thank my lucky stars every day that my mom is a

resident at Stone Hill. I can't even imagine how awful it would have been for her to be living alone in our family

home throughout this past year," said Mark Morley after he saw his mother, Julie, getting the vaccine.

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TRANSITION

Continued from Page 1

felt their Republican colleagues on Capitol Hill were also inspired by Biden's message.

"What Biden is inherently better at than most is that he's explicitly said he's not just the president for the people who voted for him, but for everyone," Trahan said. "I walked back with Republicans and there was no criticism. It was a feeling it was a new day," Trahan said. "At the end of the day, I was sent to Washington to get the job done and deliver to the people of the 3rd District (of

Massachusetts). And that's why I've worked with my Republican colleagues."

Biden has laid out a \$1.9 trillion plan to help the economy, get children back to school and vaccinate people, which local legislators agree with.

"Working families are in dire need of more help now to stay afloat. Their inadequate \$600 survival checks have been spent already, their children are hungry, and another rent payment is due on Monday," Trahan said. "They simply can't afford to wait for Republicans in the Senate to stop feigning concern over the same budget deficit that they couldn't have cared less about over the past four years."

"President Biden has shown in his first week in office that he knows what it takes to tackle COVID-19 and deliver for Americans struggling to make ends meet," His relief package meets the gravity of the moment facing working families in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, and communities across the Third District,

and we need to get it passed into law as soon as possible."

Marking the moment

The legislators also found hope in this particularly historic inauguration, where Harris became the first Black, South Asian and woman to be sworn in as vice president.

Trahan brought her stepson Thomas to the inauguration and called her two youngest daughters, Grace and Caroline, from the inauguration to remind them of the pivotal event.

"I wanted to remind (them) of this unbelievable moment of the swearing-in of the first woman. The first Asian American woman. They are likely to never see a presidential debate stage without that kind of representation," Trahan said. "And that's markedly different from my upbringing."

"I was particularly moved, especially seeing our first Black and South Asian Madam Vice President Harris get sworn in by our first Latina Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor. It was certainly a moment of immense pride for what this momentous occasion represents and the message it sends to all people that your gender and race do not limit what you can accomplish," said Nguyen, who is the first Vietnamese-American woman in the legislature. "The hope of those who are firsts is that they will not be the only one, and that the door has been swung wide open for others to follow."

PUBLIC NOTICE RIGHT OF WAY MAINTENANCE

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 132B, National Grid (New England Power and/or Massachusetts Electric Company) hereby gives notice that it intends to selectively apply herbicides along specific transmission line rights-of-way in 2021.

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Rodeo, and possibly one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, will be applied directly to the surface of stumps immediately after target vegetation is cut (Cut Stump Treatment). Garlon 4 or Garlon 4 Ultra will be applied selectively to the stems of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Basal Treatment and Dormant stem treatment). Krenite S or Rodeo, mixed with Escort XP, and one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, or Milestone will be applied selectively to the foliage of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Foliar Treatment). Applications shall not commence more than ten days before nor conclude more than ten days after the following treatment periods. The herbicide mixes and additional information about rights of way management in Massachusetts can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/rights-of-way-vegetation-management>

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*The exact treatment dates are dependent upon weather conditions and field crew progress.

Further information may be requested by contacting (during business hours, Mon-Fri from 8:00 am-4:00 pm):
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National Grid seeks increase in gas bills

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — National Grid customers could be digging deeper into their pockets to pay for upgrades to the utility's aging natural gas system. The utility's gas distribution companies, Colonial Gas and Boston Gas, are seeking approval from the state Department of Public Utilities to raise more than \$138 million by hiking rates by 6.2% to 9% for residential users and upwards of 13.4% percent for industrial.

National Grid serves more than 900,000 gas customers in Massachusetts, including tens of thousands North of Boston.

"These additional revenues will support operation

and maintenance costs and capital costs associated with investments in the gas distribution system while ensuring safety and reliability of all services," the company said in a recent message to customers.

State regulators held a virtual public hearing on the proposal Tuesday night, where they outlined the company's request and heard from company executives and customers.

Under the proposed increases, residential customers would see annual bills grow between \$16.55 and \$122.49 on average, depending on how much gas someone uses and whether it's for heat, hot water or other uses, according to the utility's reports to the state. Commercial and industrial

users would see increases ranging from one to 13.4% depending on their systems.

"I understand that there is never an ideal time to raise rates and we are always mindful of the impact that rate increases have on our customers," National Grid Massachusetts President Marcy Reed said during Tuesday's hearing. "However I am confident that the request ... is necessary to maintain the level of service our customers expect."

This is the first gas rate increase sought by the company since 2017, she said, pointing out that gas distribution rates have remained unchanged since then.

Attorney General Maura Healey, who has opposed rate increases proposed by other

utilities, has intervened in the review process. Her office has the authority to seek lower rates or restrictions aimed at shielding consumers from hefty increases.

Healey's office also intervened in National Grid's 2017 request to increase electric rates, convincing regulators to reduce the increase by about \$43 million.

Consumer advocates say Massachusetts already has some of the highest energy costs in the nation, and increased gas prices will have a particular impact on low-income households that have trouble making ends meet. The economic fallout of the pandemic has worsened the situation.

"It's really bad timing to be seeking a rate increase," said

John Howat, a senior energy analyst at the Boston-based National Consumer Law Center. "There are a lot of people still struggling because of COVID, unemployment remains very high, and many low-income consumers are already in arrears on their utility bills."

Howat said rate increases are also a drag on economic recovery because they make consumers less likely to spend and encourage businesses to hold back on investments.

Utilities are increasingly seeking revenue to pay for projects to modernize aging gas infrastructure, such as fixing leaks, replacing pipes and upgrading systems. Under state law they are allowed to pass those costs

onto consumers. Eversource received approval from state regulators in November 2017 to raise electricity rates by nearly \$220 million over five years, including a \$37 million increase in the first year. It has 1.4 million customers in the state.

Regulators will hold another virtual public hearing on National Grid's rate increase request Thursday at 10 a.m. The hearing will be streamed live on the DPU's website.

If approved, the increases would go into effect Oct. 1, 2021.

Christian M. Wade covers the Massachusetts Statehouse for North of Boston Media Group's newspapers and websites. Email him at cwade@cnhi.com.

Decoding the mystery of dyslexia

Family Matters

Larry Larsen



Dear Doctor,
Recently, we were told our third-grade son has dyslexia. They also called it a learning disability.

He is very intelligent, but reading is a struggle for him. The school wants to put him in a "reading recovery" program. We are not sure what we should do.

Can you help us understand what is wrong? Does it get better? Thanks in advance for any help.

Uncertain

Dear Uncertain,
You have asked two questions.

The first is a definition of a reading disorder. Reading is a code. The little letters trigger recognition in the brain with attendant sounds, meanings and connections. In reality, the brain "reads" — not the eye.

In my view, there are many sources for the

neurological difficulty in learning the "code." For example, there have been studies that show there are too many neurons in the left planum temporale. Others show difficulties in the medial prefrontal cortex. Actually, the brain works as a whole to decode.

The term "disability" is a horrible label. The real issue is finding the best path

for learning how to decode. Reading must become automatic to be useful. Therein lies the problem. The curriculum will become increasingly language based and your son will need to decode without struggle in order to get the meaning from what he has read.

I am of the opinion a unique method is often the answer. Here is where you

must do research. Look into Orton-Gillingham tutors in your area. This is a well-proven method for combining visual and phonetic processes. However, this method does not always work. Check out Lindamood-Bell method, too. Look into the particulars of the recovery program at your son's school. The most important factor is the passion of the

teacher. If teaching reading is the teacher's life work, you are in business.

I am reminded of one teacher I knew who said, "I can teach a barn door to read." That would be someone to trust.

Dr. Larry Larsen is an Andover psychologist. If you would like to ask a question, or respond to one, email him at llrsn@comcast.net.

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Opinion

Good grades for lawmakers

The Massachusetts Legislature catches a great deal of criticism in this space, nearly all of it deserved. Frequent topics include its lack of transparency and, in some areas, painful inefficiency. A recent one involves the willingness of most members to accept an automatic pay raise despite the joblessness and underemployment that have stricken the state's workforce.

So count us among the surprised at recent findings of the MassINC Polling Group, which reports that our Legislature's public approval rating, at 65%, is highest than that of any other state. A tendency to negotiate budgets in secret and preordain leadership years ahead of time apparently do not trouble two-thirds of the people polled. One wonders who was asked to respond to the survey — the lawmakers, themselves?

Writing for CommonWealth magazine, Steve Koczela, the polling group's president, posits that political homogeneity has something to do with it. The voting public in Massachusetts fills our House of Representatives with four Democrats for every single Republican or independent. The Senate's three-member Republican caucus could literally meet in a phone booth. With so many people in the same party, the opportunity for disagreement is minimized.

Yet, as Koczela also writes, plenty of other states are similarly one-sided without as much public goodwill toward the legislative branch. The Indiana General Assembly, to name one, is the partisan opposite of Beacon Hill: Its Republicans enjoy super-majorities — that is, veto-proof membership — in both houses. Ten Democrats in that state's Senate could meet in a coat closet, if not a phone booth. But not even 45% of Hoosiers approve of their Legislature. A slightly more bipartisan New Hampshire Legislature scores only slightly better.

Perhaps the explanation is that people in Massachusetts feel warmly toward their individual representatives and senators and project those positive vibes onto the General Court. Or maybe it's that public servants, despite the error of their ways, are not as demonized here as much as they are elsewhere. At the end of the day, maybe a few more people in Massachusetts appreciate that nearly all of our lawmakers are committed public servants whose ambition is to do a good job.

Or maybe it's just that people in the survey didn't understand the question.

Whatever the explanation for these marks — still not as high, it should be noted, as the nearly 70% public approval rating for Gov. Charlie Baker — we'd echo the warning that comes with them: Dissent in the Legislature is essential, and too much good feeling could lead us to complacency and invite corruption. However it won this distinction, our Legislature should strive to earn it while also working to win the approval of the 35% of the public not satisfied with its performance.

No dancing for a new president

So much was different about President Joe Biden's inauguration as 46th president of the United States. In view of security, two weeks after an armed mob stormed the U.S. Capitol, and a pandemic surging across the country, the customary parade down Pennsylvania Avenue was skipped, as were the formal galas usually held to fete the new president.

Sure, the nation got a television special hosted by Tom Hanks and featuring the likes of Jon Bon Jovi and John Legend. But that's just another night of television.

There were no photos of celebrities and dignitaries in pageant gowns and tuxes. There were no videos of the first couple dancing to Beyonce singing Etta James, as Barack and Michelle Obama did in 2009, or stories of chickens let loose amid the celebration, as happened at a ball during Richard Nixon's second inaugural.

No, you can't have a ball, even one secured by a phalanx of agents from the FBI and Secret Service, with the nation in the grips of COVID-19. Alas, one more tradition is scrapped and replaced by some feeble, streamed stand-in.

Parties celebrating the new president have been held since James Madison's friends threw what was considered the first such "ball" in 1809 and charged \$4 a ticket to attend (about \$85 in today's money), according to Smithsonian Magazine.

Some presidents have many such parties. Bill Clinton is said to have set a record with 14 for his second inaugural. Four years ago, Donald Trump had only three.

There's surely some symbolism in the fact that Biden has no such celebration, not this year. In the midst of a pandemic, maybe it's best for his incoming administration to skip the bubbly, buckle down and get to work.

But for Americans jolted by division and images of political violence, such rituals of government provide a little bit of comfort that our nation continues on its course. It's too bad they had to skip the dancing.

The Stowe School: A safe haven in chaotic times



Susan McKelliget

Andover Center for History & Culture

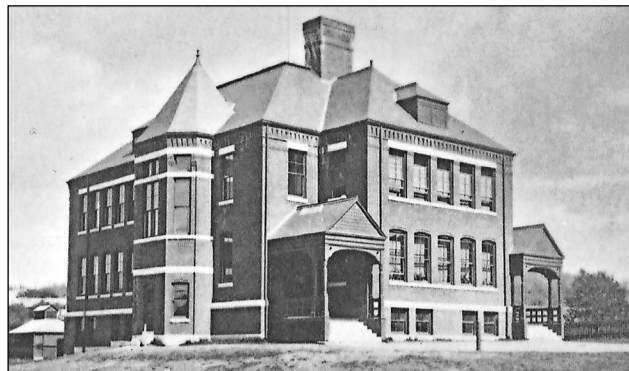
A lovely Victorian brick school built in the late 1800s on Bartlet Street, the Stowe School joined a group of schools in the center of town including Punchard High, Central Elementary, East Junior High and the Jackson School. The school was named for author Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose Andover home is located just up the street.

As needs changed, Stowe closed as a school for good in 1972.

Then, for a decade or so, the building housed school administrative and Community Services offices until it was burned in a "fire of suspicious origin" in the fall of 1981. Today, there is a small playground to the right of where the Stowe School originally stood.

Overcrowding in Andover's schools during the late 1960s meant that the town's sixth graders from the Shawsheen and other elementary schools were folded together into one school — the old Stowe Grammar School. I was one of those students.

For the first time, the majority of the town's 11- and 12-year-olds, who at that age were themselves in the throes of change, found themselves in an all sixth-grade school — certainly a novelty and most definitely a safe haven during



Photos courtesy Andover Center for History and Culture

The Stowe School in Andover stood next to what is now Doherty Middle School.



An aerial photo shows the cluster of schools in Andover center around 1975. The Stowe School is on the right, then, clockwise, are Central Elementary, Punchard High School, Memorial Auditorium, East Junior High and Samuel Jackson School.

changing times in both Andover and in the world at large.

The Stowe sixth-graders were able to have one last year being youngsters together before departing to either the East Junior High or the West Junior High schools as newly minted teenagers.

Climbing the rusty old jungle gym in the school yard was now possible for the girls, as the dress code had recently been thrown out the window. Skirts and knee socks — not ideal for jungle gym climbing and kickball

— were replaced with slacks and even jeans for the first time ever.

Best of all, there were no little kids in the way, or older kids around to make fun of these "children's games."

Even the teachers, some of them anyway, embraced the new cool fashions and liberated dress codes by wearing outfits such as bright orange and lime flared pantsuits, or wildly patterned skirts with white go-go boots.

Since both teachers and students were watching shows like "Laugh-In," catch

phrases like "sock it to me" and peace signs became the norm.

The older kids in Andover may have been involved in sit-ins and protests, but the sixth-grade girls could take part by wearing love beads and buying peace sign posters from the Sandpiper shop in town.

The boys grew their hair out and wore brightly colored neckerchiefs held together in front with gold rings. Bell-bottoms swept the school for both boys and girls — and teachers too.

In 1969, in addition to the Vietnam War, drug use was featured on the three network TV channels, and the Stowe teachers incorporated these issues into their teaching.

Students got a crash course in what drugs actually looked like when a school counselor showed each class a drug sample kit. He opened a black suitcase in which a variety of bizarrely named drugs (to us) were encased in a see-through plastic covering.

Of course, a quiz on this followed.

Dress codes, the war, drugs, riots, changing mores all made the world a chaotic place. But the Stowe school was truly a haven for its students. We could feel safe, as we were all a certain age together, learning about the outside world in a nurturing environment.

As a farewell to Stowe, our class buried a time capsule in the field near the track related to our year, 1969-70. We even tried to imagine being older and thinking back some day way off in the future to our magical time at this school at that age.

And now, being older, that is what we do.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Biden and Harris embody resilience

To the editor:

Last Wednesday marked the start of the Biden-Harris administration and the start of America's next chapter. As on every Inauguration Day, we hope for a successful presidential term, one that will bring new and continued success for our country.

Together we will rebuild our country, guided by experienced leaders President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Everything about this year has been described as unprecedented, but for

Biden and Harris, who have overcome great adversity in their personal lives, many of the pains and struggles now plaguing Americans are all too familiar.

After tragically losing his wife and daughter in an accident, and later losing his son Beau, Biden shares the grief of Americans who suffered personal loss this year without a proper goodbye.

Harris began her career as an attorney, inspired to protect and defend others after her close friend opened up about an abusive home life. She has been a fierce advocate for people seeking justice, and she has played a critical role in changing the

system to better serve those it claims to protect.

As the first female, Black and South Asian vice president, Harris is well versed in surmounting barriers no previous vice president has faced.

In the face of personal and professional adversity, Biden and Harris embody the shared resilience of our nation.

They enter the White House under some of the most challenging circumstances our county has ever experienced, though the current economic turmoil is reminiscent of Biden's first arrival in the White House in 2008. He helped restore

our economy once before, and we can entrust him to once again get Americans back to work.

Americans' will to overcome is strong, and we are fortunate to embark on this next chapter in our nation's history with resilient, magnanimous leaders who are determined to serve as president and vice president to all Americans, not only to those whose votes they earned.

If we can unite as Americans in our shared yearning for better days and vow to forge ahead, this next chapter will be brighter.

SEN. BARRY FINEGOLD
D-Andover

WEB QUESTION

What do you look for in a school superintendent?

A search firm helping find a replacement for Sheldon Berman is asking residents what they look for in a schools chief. The firm conducted an online survey and now plans public forums for parents, teachers, staff, students and others to take about the qualities they hope to see.

Which one of these attributes do you value most?

VISIONARY: Give me someone with excellent ideas about curriculum and programs to better serve Andover students.

LEADERSHIP: Andover most needs a leader who can unite often disparate groups — of parents, teachers, kids and others — behind common educational goals.

STRONG MANAGEMENT: A superintendent needs an excellent understanding of the programs, policies, laws and contracts that come to bear in our schools — and the ability to ensure all are

implemented correctly.

FISCAL CONTROL: Education is a massive expense, and our superintendent above all needs to be reasonably frugal with town dollars, while always looking for resources available elsewhere.

TRANSPARENCY: Our superintendent must be honest and forthright about decisions that won't always please everyone.

SOMETHING ELSE: The editor's imagination was not sufficiently broad to list the most important quality of a school superintendent.

Last week's question

Should lawmakers and state officials accept pay raises they were automatically granted at the beginning of the year?

The state Constitution provides for raises for top elected officials that are tied to changes in the state's median household income. Gov. Charlie Baker in December certified a 6.46% increase for lawmakers and a 4.89% raise for constitutional

officers.

Most top elected officials and a handful of lawmakers have said they won't accept the extra money. Other lawmakers say they'll take the money and give it to charity.

What do you think they should do?
DECLINE IT: The economy is hobbled by the effects of a pandemic and measures meant to stop its spread. Many people have lost jobs. Elected leaders would be tone deaf to take a raise in this environment. **(35 votes)**

DONATE IT: A lot of people could use the help, and the lawmakers donating their raises will ensure the money goes where it's needed most. **(8 votes)**

TAKE IT: Lawmakers work hard, and their base salary of \$70,530, with a raise, is still low for people with their skill and experience. They should have no qualms taking the money to which they're entitled. **(9 votes)**

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Merrimack College ramps up testing

Students begin return to campus after months away

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@eagletribune.com

Merrimack College students are returning to campus this week after working remotely due to COVID-19 since Thanksgiving. Administrators say they will be greeted by increased testing and the hope that vaccinations in the not-so-distant future will help the school return to some sense of normalcy.

Vice President Jeffrey Doggett said it was always going to be tough to reopen the residential living community of mostly 18- to 22-year-olds after they were sent home in March of last year; and they knew there would be cases of the virus in the fall and spring.

The college has focused on aggressive testing and social distancing protocols to keep it as safe as possible from the outset. However, as students begin arriving this week, the testing rates are being doubled.

All students, staff, professors and others who come to campus regularly will be required to be tested twice a week in the college's updated plans. That's an increase from once a week last semester.

"Merrimack has taken on the responsibility of trying to achieve two goals: keep a campus open that is safe, and continue to be a positive economic driver in the state," Doggett said. "And only through a program like this (with asymptomatic testing) are we able to do so."

Students are returning to campus as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to hit record highs around the country. Colleges across the Commonwealth have become more aggressive in their fight against the virus,

and Merrimack follows that trend, he said.

Since the school started conducting widespread testing once weekly, there had been 274 cases of COVID-19 as of Jan. 17, according to the college's information dashboard. Most of the students who tested positive were asymptomatic, Doggett said.

"We knew going in that (testing everyone) would mean our numbers were going to be fairly high compared to communities that don't do surveillance testing," Doggett said.

An October outbreak in a freshman dorm, Monican Hall, with 110 students testing positive caused North Andover to become a "red zone," high-risk for COVID-19 transmission, which rolled the town back in its reopening plans. There were other more isolated cases during the semester before students went home at Thanksgiving, but nothing like the dormitory outbreak.

Since Monican Hall sits in Andover, tensions arose, with North Andover appealing to Gov. Charlie Baker to

not count the college's number of cases toward the town. Baker declined the request, however, the towns — North Andover and Andover — decided cases would be attributed to where students live.

Now, positive cases at the college are applied to the town where the student's residence actually sits. The state has also changed the criteria for designating a "red zone."

Even without students on campus at Merrimack, Andover and North Andover remain designated "red zones." Both have case positivity rates greater than 5%, meaning that more than 5% of tests administered among the local residents are positive.

As students move onto campus there will be a significant increase in the number of tests administered. It's unclear how the additional testing will impact both Andover and North Andover.

"We'll have to see how it all plays out," said Thomas Carbone, health director for Andover. "I don't know what the impact on the testing

and those students coming back will be."

Health officials from Andover and North Andover meet with a Merrimack College representative weekly to keep up to date with the college of about 4,000 students, Carbone said.

"With the initial outbreak at the freshman dorm, I don't think we got the calls we expected we should have ahead of time," Carbone said. "In the intervening months as (smaller outbreaks) arose, we were having those conversations."

Since students left just before Thanksgiving, multiple COVID-19 vaccines have been approved.

The college just received designation as a vaccination center, Doggett said. This will allow Merrimack to ensure that its students and staff can receive the vaccine, and pending state approval, other locals will be able to get vaccinated there as well, he added.

Business leaders hopeful, yet wary of taxes

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

that business leaders say could drag on the country's economic recovery.

BOSTON — President Joe Biden has pledged to provide more support for small businesses hampered by the financial impact of coronavirus pandemic, and while the state's business leaders say they're optimistic that more aid will be coming, they're also worried some of the new administration's policies may hurt them.

Biden, who was sworn into office Jan. 20, is proposing a \$1.9 trillion relief package that would provide \$440 billion for businesses, including a \$15 billion grant program to help the hardest hit businesses and \$175 billion for small business lending and investment programs.

But the Democrat also wants to double the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour, expand mandates for paid leave for workers and implement other policies

He's also talked about raising taxes on top earners with incomes above \$400,000, as well as increases in capital gains and payroll taxes.

"The additional help for businesses to get back on their feet is welcomed and much needed," said Joe Bevilacqua, president of the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"But there's also a concern that we're going to see an increased burden for businesses that don't have the money to pay higher taxes."

Chris Carozzi, state president of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, said his organization shares concerns that the new administration will pursue policies that mean higher costs or that will squeeze business owners as they try to recover.

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Dolores Beal, 84

July 31, 1936 - January 23, 2021

ANDOVER, MA — Dolores M. Beal 84, of Andover, died Saturday, January 23, 2021 at Lawrence General Hospital.

Dolores was born in Lawrence to the late Arthur and Mary (Dobosz) Nolet.

She was a graduate of Lawrence High School and the Lawrence General Hospital School of Nursing, Class of 1956.

Dolores was employed as a RN at the Lawrence General Hospital, where she worked in the maternity ward and also at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in the critical care maternity ward prior to leaving her position to raise her family. Dolores was a born caregiver. She spent her entire life caring for her family. First raising her two children and after they were grown, she devoted her life to care for her ailing mother and her Uncle John, who was like a father to her. Dolores was blessed with becoming a grandmother and enjoyed every minute of taking care of each and every one of them. She would be seen waiting at the bus stop, dropping them off in the car-pool line at school or bringing them to extra-curricular activities. Her biggest joy was when she was cheering them on in the football stands, in the gymnasium during a basketball game, in the outfield watching a Little League game or watching a dance recital or cheerleading competition.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Dr. John A. Beal of Andover and her two children, Johnna D'Urso and



her husband Sean of Andover and her son Ryan Beal and his wife, Shanna (Lynch) Beal, also of Andover. Also among her survivors are her five grandchildren, Taylor and Aidan D'Urso and John, Lincoln, and Ryan Elizabeth Beal. Dolores is also survived by her sisters-in-law, Janet (Beal) Sweeny and Louise Beal as well as 6 nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, Donald J. Nolet of Lawrence and by his two children, Donald Jr. and Kim M. Nolet.

ARRANGEMENTS: A private family service and burial was held under the direction of the Conte Funeral Home of Andover.

To offer online condolences please visit www.contefuneralhomes.com.



William S. Schiavoni, 27

November 12, 1993 - January 19, 2021

Loving son, father and brother

HAMDEN, CT — William S. "Billy" Schiavoni, age 27, of Hamden, Conn., formerly of Andover, passed away at home on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

Billy was born in Dayton, Ohio, on November 12, 1993.

He was raised in Andover, Mass., attended Andover schools and graduated from Andover High School in 2012.

For the past year and a half, he worked as a Barber at Jesse's Barber Shop in Oxford, Conn.

Billy enjoyed listening to heavy metal music, hiking, rock climbing, playing his electric guitar, and disc golf.

He will lovingly be remembered for his humorous, fun loving, kind, compassionate, and gregarious personality.

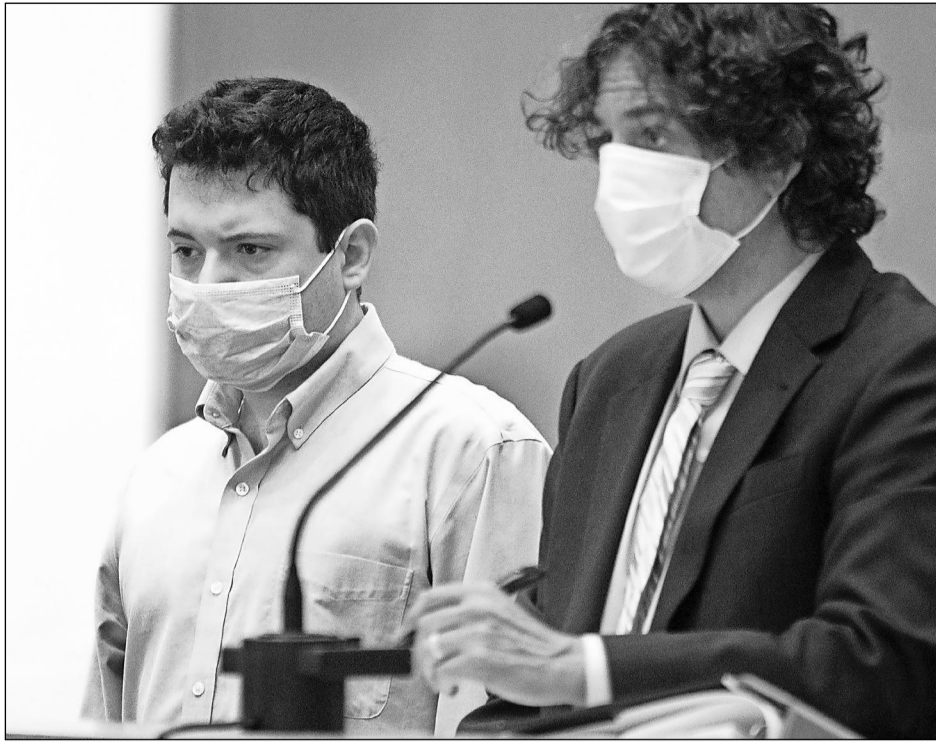
Billy is survived by his parents, Peter D. and Janet (Dwyer) Schiavoni of Salem, N.H.; his son, Grayson James Schiavoni of West Haven, Conn.; his son's mother, Brittany A. Bednaz of West Haven, Conn.; two brothers, Thomas J. Schiavoni of Dover, N.H., and Peter A. Schiavoni of Salem, N.H.; also many extended family members and friends.



Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a private funeral Mass (invitation only) will be celebrated Monday, Jan. 25, at 11 a.m., at St. Robert Bellarmine Church, Andover. Family and friends are invited to participate virtually by going to www.saintroberts.net.

Donations honoring his memory may be made to Into-Action Recovery, P.O. Box 253, Tewksbury, MA 01876.

Arrangements entrusted to Farmer & Dee Funeral Home, Tewksbury, www.farmerand-dee.com.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Bradley Zucchini of Lawrence was arraigned in Lawrence District Court in connection with a January 2020 crash that killed Yahaira Colon, 30, a mother of four. He is flanked by his defense attorney, Murat Erkan, right, of Andover. Zucchini has since been indicted an Essex County grand jury and his case has been moved to Salem Superior Court.

Conditions, but no bail, for man charged in North Andover fatal

By JILL HARMACINSKI
jharmacinski@eagletribune.com

A Lawrence man involved in a January 2020 crash that killed a mother of four once again was released from court without bail following his arraignment on motor vehicle homicide and related charges.

Bradley Zucchini, 27, was formally arraigned in Salem Superior Court on Monday following his Dec. 10 indictment on charges of motor vehicle homicide while operating under the influence, leaving the scene of an accident causing personal injury or death, speeding and a marked lanes violation.

Yahaira Colon, 30, was killed Jan. 12, 2020 when the BMW Zucchini was driving slammed into her SUV near Waverly Road at 10:08 p.m., police said.

Zucchini's blood alcohol level was .322, which is four times over the legal limit of .08, according to a police report.

Prosecutor James Michael Delany said there was "no question of bail," noting Zucchini walked into Lawrence District Court last summer for a previous arraignment and also showed up in Superior Court on Monday.

Murat Erkan of Andover is Zucchini's defense attorney.

If convicted, the penalties

Zucchini faces in Superior Court are more severe.

Zucchini's conditions of release, approved Monday by Judge Sal Tabit, remain the same as what was set during his arraignment last summer. He must wear a SCRAM unit — a remote alcohol monitor — remain alcohol free and submit to random screens. He also must not drive without a valid license.

Colon's passenger, Jessica Mercado, 32, survived the crash. She suffered a torn aorta, broken femur, knee injuries, broken hip and post traumatic stress disorder, she said previously.

The night of Jan. 12, Colon, who owned a condominium nearby, was driving Mercado home to Lawrence, according to authorities.

Colon's family members said they were told Yahaira saw the oncoming car swerving on Waverly Road. They said she pulled over and attempted to get out of the car's path but her vehicle was hit anyway.

Colon's SUV landed on its right side near a front lawn, according to police. The other vehicle, a BMW sedan, was stopped nearby.

Zucchini was also injured in the crash and was visibly bleeding from his nose, according to police.

He smelled of alcohol and he was taken by ambulance to Lawrence General Hospital, according to a police

report.

Mercado told investigators she and Colon "were driving down Waverly Road when an oncoming sedan had swerved in their lane out of nowhere," the report states.

"Colon attempted to avoid the collision but the oncoming car hit them head on causing them to roll over," the report continues.

Colon was pronounced dead at Lawrence General Hospital at 11:28 p.m. Mercado was Medflighted to Boston Medical Center for treatment, according to the report.

A Lawrence General doctor who treated Zucchini after the crash said he had "acute alcohol intoxication" and a "slight slurred speech," according to medical records reviewed by police.

"One of the doctors stated that after admission, Zucchini was 'intoxicated at that time,'" according to the report.

Samples of Zucchini's blood from that night were analyzed Jan. 31 at the state police crime lab. The blood alcohol for the first test was .322 and the .326 for the second test, according to a North Andover police report.

Massachusetts drivers are considered intoxicated with a blood alcohol level of .08.

Follow staff reporter Jill Harmacinski on Twitter @EagleTribJill.

Baker reflects on sacrifices, progress, in COVID-19 fight

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Gov. Charlie Baker highlighted the "heroes" and "sacrifices" in the state's battle against the coronavirus in his annual speech on Tuesday and said "better days are coming" with more vaccines being distributed and public health trends improving.

The second-term Republican devoted much his half-hour speech to reflecting on the impact of the pandemic on the state, the thousands of lives lost and disrupted, and the economic upheaval the virus left in its wake over the past 10 months.

"The pandemic changed everything," Baker said. "And it was much more than just the worst public health crisis of the last hundred years. It came with economic calamity. Severe job loss. Business closures. Anxiety. Fear. Civil unrest. Riots. Racial injustice. Isolation. Death. And Loss."

Baker's annual State of the Commonwealth address — which is normally delivered in the ornate House chambers before a packed crowd of lawmakers, supreme court justices and other elected officials — was broadcast live from the governor's Statehouse office, without an audience.

"Tonight's address is just one more example of a gathering — a ritual of coming together — that's been put on hold by the pandemic," Baker said.

Baker noted that there are encouraging signs in the state's public health data, following a surge of infections and hospitalizations after the holidays.

The 7-day average positivity rate in Massachusetts dropped to 4.77% as of Tuesday, down from 7.2% two weeks ago. Hospitalizations are also declining, he said.

"The end is in sight — but for the next few months, we must continue to stay vigilant and take steps to stop the spread," Baker said. "Know this — we will beat this virus. And life will begin to return to normal."

The state has reported 481,617 cases of the virus and 13,930 deaths since the outbreak began in mid-March.

Baker acknowledged the slow pace of vaccine rollout and said he expects it will accelerate as more of the drugs are available and more vaccination sites are opened up.

"From large-scale facilities at stadiums to local sites at health clinics, we are working to reach vulnerable populations and get as many people protected as soon as doses are delivered," he said.

Baker, who unveils his fiscal 2022 budget Wednesday, also highlighted his administration's efforts to expand COVID-19 testing facilities, purchase protective equipment for health care workers and respond to the economic impacts of the virus. But he acknowledged that the state faces many

challenges ahead.

"Too many people still can't find a job. Our downturns are hurting. And many of our small businesses have been crushed by the pandemic," Baker said.

Despite the turmoil of the pandemic, Baker noted that his administration worked with the Democratic-controlled Legislature to pass a sweeping overhaul of policing, economic development, housing reforms and other major initiatives.

His remarks come as he weighs whether to seek an unprecedented third term in 2022, with his job approval numbers among the highest of any governor.

Baker hasn't said he will seek another term, but he hasn't ruled it out, and his campaign apparatus has been kept in place in the event that he decides to run again.

In Tuesday's address, Baker also bemoaned the lack of civility in American politics and politicians who "thrive on take-downs and judgments" — a veiled reference to former President Donald Trump's divisive rhetoric.

"In the end, this makes it harder for us to understand one another. To learn from one another," Baker said. "And most importantly, to grow."

Christian M. Wade covers the Massachusetts Statehouse for North of Boston Media Group's newspapers and websites. Email him at cwade@cnh.com.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO

Susan McKelliget

Andover Center for History and Culture

100 Years Ago: Jan. 21, 1921

An earnest appeal is made for clothing of all kinds for men, women, and children. Old blankets and sheets are especially desired. Many persons do not realize that the severe weather of the last week and lack of work has borne heavily on many Andover families. Twenty children were fitted out with warm clothing last week. Can't you help? Bundles may be left at the Andover Guild house or will be called for by notifying Miss Anna W. Kuhn, telephone 26.

At a meeting of the Board of Public Works held Tuesday evening, Jan. 18, the question of granting permits for fishing, boating and cutting ice at Haggett's pond was fully considered. So far as the cutting of ice is concerned, the board will issue permits from now until March 1, subject to certain conditions in the permits which must be adhered to.

Shawsheen Laundry advertisement, "We no longer look upon women as mere menials. Our new conception of them is as helpmates and companions, with equal social and civic privileges. Women are barred from quick realization of this finer future, however, by such unnecessary duties as the family wash, that alone takes up from one and one-half to two days of the week. A freer womanhood — a cleaner America — these are the motives behind the movement for educating women to the use of the modern laundry for their family washing."

75 Years Ago: Jan. 24, 1946

A photo shows "Jim Christie and some of the school-boy volunteers assisting in the paper drive held on Sunday afternoon. Over 35 tons of waste-paper were collected. Here they are shown loading a box-car which will transport the paper to a processing plant."

The biggest affair of the season will take place Jan. 30, when the March of Dimes Ball, under the joint sponsorship of the Andover Service-men's Fund Committee and the Andover Infantile Paralysis Fund will get under way at 8 p.m. in the Memorial Auditorium.

"Insofar as supplies of fresh beef, lamb, pork, and veal are concerned, we received the last of our share today, Jan. 24. The small amount we received did not last three hours! From now until the meat strike is settled all we can expect to have in our market will be turkeys, chickens, fowl, and fresh fish." "The J.E. Greeley Co. Telephone Andover 1234"

50 Years Ago: Jan. 28, 1971

Andover is currently thinking about recycling bottles and cans. The Andover Ecology Action committee has inserted an article in the annual town meeting warrant which provides a bylaw prohibiting sale of non-returnable bottles, which no doubt, will produce some interesting debate and discussion.

The 1971 school budget places priority on math and reading programs, early childhood education, plus purchasing a many terminated computer service with both administrative and pupil instruction functions.

Partial Editorial: "It seems unfortunate that the decision, expected for some time, finally had to be made — dropping the traditional Andover vs. No. Andover football game on Thanksgiving Day. The traditional rivalry, built over a number of years, was a good one between the two schools. It seemed inevitable that the rivalry in football would have to be dropped, for North Andover's football fortunes have been poor these past few years."

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COVID-19 variant stirs concerns

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Medical experts are worried that a new, highly contagious strain of the coronavirus could lead to another surge of infections and hospitalizations.

State health officials reported at least two cases of the new COVID-19 variant, known as B.1.1.7, in Massachusetts. They include the infection of a Boston woman in her 20s who recently traveled to the United Kingdom, where the variant was first detected.

Research has shown the new COVID-19 variant is more contagious than other strains, medical experts say, and could complicate efforts to prevent spread of the virus as the first vaccines are rolled out.

“It’s much more

transmissible, easier to spread and harder to control,” said Dr. David Hamer, a professor at Boston University’s School of Public Health and School of Medicine.

Hamer said COVID-19 vaccines produced by Pfizer and Cambridge-based Moderna have proven effective against the new variant. But he cautioned of a risk that the virus could mutate further, becoming resistant to the vaccines.

“The virus is continually changing,” Hamer said. “And if there’s a lot of it around, as there is now, that increases the likelihood of mutations.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned that, without new precautions, the new COVID-19 variant could become the dominant strain of the coronavirus and lead to another surge in infections

and hospitalizations.

The new strain has been detected in at least a dozen states and several countries.

Hamer said Massachusetts and the rest of the country need to begin monitoring and tracking the changing genetic makeup of COVID-19 samples collected from patients.

“The reality is we’re not systematically sequencing the virus, so it could be more widespread,” he said. “We just don’t know.”

Like most states, Massachusetts has been hard hit by the coronavirus, with more than 454,000 cases of infection and 13,469 deaths reported as of Wednesday.

Nationally, the virus has infected more than 24 million people and claimed more than 400,000 million lives -- a quarter of them in the past

month.

Dr. Howard Koh, a professor at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School for Public Health, said the presence of a new, highly contagious strain of the virus reinforces the need to “double down” on health precautions such as wearing face coverings, practicing social distancing and avoiding crowds, until enough of the population is vaccinated.

“We’re in the midst of the most ambitious vaccination program in U.S. history, and that needs to accelerate,” he said. “The urgency to do so has only increased with this new strain of the virus.”

Christian M. Wade covers the Massachusetts Statehouse for North of Boston Media Group’s newspapers and websites. Email him at cwade@cnihi.com.

State urged to modify rules on chicken cages

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — The food industry is pushing to update a voter-approved law requiring larger enclosures for egg-laying chickens, warning of shortages and higher prices when the rules take effect next year.

Question 3, which bans shelled eggs, veal and other meat produced by cage-confined farm animals, was approved by more than 77% of voters in 2016.

Food industry advocates say its requirements — which mandate 1 1/2 square-feet per bird enclosures — are stricter than what other states require and would lead to egg shortages and higher prices in Massachusetts.

They want the limit reduced to enclosures of 1 square foot for large “aviary” farms.

“If we don’t address this soon, it will create major disruptions in the food supply chain,” said Brian Houghton,

senior vice president for governmental affairs and communications for the Massachusetts Food Association, which represents grocers and supermarkets. “There will be shortages and higher prices for consumers who depend on eggs and other sources of protein.”

Houghton said about 98% of eggs sold in Massachusetts come from out of state, and producers will be reluctant to make costly modifications to cages to comply with its rules.

“People aren’t going to change their facilities just for Massachusetts,” he said. “They’ll just sell their product somewhere else.”

Several proposals to update the law were filed in the previous legislative session but failed to win approval. Backers of the changes say the 1 square foot per bird standard for chicken cages has been adopted by the United Egg Producers and incorporated into new laws in California, Rhode Island, Oregon and Washington.

Animal welfare groups, which campaigned for the new law, were on board with the changes, which they say will improve conditions for egg-laying hens by adding new rules that were not included in the ballot question four years ago.

But the changes were opposed at the time by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, which cited how some chicken farmers had already made costly modifications to comply with the 2016 referendum.

Lawmakers have begun filing new bills for the upcoming two-year session, but so far none have been proposed to deal with changes to the cage ban.

Meanwhile, the food industry and others are waiting on Attorney General Maura Healey’s office, which was supposed to finalize regulations for the new cage ban last year.

On Tuesday, the Humane Farming Association, a California-based animal welfare group, filed a state lawsuit

against Healey seeking to force her to release rules following the original referendum. The lawsuit accuses Healey of working with the egg industry to weaken the law.

“It’s outrageous to see that this animal-protection measure, which was overwhelmingly approved by voters, is now languishing while the AG supports legislation that will drastically weaken the measure,” Bradley Miller, the group’s national director, said in a statement.

Nationwide, the Humane Society estimates 90% of egg-laying chickens — about 300 million birds — are kept in wire battery cages so restrictive they cannot extend their wings.

Opponents of Question 3 pointed out that Massachusetts isn’t home to the large-scale farms that use “battery” cages for livestock. They argued that animal welfare groups were using Massachusetts as a testing ground for similar referendums in other states.

Domestic violence murders plummet in pandemic

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

Domestic violence murders in Massachusetts have plummeted amid the pandemic, but victims’ advocates say that doesn’t mean less abuse is happening.

Seven homicides were attributed to domestic violence in the state last year, a decline of more than 75% from the previous year, according to a new report by the state’s Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.

In 2019, there were 28 homicide victims, the report noted, which was up from 15 in the previous year.

The numbers of domestic violence deaths often fluctuate, and the panel said there’s “no research to explain the significant decrease.”

Sara Stanley, executive director of Salem-based Healing Abuse Working for Change, said she suspects that part of the reason for the drop could be because victims aren’t leaving their abusers as frequently — a time when women are often most likely to be killed.

“That’s when we see the abuser take that drastic step to regain control,” said Stanley.

Instead, she believes, many victims are trapped by circumstances — whether financial or an inability to stay with relatives out of concern over spreading the coronavirus to, say, an aging parent, or fearing they’re a financial burden on an unemployed sibling.

Meanwhile, the number of protective and harassment prevention orders filed by abuse victims also declined in 2020, the report added.

Charges filed against perpetrators of domestic violence, such as violating a restraining order or assaulting a household member, also dropped last year, according to the report, which cited data from the state Trial Court.

The state panel cautioned that a decline in reported abuse “does not reflect a reduction in domestic violence.”

Advocates stress abuse still goes on

The report’s authors suggested that the pandemic actually has worsened the situation for many victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

“The necessary steps of preventing the spread of COVID-19 have left children, individuals, and families experiencing violence in the home, particularly vulnerable, isolated and at an increased risk,” the report states.

Stanley said that’s what her staff is seeing.

“What we are seeing is when victims do come to us they have suffered more significant injuries,” Stanley said.

The 13-member Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, which includes law enforcement officials and victims advocates, was created under a 2014 law that seeks to investigate the circumstances surrounding all domestic violence-related deaths.

Panel members also looked at deaths of perpetrators — whether by suicide, police intervention or self-defense by the victim — to illustrate the impact of domestic violence on families. There were four such perpetrator deaths last year.

Domestic violence homicides in 2020 included the murder of Migdalia Perez, a 47-year-old Gardner woman who was killed by her former boyfriend before police said he turned the gun on himself.

Toni Troop, a spokeswoman for Jane Doe Inc., a Boston-based victim advocacy group, said the panel’s report “doesn’t tell the full story.” Despite an initial decline in reports of domestic violence at the outset of the pandemic, she said call centers have seen an uptick in activity from victims seeking help.

“What we have heard consistently is that the level of violence has increased significantly in the past few months as people continue to be socially isolated and not

able to access resources,” Troop said.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, who leads the Governor’s Council on Sexual Assault

and Domestic Violence, is among those who have raised concerns about victims being “trapped at home” with their abusers as the state urges people to stay indoors to prevent spread of the coronavirus.

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Solution in Classified Section

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Nuclear near reach weapon
 - Of she
 - Hyperbolic function
 - Rice dish
 - A team’s best pitcher
 - Strong and healthy
 - Induces
 - Popular manga series
 - From a distance
 - Split
 - Consumed
 - Cushions
 - All over
 - One who provides food
 - St. ___ Girl, brand of beer
 - Walking slowly
 - Wood
 - Semitic gods
 - Bugle
 - 60-minute periods (abbr.)
 - Congressman
 - Plant of the heath family
 - Subdivision of an army
 - Having many different forms
 - Shellfish
 - Latin for hail
 - Between sixth and seventh
 - Maori war dance
 - Precious or semiprecious stone
 - Teeter totter
 - Deity
 - A major division of geological time
 - Fishing net
 - Small Caribbean bird
 - Field force unit
 - Japanese beverage

- CLUES DOWN**
- Prevents oil spills
 - Monetary unit
 - The color of the sky
 - Dough used to make tortillas
 - Popular comic strip character
 - Distinct form of a plant
 - Replenishment
 - Has its own altar
 - Expedition to see animals
 - Group of related organisms
 - His and ___
 - Frantically
 - Small integer
 - Unit of energy
 - Studies of culture
 - Taxi
 - Doctors’ group
 - Don’t know when yet
 - Former measure of length
 - Popular CBS series
 - Skin condition
 - Christian creator and ruler of the universe
 - They ___
 - Caused severe damage
 - Work done under harsh conditions for no pay
 - One point east of due south
 - Sea eagles
 - Drenched
 - State capital
 - Italian city
 - Sweetheart (archaic)
 - Brief talk
 - Popular disco group: Bee ___
 - First Chinese dynasty
 - Military vehicle
 - Chinese Moslem

Announcements

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HOMES

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANDOVER ZONING BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING
A public hearing will be held at virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. on the petition of Lillian Montalto, 32 Park St., Andover, MA as a Party Aggrieved for review of a decision made by the Inspector of Buildings &/or for a special permit under Art. VIII, §5.2.5.1 for the continued use of an internally illuminated sign.
Premises affected are located at 32 Park St., Andover, MA in a GB District and are shown on Assessor Map 39 as Lot 6. The petition may be viewed by request at 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
ELIZABETH OLTMAN, CHAIR
BOARD OF APPEALS

ANDOVER ZONING BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING
A public hearing will be held at virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. on the petition of Karen Hogan, 14 Beech Circle, Andover, MA for a special permit under Art. VIII, §3.3.5 &/or for a variance from Art. VIII, §4.1.2 to construct additions & alterations that won't meet the minimum front & side setback requirements.
Premises affected are located at 14 Beech Circle, Andover, MA in an SRA District and are shown on Assessor Map 54 as Lot 88. To view the application, contact 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
ELIZABETH OLTMAN, CHAIR
BOARD OF APPEALS
AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

ANDOVER ZONING BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING
A public hearing will be held virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. on the petition of C. Ham & C. Elliott, 110 Lowell St., Andover, MA, for a special permit under Art. VIII, §3.3.5 &/or for a variance from Art. VIII, §4.1.2 to construct a 2nd story addition that won't meet the minimum front setback requirement.
Premises affected are located at 110 Lowell St., Andover, MA, in an SRA District, and are shown on Assessor Map 89 as Lot 1. The petition may be viewed by request at 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
Elizabeth Oltman, Chair
Board of Appeals
AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

ANDOVER ZONING BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING
A public hearing will be held virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 6:30 P.M., on the petition of Ronald & Sheila Ballinger, 65 Burnham Rd., Andover, MA, for a special permit under Art. VIII, §3.3.5 &/or for a variance from Art. VIII, §4.1.2 to construct a rear addition that won't meet the minimum rear setback requirement.
Premises affected are located at 65 Burnham Rd., Andover, MA, in an SRA District, and are shown on Assessor Map 19 as Lot 2. The petition may be viewed by request at 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
ELIZABETH OLTMAN, CHAIR
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AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

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AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

TRADES/INDUSTRIAL
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● 401k Plan
● Tuition Reimbursement
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ATTENTION FUEL CONSUMERS:
All ads in this classification run in our 10 paper "Classified Connection" that covers the North Shore, Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire.
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Prices may reflect a "Local" delivery area only and may be higher for an extended delivery area.

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CUDDLE CHAIR Gorgeous "cuddle chair" in art deco motif. Original price from Neiman Marcus was \$3500. Have downsized and have no where to put! \$750. Excellent condition. Gloucester. sharonmaher@gmail.com.

SELL YOUR CAR FAST!
CALL 978.946.2300 TODAY.

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANDOVER ZONING BOARD NOTICE OF HEARING
A public hearing will be held at virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. on the petition of Karen Hogan, 14 Beech Circle, Andover, MA for a special permit under Art. VIII, §3.3.5 &/or for a variance from Art. VIII, §4.1.2 to construct additions & alterations that won't meet the minimum front & side setback requirements.
Premises affected are located at 14 Beech Circle, Andover, MA in an SRA District and are shown on Assessor Map 54 as Lot 88. To view the application, contact 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
ELIZABETH OLTMAN, CHAIR
BOARD OF APPEALS
AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

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A public hearing will be held virtually at www.andovertv.org on Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 6:30 P.M., on the petition of C. Ham & C. Elliott, 110 Lowell St., Andover, MA, for a special permit under Art. VIII, §3.3.5 &/or for a variance from Art. VIII, §4.1.2 to construct a 2nd story addition that won't meet the minimum front setback requirement.
Premises affected are located at 110 Lowell St., Andover, MA, in an SRA District, and are shown on Assessor Map 89 as Lot 1. The petition may be viewed by request at 978-623-8627, zoning@andoverma.gov or 36 Bartlet St., Andover, MA.
Elizabeth Oltman, Chair
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AT - 1/21, 1/28/21

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Sports

DEFENSIVE ACE

Blue-liner Chiango a major reason girls hockey is off to dominant start

By DAVID WILLIS
Staff Writer

Try as she might, Andover girls hockey standout Ashley Chiango can't kick a nasty habit on the ice.

She is, however, no longer allowing said habit to gnaw at her psyche.

"I still count every goal scored against me," said Chiango. "But playing defense has taught me a lot about accepting my mistakes, learning from them, and moving on. As a defenseman, I've made a countless number of mistakes on the ice, and I've had to learn how to not get down on myself."

"Our assistant coach, Meagan Keefe, helped me move past mistakes by saying, 'Tie it to a balloon and let it go.' I remember her telling me this freshman year and it has helped me dramatically."

So far this winter, Chiango hasn't had to worry about releasing too many metaphorical balloons.

Led by a crushing defense paced by Chiango and a dominant offense that had scored 35 goals in five games, Andover girls hockey raced to a 5-0 record going into the week.

The Golden Warriors are currently ranked No. 7 in Massachusetts by the state-wide Hockey Night in Boston rankings.

This marks the second time in three seasons Andover has opened the season with five straight wins. The 2018-19 Golden Warriors started season with six straight victories, finished 19-3-1 and advanced to the Division 1 semifinals.

"Of course starting our season undefeated is thrilling," said Chiango, a junior and member of the National Honor Society. "But the excitement goes beyond the scoreboard. The communication, teamwork, grit and energy out on the ice this year is what is making us so successful."

Andover's defense has allowed just eight goals on the season, surrendered only one goal to 2019 Division 1 state champion Methuen/Tewksbury and two goals to contender Haverhill/Pentucket/North Andover.

Leading the way on defense is Chiango, now in her third season as a top



TIM JEAN/Staff file photo

Andover's Ashley Chiango plays defense against HPNA last winter. Chiango has helped the Golden Warriors get off to a dominant start.



COURTESY PHOTO

Andover's Ashley Chiango takes the puck off ice against HPNA. Chiango is a top defenseman for the Golden Warriors, who opened the season with five straight wins.

blue-liner.

"Ashley is a great player," said second-year Andover head coach Tyler Vigue. "She has been with the team since freshman year and has the skill sets to play college hockey."

Chiango began playing hockey when she was just 4-years-old, and almost immediately she fell in love with playing defense.

"I've always been a defenseman," said Chiango, who has not scored a goal this

season, but has four assists. "I've tried playing forward on a few occasions, but I've always preferred defense. I like to be able to see the whole ice and keep the play in front of me. I also enjoy the physical battles in the corners and the shots off the point."

"I love the physical aspect of hockey. My coaches have helped me train hard and learn how to use my size and speed to my competitive advantage. Once I began to

accept my mistakes and use them to help me improve, I noticed a dramatic difference in my performance on the ice as I was able to keep a positive attitude."

Chiango was a key contributor to the 2018-19 Division 1 semifinalists, and last year's squad that went 11-7-4 and lost to eventual state champ Austin Prep in the tournament.

But, going into this winter, she wasn't sure quite what to expect.

"I entered this season with a lot of uncertainty due to the COVID pandemic," she said. "During our (fall workout) season, we played with a day-by-day mindset that there was the possibility of getting shut down. After a successful season in the fall, it was apparent that the team had a lot of potential. But it was difficult to judge and gel with the newcomers because we had to play on different teams."

"After tryouts were over and we got out on the ice for our first practice, everyone was pleasantly surprised with both the talent and the energy of the new team. Though it was great from the start, our team continues to gel every time we hit the ice due to everybody's hard work and excitement."

"Although we have had to adapt to a lot of new safety protocols, such as playing with masks and no locker rooms, the team is beyond grateful that we have the privilege of having a season."

Chiango now hopes this host streak will continue, and that this is a winter to remember.

"I will continue to do my part in keeping the team safe in this COVID environment," she said. "So far the team has been doing a great job following all COVID protocols inside and outside. We want to continue the success we have started the season, while continuing to have fun."

TWITTER: @DWillisET



COURTESY PHOTO

Andover's Ashley Chiango looks to make a play on defense. Chiango has played defenseman almost since she started playing hockey at age 4.

LOCAL ROUNDUP

Shaw twice tops 30 points, leads girls hoops to pair of wins

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Tatum Shaw exploded for 38 points — one of the highest totals for a girls basketball player in all of Massachusetts in recent memory — as Andover topped Haverhill 62-50 last Tuesday. Shaw hit four 3-pointers, while Amelia Hanscom added nine points for the winners.

Tatum Shaw continued to dazzle with 35 points — her third 30-plus point performance in four games this winter — as Andover bested Haverhill for the second time in three days, 67-53 last Thursday. Amelia Hanscom was again next best with eight points.

Shaw entered this week averaging a whopping 28.8 points per game for the 2-2 Golden Warriors, having scored double digits in all four contests. She's halfway to the six 30-plus point games Golden Warrior great Nicole Boudreau posted during the 2011-12 season.

GIRLS HOCKEY

Jagger a rock in net

Lillian Jagger excelled with 22 saves, and Andover remained unbeaten with a 2-1 victory over previously-undefeated Chelmsford last Monday. Lauren Adams and Lilly Reeves each



CARL RUSSO/Staff file photo

Andover's Tatum Shaw, here at the TD Garden last winter, is off to a red-hot start with three 30-plus point games this season.

scored a goal for the Golden Warriors.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Cammann tallies 28

Aidan Cammann erupted for 28 points, and Andover beat Haverhill 57-50 last Tuesday. Fellow low-post standout Logan Satlow added eight

points for the winners.

Andover trailed by two points at halftime, but outscored Haverhill 24-4 in the third en route to a 67-45 win last Thursday. Ryan MacLellan had a season-best 18 points while Ayn Aruri scored eight points and Aidan Cammann had seven points for the Warriors,

who stayed perfect (4-0).

GYMNASTICS

Foster, Bresnick dominate

Molly Foster won the bars (8.6), was second in the beam (8.9) and floor exercise (8.8) and took first in the all-round

(34.9) as Andover topped Haverhill for the second time in four days, 135.4-131.25 on Sunday. Gabby Bresnick was second in the all-around (34.75), winning the vault (9.15), beam (9.1) and floor (8.95). Maggie Consentino was third in the bars (8.1).

Gabby Bresnick won the floor exercise (9.0) and was second in the beam (8.4) as Andover edged Haverhill 131.75-130.4 last Thursday. Molly Foster added a victory in the beam (8.8) and was second in the bars (8.45) and Sophia Tran was second in the vault.

BOYS SWIMMING

Kessell takes two

Scott Kessell won the 100 butterfly (57.43) and the 500 freestyle (5:24.46) as Andover rolled past Haverhill 131-52

but lost to Chelmsford 98-89 on Saturday. Adding victories for the Golden Warriors were Henry Campbell (200 freestyle, 1:54.63), Eric Xu (50 freestyle, 23.68), Dave Blanch (diving, 142.20), Patrick Currie (100 freestyle, 53.39) and the 200 medley, 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relays.

BOYS HOCKEY

Games cancelled

Andover was scheduled to host Haverhill last Thursday and play at Haverhill on Saturday, but both games were cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns.

No makeup date was announced for the games last week, as the Golden Warriors were scheduled to return to the ice on Wednesday, hosting Chelmsford.

SEND US YOUR TOWN SPORTS NEWS

The Townsman wants to spotlight the triumphs, and tragedies, of Andover's local sports teams and athletes.

We're asking coaches, players, parents and fans to send us photos as well as highlights from all the week's sporting games and events. Items can range from a shout-out for a top player or team, a spectacular play or sports milestone or even some candid shots from a game or practice.

Send your photos, highlights and story ideas to townsmen@andovertownsmen.com or call 978-475-7000, ext. 8733. We look forward to hearing from you.



MIKE LABELLA/Staff photo

A no-trespassing sign issues a warning at the property where the Southwick clothing factory formerly operated. It will become an Amazon distribution center.

Amazon's move to Haverhill reflects shift during pandemic

By ALLISON CORNEAU
Staff Writer

Nearly a year into the pandemic that has crippled much of Haverhill's business community and closed the Southwick clothing factory, e-commerce giant Amazon will boost the economy by bringing 150 jobs to the site.

Amazon will open a distribution center at the former Southwick property in the Broadway Business Park off Route 97, Mayor James Fiorentini said.

As the pandemic hurts many businesses, the change of use at the property embraces an industry that is booming during the health crisis — shoppers ordering items online for home delivery rather than visiting stores.

Fiorentini said he expects Amazon will bring 150 jobs to the site at 25 Computer Drive. Most of the jobs are expected to be packers and drivers who will transport Amazon packages to their final destinations within a 45-mile radius of the new "last mile" center, the mayor's office said. There is a similar Amazon distribution

center at Logan Airport. The company is also opening a distribution facility in North Andover, just across the Haverhill line.

Amazon's "last mile" program is the final leg in a journey of a package shipped to a home. Drivers will travel directly from the Haverhill center to homes in the region to make deliveries.

"We're very, very happy to see this spot used," Fiorentini said of the property. "It's had some great use over the years: first as Lowe's, then as a movie production studio and then as Southwick. This is the latest iteration."

"We're thrilled to bring 150 new jobs to our city, especially during a pandemic-induced recession," he said. "We're thrilled to see economic vitality coming to this community through new jobs. That's always a great thing."

Fiorentini has worked to find a new company for the former Southwick factory since its parent company, Brooks Brothers, filed for bankruptcy protection last summer. In a last-ditch effort

to keep the company operating, more than 400 unionized garment workers pivoted to making personal protective equipment during the pandemic. The workers were ultimately laid off and the property was sold to Eastern Real Estate at auction in August 2020.

Fiorentini said he will push for the Amazon distribution center to hire as many Haverhill residents as possible, adding that drivers are considered hourly, independent contractors. In addition to providing jobs, the city stands to benefit from increased property tax payments and new excise tax payments on an estimated two dozen Amazon delivery vehicles that will be registered in Haverhill and based at the site, the mayor said.

Once Amazon opens the center, daily operations there are expected to begin after 9:30 a.m., so Amazon drivers avoid the morning rush hour, Fiorentini said. Most delivery vehicles will likely be small Amazon-branded vans which residents are accustomed to seeing around the city, he said.

ANDOVER BRIEFLY

Ambulance Association names Finegold legislator of year

The Massachusetts Ambulance Association has recognized state Sen. Barry Finegold, D-Andover, as the 2020 Legislator of the Year. Association President Dennis Cataldo and the Board of Directors lauded Finegold's crucial support of non-public ambulance services in this year's state budget.

Finegold worked on a Medicaid-matching program for ambulance companies providing critical services during COVID-19, which was instrumental in helping those companies recoup costs.

"This year, it's all of you and your teams who should be recognized for risking your own health to protect our communities," Finegold said. "We have asked more and more of our EMS personnel, and they have bravely continued to show up for work each day in the face of this pandemic. It is the least I can do to make sure ambulance providers have the resources necessary to respond to COVID-19 in an aggressive manner."

Environmental club to plant trees

Andover High School's Environmental Club partnered with the organization Tree-Plenish to plant trees.

"Our goal is to personally plant 256 trees to offset the cost of the paper that we have used this year," said Kaitlyn Crowley, a junior who is a member of the Environmental Club. "This event is particularly important to us because it hits so close to home and in the big fight against climate change, it is often the little wins that bring us encouragement and the strength to keep going."

Members of the club are encouraging people to sponsor planting a tree.

For more information go to tree-plenishevents.org/andover.

Andover nonprofit receives grant

The Professional Center for Child Development is a recent recipient of the Essex County Community Foundation COVID-19 Response Fund Grants. Those grants are to help nonprofits that assist people most negatively impacted by the pandemic.

PCCD, with locations in Lawrence and Andover, will use the money to purchase computers. The new technology will be used to help babies and toddlers under 3 years old in the Early Intervention program access telehealth. Funds and to support staff to allow the agency to continue its innovative and therapeutic service delivery options to children and families.

Applicants sought for medical scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the 2020 Penny Richards Memorial Scholarships, which support individuals who work in the medical field who are furthering their education.

The memorial fund was established by David and Penny Richards of North Reading in memory of their daughter, Penny, who was killed in a motorcycle crash.

"We're looking for people like our daughter, who was passionate about her career and helping people," Penny Richards said about her daughter who worked as a medical assistant. "We seek people currently employed in the medical field and continuing their education to develop greater knowledge and skill sets to treat the range of patient needs in the health care arena."

Applications are reviewed by a committee that includes business and health-care industry professionals. The final determination of awards is the decision of the Richards, in conjunction with input from the application review committee.

Deadline for applications is April 3, 2021. Successful applicants will be notified of their award by July 30.

For more information about the scholarship fund and to

download a PDF of the application and instructions, please visit penneyrichards.com/schship.htm.

Andover seeks people for diversity commission

The Board of Selectmen approved a town Commission on Diversity and members are seeking volunteers to participate.

More information can be found at andoverma.gov/Civicalerts.aspx?AID=444.

Police goal: 'Giving warmth for winter'

The Andover Police Department has been collecting blankets, coats, hats, gloves, scarves, socks and other warm clothing items through its Giving Warmth for Winter Drive.

The donation box will be in the Andover Public Safety Center lobby until Jan. 31. All donated items must be new and unused.

Help for job-seekers

The 50-plus Job Seekers Group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.

The group will meet from January through June. If you are unemployed and looking for a job, underemployed, seeking a new career direction, re-entering the job market after a long employment gap, or recently retired and looking for your "encore career," this networking group program is perfect for you.

Deborah Hope, an experienced executive career coach, hosts the professional forum for networking with peers in a safe and comfortable environment conducive to developing new relationships and developing skills and strategies to help in your career transition.

Each meeting features a new topic. Meetings include a presentation and workshop on topics relevant to career transition, guest speakers, access to hiring managers, small group breakout rooms to network, and one-on-one coaching guidance.



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