



LOCAL ARTIST RECOGNIZED FOR PHOTO.
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LOCAL TEEN LEADS WARM EFFORT.
PAGE 12



ARURI HELPS AHS BOYS HOOP TEAM REMAIN UNBEATEN.
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OUR 131ST YEAR

Andover Townsman

Issue No. 15

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

\$1.00

Andover mourns loss of 11-year-old

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsman.com

The Sarah Strong soccer players will still take the field for their game this week in honor of their friend and coach, Sarah Duval, who died Monday.

They will remember Sarah, 11, as hilarious, kind, outgoing, brave, courageous and “sometimes bossy when it came to sports,” said her best friends Keaghan Murphy, Leah Kiblan and Sadie Loucks Tuesday night.

They want to honor their friend and teammate who stuck with them even through the hardship of her B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia treatments. She

died Monday of a blood infection. Since her diagnosis in May, Andover has rallied around the 11-year-old.

Her death shocked the community because Sarah had been doing well, said Abby Murnane, a family friend, and Sarah’s hockey referee.

Now neighbors are leaving out hockey sticks, soccer balls and lighting candles in her memory. Displays can be posted to the Facebook page called “Lights for Sarah Strong.”

“She always used to have heart and passion on the ice, digging for pucks in the corner,” Murnane said. Sarah’s passion continued off the ice learning about

the game and caring for her teammates, Murnane said.

After learning of Sarah’s death Monday night the Andover Women’s Hockey team, which Murnane is part of, wore their #SarahStrong headbands in her memory and are planning a memorial game, Murnane said. Murnane will be collecting notes to give to Sarah’s family. They can be written at bit.ly/3rEfn96

‘Just strong’

Even when she was diagnosed with cancer, Sarah continued rooting for her teammates, friends and siblings, said Beth Murphy, Sarah’s soccer coach and best friend’s mother.

“Nothing held her back, even when she, unfortunately, lost her hair. She was just strong,” Murphy said.

This season as her teammates on the Sarah Strong indoor soccer team played, while she she helped coach, she “yelled at them to get their butts moving,” Murphy said.

Sarah also loved animals and was fond of Lifting Spirits Miniature Therapy Horses in Andover. She enjoyed the horses as well as the farm’s newest animal, Oscar the pig, said owner Tony Hajjar.

Sarah had most recently been helping at the farm on the



Courtesy photo

Sarah Duval, 11, pets Idaho when the mini horses from Lifting Spirits visited her in August. See DUVAL, Page 2

In sickness and in health

Andover’s Brides Across America gives free dresses to pandemic workers

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsman.com

Dressed in tulle, lace and rhinestones, Mariama Runcie decided it was time to FaceTime her mom.

“Did you hear what she said?” Runcie said with a smile, ready to echo her mother’s words to a worker at the Brides Across America shop in Andover. “She said, ‘I say yes to that dress.’”

Living halfway across the country from her family and her wedding venue in Chicago, Runcie, a medical doctor with a home in Cambridge, has struggled to plan her wedding in the middle of the pandemic. Thankfully, finding the perfect wedding dress was an easier task for the emergency room resident doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. She discovered that the Andover-based nonprofit Brides Across America expanded its program to give dresses to front-line pandemic healthcare workers.

“I’m still a resident (doctor), so I’ve made a lot of sacrifices to save to have a



MADELINE HUGHES/Staff photo

Dr. Mariama Runcie tries on a wedding dress at Brides Across America in Andover.

wedding at all,” said Runcie, referring to the fact that doctors don’t make big money at the start of their careers.

“It’s so nice to have someone take care of you,” she said of Brides Across America, “especially when you are serving people and

working in service every day.”

When Runcie became an emergency room doctor, she expected the craziness that typically comes with the job. For nearly the past year, however, the emergency rooms where she works have been far more

hectic than normal due to the pandemic. The two weeks at the start of the pandemic set the pace: She worked 95 hours in each of those weeks.

Heidi Janson, founder of Brides Across America, said it made perfect sense

Andover to start vaccinating seniors

State will issue 100 doses a week starting Feb. 17

By MADELINE HUGHES
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Next week Andover health officials will begin administering the COVID-19 vaccine to seniors over 75 — although the shots will come in doses that will make the process of inoculation slow.

“We have been informed by the state we should

expect no more than 100 doses a week,” said Thomas Carbone, director of public health.

Andover seniors can schedule their appointment by signing up online or calling a number that will be released by the town Thursday, Carbone said. People will be notified of the vaccine sign-ups via

See SENIORS, Page 2

State unveils COVID-19 vaccine call center

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
Statehouse Reporter

Amid growing frustration over the slow rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in Massachusetts, Gov. Charlie Baker on Friday said the state has created a new call center to help elderly residents make appointments to get vaccinated.

Baker said the call center, which can be accessed through the state’s “211” information system, will be available only for residents 75 and older who’ve had trouble scheduling appointments through the state’s online portal.

“We believe this resource will be a huge help to individuals over 75 who may not have access to the Internet,”

Baker said at a Friday briefing. “However, we still recommend using the website, if it’s possible to do so, because

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Community mourns teacher’s death

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsman.com

Tia Pittounicos is described as “an absolute ray of sunshine” — a teacher whose students looked forward to being with her each day.

That happiness was dashed when school officials announced to the Bancroft Elementary School community Feb. 4 that the 24-year-old third-grade teacher died unexpectedly Feb. 4.

Bancroft Principal Michelle Costa sent an email to students’ families and

other members of the school community announcing the death, which sent a shock wave through the community and left children, parents and school staff members mourning. Pittounicos’ death came after a short illness, Costa said in the email.

Social media has been flooded with an outpouring of support for the first-year teacher from Merrimac, with coworkers and the families of her students remembering her fondly. A GoFundMe has raised over \$30,000 for a memorial scholarship

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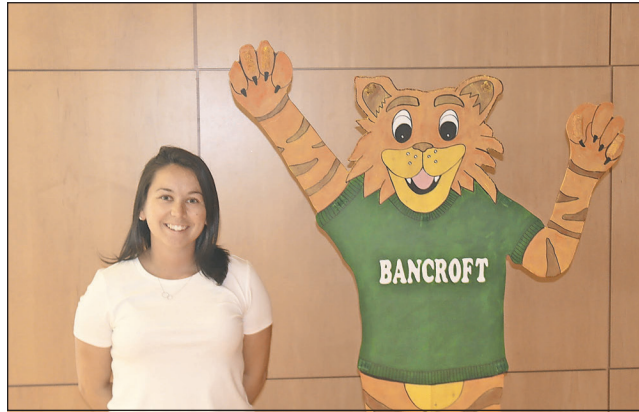


PHOTO COURTESY OF PITTOUNICOS FAMILY

Tia Pittounicos, a third-grade teacher at Bancroft Elementary School shown here with the image of the school mascot, died Wednesday night.



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COURTESY PHOTO

Sarah Duval, 11, pets two mini horses Buttons (left) and Idaho when the horses from Lifting Spirits visited her in August.

DUVAL

Continued from Page 1

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service where a group gathered to do volunteer work, Hajjar said.

The sixth-grader from Doherty Middle School made an impact on many of the people who came into her

life. "It is with tremendous sadness that I share with you that Sarah Duval, 6th grader at our school, passed away this morning," Principal Robin Wilson wrote in an email to students' families. "Sarah was a joy and the news of her loss is profoundly heartbreaking for all of us."



Sarah Duval (front, left) poses with the Sarah Strong indoor soccer team she helped coach in recent months.

SENIORS

Continued from Page 1

an email blast through the town's "news flash" alerts and through a call from the Senior Center. The two processes will begin at the same time, Carbone said.

There will not be a waiting list, Carbone said, so it could take multiple tries to successfully schedule an appointment. He's also encouraging seniors who can travel further to use the

state's website to sign up. "The supply certainly isn't meeting the demand," Carbone said.

The vaccine clinic will be held Wednesdays at a location yet to be announced.

Officials are focusing on this first-come, first-serve model — with no waiting list — in hopes people find appointments sooner than the town can provide, Carbone said. Andover has about 2,700 people over the age of 75, many of whom are waiting to be vaccinated closer to home instead of traveling to

mass vaccination sites, Carbone said.

Andover and other municipalities will be receiving about 100 doses a week until the state gets more, Carbone said. He expects to see the vaccine supply increase in March, he said.

"We are prepared to bump up weekly to our abilities, but we are prepared to (administer) what they send us," Carbone said.

And while the vaccine provides hope for getting back to normal, town health officials still warn people to stay

home when possible, wear masks and use social distancing measures to stay safe.

Monday night the Board of Health approved fines for people breaking the governor's emergency orders, including wearing a mask and limiting gatherings.

"We haven't had a need for this, we've had good compliance," Carbone told the board. "It hasn't come to our attention until now."

Recently the police broke up a house party where there were more than 10 people. The police were unable to

issue a fine to the homeowner, which prompted the town to approve these fines.

According to the town's new rules, someone breaking any of the governor's rules would first receive a written warning, then get a \$50 fine for a second offense. Subsequent offenses would result in a \$300 fine. Health officials hope the repercussions will be more educational than punitive.

"Our goal is to never punish unless they are really ignoring us or endangering people," Carbone said.

Andover's number of COVID-19 cases has been steadily decreasing. There were 124 active cases as of Friday, Feb. 5. The town will be updating the numbers weekly instead of daily because the community is in the yellow moderate risk for the virus transmission for the second week, according to the state's criteria.

To sign up for Andover news alerts go to andoverma.gov/list.aspx. To find a vaccine appointment at the state level call 211 or visit mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine.



MADELINE HUGHES/Staff photo

Dr. Stephanie Ludy tries on wedding dresses at Brides Across America in Andover.

BRIDES

Continued from Page 1

to her organization to provide healthcare workers like Runcie with free wedding dresses.

"We felt it really lined up with our mission to help those healthcare workers on the front lines because they are putting their lives on the line, too, just like military and first responders," Janson said.

In 2008, Jansen created the Brides Across America organization to help military brides, many of whom served in the Middle East.

After the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, she began offering free wedding dresses to first responders as well.

The store sets aside two days per month for an Operation Wedding Gown event where dresses are given away to eligible brides-to-be. The store also works with other bridal shops across the country to provide give-aways to brides who cannot travel to the Andover store.

Brides Across America has helped many local brides, particularly those who work at Massachusetts General Hospital. Runcie

spread the good news to her coworker Dr. Stephanie Ludy of Boston.

"It was an amazing experience," Ludy said when picking out her dress.

The pandemic has put a heavier-than-normal financial strain on brides-to-be, Jansen said. Weddings were expensive enough before the pandemic, but now some brides have to re-plan their big days and often incur extra expenses because of the health crisis.

For her September wedding, Runcie adjusted to COVID-19 rules by booking a larger space than she originally picked — and

she also added an outdoor option. She's waiting to see if she can acquire rapid COVID-19 tests so guests can feel safer. The dress provided by Brides Across America brought her a huge relief, she said.

The Andover store also sells dresses to the public, with 100% of the proceeds going to the nonprofit so brides who shop there know they are helping other brides, Jansen said. This month, the store is selling all wedding gowns for \$699. The store also has a special Mother of the Bride Friday, during which moms' dresses are sold for \$129.

TEACHER

Continued from Page 1

in her name at Pentucket Regional High School, which she attended.

It will be awarded to students who want to be teachers. The Go-Fund-Me has raised enough money to give the scholarship for

multiple years, according to the organizer.

"It is our hope that this worthy student will carry on Tia's legacy of dedication to educating, nurturing and lifting up the next generation," her family wrote in Pittounicos' obituary.

"Tia Pittounicos was a third-grade teacher at Bancroft Elementary School and

an absolute ray of sunshine," Superintendent Claudia Bach wrote in a statement about the woman known as Miss P. to students and co-workers.

"She loved working as a teacher and her dedication, enthusiasm and positivity radiated throughout the building," Bach said.

"Although Ms. Pittounicos taught in Andover for a short period of time, she quickly developed a wonderful rapport with staff and families. This is a significant loss to our students, school staff and

the greater community."

After the death was announced, Pittounicos' students were invited to the school to speak with social workers who provided counseling, Costa said. The school is also offering grief counseling to the rest of the school community.

"The Crisis Response Team at Bancroft has made plans to support the emotional needs of all students, families, faculty and staff," Costa wrote. "Social workers are available to provide support. As this news is sudden,

further resources will be provided as soon as possible."

In a followup email Costa added, "The loss of a teacher affects an entire community and Miss Pittounicos, or as we affectionately called her, Miss P, has worked in different grade levels, positively affecting the lives of students and staff across our building."

In addition to teaching third-graders, Pittounicos worked in Bancroft School's kindergarten as an assistant. She lived in Merrimac and was a graduate of the

University of New England in Biddeford, Maine.

Costa encouraged parents to discuss the death with their children. She asked families needing emotional support to reach out to school officials.

"We do ask that you share this news with your child if they have a connection to Miss P.," Costa said. "And (we) ask if you need help in doing so."

For more information about the memorial scholarship visit gofundme.com/f/tias-memorial-scholarship-fund.

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ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Advertising copy must be in the office by Monday at 5 p.m.
Camera-ready advertising copy is due by Tuesday at noon.
No cancellations honored after these deadlines.

CENTER

Continued from Page 1

you may experience significant wait times using the call center."

He said the state has enlisted at least 500 workers to staff the call center, and information will be available in Spanish and at least 100 other languages.

Baker said the federal government had distributed more than 1 million doses of vaccine to Massachusetts so far, and more than 681,000 residents

have already been vaccinated. Another 120,000 appointments are scheduled for next week.

"Vaccine availability continues to be limited by supply, which means it may take a week or so for people to get an appointment scheduled," Baker said Friday. "But as we move through the distribution process, and as more vaccines become available, we'll continue to add appointments and expand resources."

Massachusetts currently has 125 vaccination sites in operation, with another 40

expected in coming weeks, according to the Baker administration.

Locally, a mass vaccination site at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Danvers opened this week.

The state also plans to scale up several mass vaccination sites in the coming weeks, including Fenway Park in Boston and Gillette Stadium in Foxborough.

As of Friday morning, Baker said more than 20,000 appointments were still available for next week at

Fenway, Gillette and another mass vaccination site in Springfield.

On Thursday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that Massachusetts would get a \$213 million grant to support vaccine distribution.

President Joe Biden has vowed to accelerate vaccine distribution and administer at least 100 million doses in the first 100 days of his administration.

So far, two vaccines have been approved for emergency use, the two-dose regimens developed by Pfizer and Cambridge-based Moderna.

A one-shot vaccine produced Johnson & Johnson applied for emergency authorization from the Food and Drug Administration this week.

Nationwide, about 5% of the population received at least one dose of the vaccine in the first month of the rollout, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Under the state's vaccination plans, health care workers, nursing home and congregate residents and police, firefighters and other first responders were among the first groups to get inoculated.

Individuals age 75 were eligible starting this week.

Vaccines won't be available to the general public until April, according to the state's plans.

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

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- Eyelid irritation
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Andover Eye Associates

Not Your Average Eye Care Practice

For over 30 years, the physicians at Andover Eye Associates have provided the most trusted eye care in the Merrimack Valley. In addition to providing routine eye care and treating patients with leading-edge eye care standards, our physicians continue to be dedicated to paving the way for the development of new treatment options through clinical research. While the COVID-19 pandemic may have put a fleeting halt to clinical research earlier this year, the silver lining is that it also educated people on the importance of clinical research in identifying new therapies for medical conditions that are in need of worthy treatment. Patients play an integral role in clinical research, as their participation can contribute invaluable information surrounding a potential new treatment option. This allows for the successful advancement of new therapies, which enables medical providers to more effectively treat their patients.

As your ophthalmic provider, we want to assure you that we at Andover Eye Associates take great pride in our participation as a clinical research site. Not only do we hold the responsibility of treating your eye care needs with the treatments/therapies already available, we are also committed to playing a vital role in the research and clinical testing of new and improved treatments for our patients. Our contributions to clinical research over these many decades include the addition of over 40 eye drops to market worldwide with the help of our Andover patients and our research affiliate Ora, Inc. (also based in Andover, MA). Today, over 200 million people use drops that we helped develop.

As we resume our clinical evaluations for new therapies, we continue to encourage our valued patients of Andover Eye to consider participation in future clinical trials. Together, we can work to improve treatments for those who continue to suffer from bothersome and debilitating eye conditions.

Upcoming Research

Blepharitis is a common, chronic condition that can cause eyelid inflammation as well as lid redness, lid itching and eye irritation. Many people with blepharitis may also experience scales on their lashes and debris-like dandruff, especially in the morning. In 45% of cases, this condition also presents with demodex, which are tiny mites that live along the lids. If left untreated, these mites can thrive and cause increased irritation and inflammation and overall lid discomfort. Dr. Gail Torkildsen of Andover Eye Associates is working hard to find better treatment options for people with this eye condition.

We will soon be evaluating a therapy that Dr. Abelson (founder of Andover Eye Associates and Ora, Inc.) and Dr. Torkildsen are excited about! This new research study is to evaluate how effective an investigational eyedrop is at relieving symptoms associated with blepharitis. If you are experiencing the symptoms described, we invite you to participate. The study involves 6 office visits over the course of 8 weeks. If you complete these office visits, you may be compensated up to \$600 for your time. Please call us for more information!

Addressing COVID Concerns

We understand that many of our patients may feel uneasy about coming into the office, but we would like to reassure you that your health and safety are our top priority. Our staff are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible and we are taking all of the necessary precautions per the CDC guidelines, including, but not limited to:

- Screening questionnaires for all staff and study participants
- Required vaccinations for staff in direct contact with patients
- Temperature and pulse/oxygen checks
- Mask wearing for all staff and study participants
- Hand hygiene (frequent hand sanitizing and washing with soap and water)
- Frequent sanitizing of all clinical areas where participants are being examined



Image of collarettes or cylindrical dandruff commonly associated with demodex blepharitis.

English FP, Nutting WB. Demodicosis of ophthalmic concern. Am J Ophthalmol 2981;91:362-372

ANDOVER TOWNSMAN OBITUARIES

Obituaries in the Andover Townsman are paid notices. To place an obituary, please visit andovertownsm.com/submitobit. Call 1-800-681-6248 if you have any questions.

Paula L. Chechik

June 17, 1931 - February 1, 2021

CHELMSFORD, MA — Paula L. Chechik, of Chelmsford, Mass. died Monday, February 1, 2021 at Chelmsford Crossings after a period of declining health.

She was married to Howard I. Chechik with whom she would have celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on September 4, 2021.

Born in Fall River, Mass. on June 17, 1931, Paula was the daughter of the late Samuel Lipsky and Catherine (Ronan) Lipsky. She was a graduate of Sacred Heart Academy in Fall River with the class of 1949 and New England Baptist Hospital School of Nursing.

She was a registered nurse at the "Baptist" before retiring to raise her family.

Paula enjoyed painting, ceramics, playing bridge and traveling in the earlier years of their marriage. More important than anything to Paula was her family. She and Howard had the most amazing love story and were truly devoted to each other, never wanting to be far from each other's side. Together they raised their family in Andover, and later moving to Chelmsford. Wherever home was, Mom made it a place filled with love and laughter and a place where lots of family memories were made. Her presence will be deeply missed, but she will always remain in our hearts.

Besides her beloved husband, she is survived by son David Chechik (Julie) of Ipswich, and daughters, Lisa Kauh (Jim) of Windham, NH and Stephanie McElligott (Steven) of Westford, and was a devoted "Mimi" to grandchild-



dren Sam and Paige Kauh, and Brynn, Cullen, and Teagan McElligott. Paula is also survived by brothers William Lipsky of Venice, FL and Richard Lipsky (Arlene) of Moorpark, Calif., and several nieces and nephews. Paula was predeceased by her grandson, Ronan McElligott.

The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Chelmsford Crossings staff for the care and compassion shown to Mom when she needed it most.

ARRANGEMENTS: Visiting hours and funeral were Friday, February 5, 2021 from the Dolan Funeral Home, 106 Middlesex St. Chelmsford, Burial in Pine Grove Cemetery, Westford followed. Arrangements by Dolan Funeral Home, 978-256-4040. Guestbook at www.dolanfuneralhome.com.

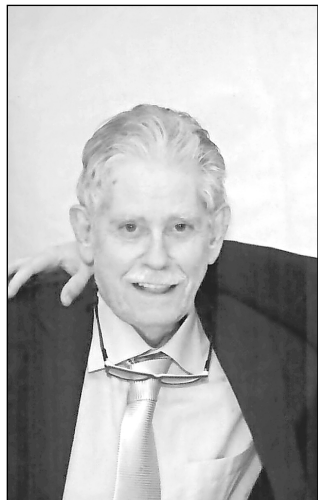


Guy Petty, 66

October 14, 1954 - February 2, 2021

ANDOVER, MA — passed away at Lahey Hospital in Burlington due to COVID.

He was born on October 14, 1954 in Lynn to the late John and Janet (Morency) Petty. He was raised in Andover and he attended Andover public schools. He was employed for many years as a truck driver and cook. He lived in southern NH for most of his adult life and retired to his home town of Andover to be closer to his family and friends.



Guy's love of football kept himself and his son, Gary, cheering and speculating as to who would be the best! One of his greatest achievements was being a father and plotting the next adventures with his son. Guy loved spending time with family and friends and the many animals he adopted throughout his life. Lately he enjoyed the companionship of his neighbors, especially his friend Paul, at his housing community of Frye Circle. Guy could always be seen helping people around the complex and socializing at his favorite restaurant, Palmer's.

and Jason Daggett and nieces, Kelsey Dexter (and her husband Dan), Abby Daggett and Bridget Daggett. As well as many cousins and friends.

ARRANGEMENTS: Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, the family will be holding a private burial at a later date at Spring Grove Cemetery, Andover.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to House Rabbit Network, PO Box 2602, Woburn, MA 01888 or the charity of ones choosing.

Arrangements are in the care of Conte Funeral Home of Andover.



POLICE LOG

TUESDAY, FEB. 2

- Found property: Stolen car found, Bullfinch Drive, 9:23 a.m.
- Identity fraud: Shaw-shen Road, 10:46 a.m.
- Identity fraud: Barrington Drive, 13:18 a.m.
- Identity fraud: Hawthorne Circle, 4:56 p.m.
- Request officer: Police helped direct traffic when railroad gates were stuck, Essex Street, 5:56 p.m.

- Found property: Front desk found BB gun in room, Riverside Drive, 10:20 a.m.
- Identity fraud: Berkley Lane, 12:01 p.m.
- Found property: Wallet turned in to police, Main Street, 8:56 p.m.
- Traffic citation: Written warning failure to stop at red light, North Main Street, 10:37 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB. 5

- Noise complaint: Teenager and friends asked to quiet down, Memorial Circle, 1:51 a.m.

SATURDAY, FEB. 6

- Found property: Wallet turned in to police, Park Street, 12:20 p.m.
- Theft: Woman's wallet stolen from purse, Dascomb Road, 12:27 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEB. 7

- Taxi fare evasion: Old River Road, 9:55 a.m.

THURSDAY, FEB. 4

Proposal seeks big growth at Royal Crest

By GENEVIEVE DiNATALE
gdinatale@andovertownsm.com

A Boston-based development company has presented town officials with a plan to replace the existing Royal Crest Estates on Route 114 with a mixed-use residential complex including retail businesses, more apartments, townhouses, Merrimack College student housing, a boutique hotel and office space.

Currently owned by Aimco, a real estate trust company, Royal Crest, which sits in North Andover, now has 588 apartments housing residents and boarding students from the college.

Aimco is commissioning Trinity Financial to redevelop the 76-acre property, though it is unclear how quickly the project will progress through town requirements and when it will make it before voters.

"We had worked with them (Aimco) on the development of a building in the Bulfinch Triangle in Boston and that was a very successful collaborative effort on behalf of us and them," said Jim Keefe, a Trinity Financial principal. "They reached out to us to ask us to help them figure out what to do with Royal Crest."

Royal Crest, located at 50 Royal Crest Drive across from Merrimack College, was constructed in the 1970s. The initial master plan proposed by Trinity is substantially different than what exists and would involve demolishing



COURTESY PHOTO/Trinity Financial

This is a rendering of what the new Royal Crest development may look like.

as the apartments and student housing."

The new apartment buildings would be larger than the existing ones, according to the plan, with retail space on the first floor. Some townhouses would be three stories high, and additional buildings — the boutique hotel in the complex's center and office buildings — could be four to five stories high. A town green with a café and patio are also included in project renderings.

Trinity initially considered updating the existing buildings, but determined it would be more costly and less efficient than actually starting from scratch.

"We came up with a plan because the buildings are 50 years old. They are tired, need substantial rehabilitation, which we

first considered in this process and ruled out because it was going to be so expensive and complex that the feasibility made no sense," Keefe said.

Traffic would enter the property through two driveways around the green and a third near the office buildings, which are on the far right of the master plan, color-coded as dark purple for offices and light purple for parking.

Residents adjacent to Royal Crest have submitted concerns to the Planning Board about the redevelopment effort, ranging from traffic congestion along Route 114, security and privacy issues resulting from the taller buildings, and concerns about an influx of transients and permanent residents to the area, which may require an increase in size of the school buildings.

Temple Emanuel hosts special service

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsm.com

Temple Emanuel will host an American Sign Language Interpreted Inclusion Shabbat as part of Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month at 6:30 p.m. on Friday.

The entire service will

be interpreted in American Sign Language by EJ Cohen. The service will feature interview sessions with three members of the congregation who have seen firsthand the efforts, and benefits, of Temple Emanuel to make Judaism accessible to all.

"This weekend has been designated as 'Inclusion

Shabbat,' an opportunity for us to focus on how we can be open and welcoming to those with differing needs," Rabbi Robert Goldstein said.

"Though Temple Emanuel engages in an ongoing effort to widen the door for any new who wishes to join us, on 'Inclusion Shabbat' we become even more

intentional in our attempt to identify ways to become even more hospitable and accessible."

One of the speakers is Suzanne Emmi, whose son Matthew has severe autism and is non-verbal. She will be talking about his Bar Mitzvah, and how it was made accessible for him.

ANDOVER BRIEFLY

Kindergarten registration in progress

Andover's Kindergarten registration is underway through Feb. 28. Andover has free full-day kindergarten for any child who turns 5 before Aug. 31, 2021.

Parents must register their children online and make an appointment to bring the necessary residency and health documents to the school.

For more information visit aps1.net/1126/Kindergarten-Registration.

Superintendent search committee

The Andover School Committee is looking for two community members to be part of the 11-person search team that will help narrow down the superintendent search. Applications are due to the committee by Feb. 26.

More information can be found at aps1.net/2306/APS-Superintendent-Search—2021.

Choral Society rehearses for spring concert

Andover Choral Society

is hosting Zoom rehearsals on Mondays at 7 p.m. as the group prepares for its virtual spring concert.

Rehearsals will feature vocal warm-up exercises, talks by guest speakers, professional instruction in sight-reading and vocal techniques by Director Michael Driscoll, and the practice and recording of selections for the spring concert.

All voice parts are welcome and singers from any town are encouraged to participate. It costs \$50 to take part in the spring season. For more information, email membership@andoverchoralsociety.org.

Consulting firm expands services

The Andover-based ALKU consulting firm is expanding its offerings to include the cloud-based Amazon Web Service.

"Our customers realize the benefits of moving to the cloud and have had a stronger desire to evaluate their overall IT infrastructure and have placed a priority on cost-savings, scalability, security, and efficiency," said Tyler Bush,

a senior manager.

Local musician featured in new film

Lisa Hennessy of Andover is featured in the new film, "The Fall of the House of Usher," produced by Boston Lyric Opera.

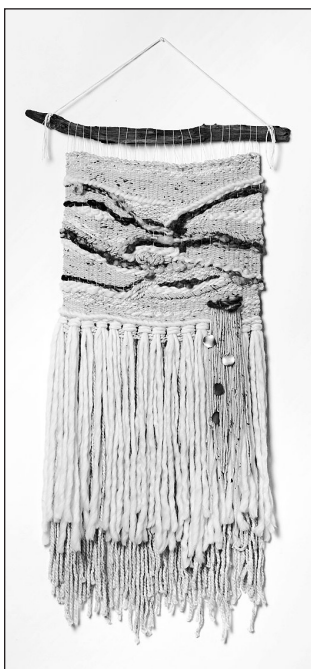
The weaving of Molly Foley of Andover is featured in the Chemistry of FiberLab exhibit at Lexington Arts & Craft Society from March 14 to April 4.

The Chemistry of FiberLab is curated by award-winning fiber artist Jodi Colella, and features the artwork of students in her independent study group FiberLab.

Begun in 2015, the group experiments with material and process while developing personal connections within a supportive community.

The film — inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's original story — is set to Philip Glass' complete opera score and Arthur Yorinks' full libretto, reimagining the chilling tale through the mind of a young immigrant girl held in a border detention center.

Hennessy plays the flute and piccolo in the film that



COURTESY PHOTO

Molly Foley of Andover is having her weaving featured in the Chemistry of FiberLab exhibit at Lexington Arts & Craft Society from March 14 to April 4.

mixes hand-drawn animation with stop-motion animation alongside curated archival footage.

It is available to stream at operabox.tv.

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

ANDOVER

11 Azalea Drive: Martha Russell to Jonathon and Margarita Dreyer, \$915,000
1 Colonial Drive Unit 7b: Michael Giberti to Linda Bourgeois, \$195,000
247 North Main St. Unit 7: Brandon and Amanda Angiolillo to Elona Palushaj, \$272,500

HAVERHILL

7 Sister Road: Kenoza Properties LLC to 7 Twisted Sister RT and Albert C. Couillard, \$240,000
33 8th Ave.: 33 8th Avenue LLC to Snow Cassell LLC, \$192,000
132 Amesbury Rd: Mac&D Realty LLC to Mass Prop Invest LLC, \$1,350,000
30 Arlington St. Unit 30: Lindsey S. Pagley and Andrew Palmer to Juan M. Torres, \$280,000
20 Boston St.: 20 Boston St. RT and Rachel M.

Hickey to Henry A. Garcia, \$435,000
64 Denworth Bell Cir Unit 64: Ruth E. Lewis RET and Ruth E. Lewis to Amanda N. Lewis, \$350,000
34 Grove St.: Guylaine and Richard Hanlon to Wirdalis Gomez-Garcia and Elias F. Garcia, \$480,000
7 Lawton St.: Christine K. and Derek S. Beckwith to Bianca and Joseph N. Delgrosso, \$570,000
11 Lincoln Ave.: Chaz A. Sweeney and Matthew A. Zapanas to Frank and Stacey Cunha, \$390,000
17 Orange St.: Malcuit FT and Avis Malcuit to Five C Construction LLC, \$100,000
22 Pentucket St.: Elvy P. Hawbaker to Ruth J. Guzman, \$150,000
75 Pilling St.: G&A Azzarito RT and Maria Pastore to Edwin Arman, \$350,000
150 Riverside Ave.: Van Geyte Fine Prop LLC to Frank T. Muraco, \$500,000

96 Summer St. Unit 4: Michael Borges to Pajje Moormann, \$175,000
119 White St.: Robert A. Pigeon to 123 White Street LLC, \$180,000
127 White St.: Robert Pigeon Elec&Applnc to 123 White Street LLC, \$120,000

LAWRENCE

86 Beacon St. Unit 3: Imelda V. Nauffal-Ayngono to Eddy Garcia, \$165,000
327-329 Broadway: Emilio J. Marchena to Johanna R. and Anthony O. Villa, \$591,000
18-20 Greenwood St.: Daher Group Inc. to Erwin O. and Joan F. Cardona, \$560,000
253 Jackson St.: Luis G. Bilbraut to Elena Sanchez, \$460,000
20 Spring St.: 20 Spring Street RT and Deirdre A. George to Yeison Mora, \$145,000
39-41 Swan St.: Chantall

P. Ontivero to Harison and Hamilton A. Terrero-Payano, \$597,000
204 Walnut St. Unit 204: E&G RT and Eddy I. Guzman to Antonio Martinez, \$195,000
35 Washington St.: Wilmen A. Lopez to Wanda A. Frias and Felix M. Bautista, \$380,000

NORTH ANDOVER

88 Amberville Road: Pushp K. and Sudesh Khatri to Julie A. Rousseau and Mary Mayo, \$810,000
21 Annis St.: Northshore RE Solutio LLC to Jordie and Virginie K. Kamuene, \$477,500
597 Foster St.: Jody A. and Scott B. Bradstreet to Andrew Fonzi, \$440,000
148 Main St. Unit C438: Jeanne M. Mccusker to Eric C. Stimac, \$262,900
24 Summit St. Unit 24: Jesse and Jody Blackwell to Dawn Giadone, \$392,500

Library hosts Black History Month events

The following programs are planned to recognize Black History Month at Memorial Library:

* 10:30 a.m. Feb. 13: Jason Sokol traces the modern history of race and politics in the Northeast. He explores questions like: Why did white fans come out to support Jackie Robinson as he broke baseball's color barrier in 1947 even as Brooklyn's blacks were shunted into segregated neighborhoods? How was African-American politician Ed Brooke of Massachusetts, who won a Senate seat in 1966, undone by the resistance to desegregation busing in Boston?

* 7 p.m. Feb. 17: Author and journalist Matthew Van Meter will discuss his book, "Deep Delta Justice: A Black Teen, His Lawyer, and Their Groundbreaking Battle for Civil Rights in the South." Van Meter talks about research into how an arrest of a Black man brought massive change to the criminal justice system.

* 7 p.m. Feb. 22: Flutist and

lecturer Galen Abdur-Razaq presents Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement. The combined lecture and musical performance will start with a flute prelude followed by a presentation chronicling the music from the turn of the century to the present day, highlighting various artists.

* 7:30 p.m. Feb. 24: Former Andover resident E. Dolores Johnson will discuss her new book, "Say I'm Dead: A Family Memoir of Race, Secrets and Love," with author Grace Talusan.

For these library events and more sign up at mhl.org/events.

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Opinion

Shopping bags need a statewide solution

Single-use plastics clog our waste stream; pollute our waterways; kill shore birds, fish, turtles and other wildlife; and threaten human health, but the last attempt to do anything meaningful about them in Massachusetts got similarly bogged down in the sausage-making of the Legislature. Rep. Lori Ehrlich's resurrected, still-unfunded plan to stop the use of single-use plastic bags at convenience stores and groceries springs anew on Beacon Hill, where her colleagues would be wise to keep it intact and enact it.

Ehrlich's bag ban would apply statewide, replacing local bans already set in place in 141 cities and towns, including many on the North Shore and in the Merrimack Valley. Her bill would allow retailers to charge a 10-cent fee for reusable, recycled paper bags. Consumers are always free to use reusable totes to carry away the goods and groceries that they purchase.

The last time this idea had any traction — and the support of nearly 100 lawmakers — it was beaten out of shape by one of the Legislature's many secretive committees and thus lost momentum. The only sure way at the time to address the scourge of single-use plastic appeared to be in watching local bans continue to spread across the landscape.

Since then we've faced a pandemic, which prompted Gov. Charlie Baker to temporarily halt local bag bans in light of fears that one of their go-to replacements, reusable totes, could carry the coronavirus. Grocers were worried about their workers. But evidence in the months that followed showed the disease doesn't spread on surfaces as much as once thought, and in July, those interim rules were allowed to expire.

In the meantime, our collective problem with plastics has not subsided. If anything, Janet Domenitz, executive director of the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, tells Statehouse reporter Christian M. Wade the pandemic has only made it worse.

It's no illusory concern. Every man, woman and child in the United States can be counted on to use more than 300 plastic shopping bags every year, according to research compiled by the Sierra Club. Each single-use bag is good for about 12 minutes before it's tossed. After that, the plastic lingers in the atmosphere — too often at a waste dump, in the woods or in the oceans — for hundreds of years.

Think of that the next time you leave the market. And maybe take a few minutes with your bags because unless you recycle them they're almost sure to outlive you on this planet.

That's because bags don't break down so much as break apart, says the Natural Resources Defense Council. Which is to say they degrade into smaller and smaller bits of plastic, eventually turning into microscopic fragments that are suspended in the water, eaten and absorbed by animals, and eventually processed into our own bodies, where they pose a whole host of health risks.

We are literally wrapping our world and ourselves in plastic.

Ehrlich cites a paper by the World Economic Forum that predicts a single ton of plastic will pollute the oceans for every three tons of fish within the next four years. Within the next 30 years, it's expected that there will be more human-generated plastics in the oceans by weight than there are fish.

If that wasn't reason enough to make other plans to carry away your purchases, there are logistical reasons to consider as well. As Wade reports, an industry group that represents supermarkets says a single statewide ban on single-use bags would be far preferable at this point to rules that vary by community. Let's adopt one standard instead of living within a patchwork of 141 of them.

Each of us has an obligation to our environment and to the generations that follow. Filling the world's woods and reservoirs, not to mention our own bodies, with plastics is poor stewardship and a poor legacy.

Recycling single-use plastic whenever possible is an important step. So is finding alternatives to carry away our purchases from the store, even if that means paying a dime for a paper bag to use in place of a plastic one. Enacting that as a matter of statewide policy would represent real progress toward dealing with this intractable problem.



Christopher Klein

Andover Center for History and Culture

It was a suspected murder plot seemingly poured from the pen of Agatha Christie. And it happened in Andover a century ago, when nurse Bessie Mae Skeels stood accused of being a cold-blooded killer who poisoned her patient and four members of her own family.

An English immigrant, Skeels moved to Lawrence with her second husband in 1905. After his death, she supported herself by teaching elocution and calisthenics.

Shortly after moving to Andover, Skeels started a job as a day nurse inside the grand home at 35 School St. on Thanksgiving of 1916. After first assisting Rosamond Gay, a wealthy stroke victim confined to bed, Skeels nursed her daughter, Florence, who was feeble herself. Misery had stalked

Florence from an early age. Her mother and father, a landscape designer who developed a master plan for Abbot Academy, separated shortly after her birth. After she attended Smith College and briefly taught at Abbot Academy, maladies and melancholy eclipsed her intelligence and quiet wit.

Afflicted with ailments of both mind and body, she became a fragile, 90-pound recluse prone to crying jags.

The life steadily receded from Florence in the fall of 1917 until her death on Dec. 13 at the age of 43. While Dr. Charles Abbott listed the cause of death as a cerebral hemorrhage, Judge Jeremiah Mahoney, a neighbor of the Gays who noticed "queer doings" going on in the house, suspected something more sinister.

Skeels had notified the Andover police of robberies at the house several times, but officers never found signs of forced entry. They did, however, notice broken locks on chests and items missing.

At Mahoney's suggestion, state police detective Richard Griffin visited the boarding house at 60 Chestnut St.

where Skeels lived, accompanied by Edith Luce, Florence's cousin.

Luce identified pillow slips, curtains, rugs, a piece of black lace and other family heirlooms in the nurse's possession. Skeels insisted they had been gifts from the Gays.

At the request of District Attorney Henry G. Wells, spades once again turned the turf at Spring Grove Cemetery to exhume Florence's body. A new autopsy determined she had died of "arsenical poisoning."

Griffin paid a call to the nurse's boarding house on May 7, 1918, to arrest her for stealing but instead let her go when she told him her brother had taken ill.

Traveling to Bayonne, New Jersey, to care for her brother, Skeels couldn't nurse him back to health. He died on July 7, two days after their sister-in-law's passing. Authorities noticed that the nurse's parents had also been under her care when they passed in recent years.

Was it more than just a coincidence?

Skeels returned to Andover on Aug. 25 to finalize plans for her impending nuptials

to Alfred Lundgren, who lived at 53 Whittier St., and worked at the S.K. Ames Butter Store.

The following day, however, Griffin returned to the nurse's boarding house to arrest her for larceny. Having discovered that Skeels had purchased arsenical solutions in Andover and Bayonne, the detective warned that a murder charge would likely follow.

"My God, it can't be possible!" exclaimed Skeels, who then went to her bathroom and put her mouth over the gas cock, presumably to kill herself.

Skeels spent her wedding day under police guard at Lawrence General Hospital. After being charged with murdering Florence Gay, Skeels was indicted in New Jersey for poisoning her brother when an autopsy revealed elevated lead levels.

More on the sensational murder trial that followed in the next column.

Andover resident Christopher Klein is the author of four books including "When the Irish Invaded Canada." More at www.christopherklein.com.

Lack of transparency stymies progress on climate change

Editor, Townsman:

I am 26 years old and I have decided I do not want kids. It would be immoral to bring a child into the abysmal future we face in this climate crisis. I place the blame on the illusion that our government is doing its job, and I am writing in support of transparency in the Massachusetts Statehouse.

We cannot pass any additional progressive climate bills until we fix the transparency and accountability problems in the Statehouse. Until the other day, the last time a progressive climate change bill passed through the Statehouse was in 2008. I was 14 and in eighth grade.

Since then we have learned that climate change is much worse than we thought. If Massachusetts residents were able to truly hold their representatives accountable and have influence over which bills passed, we would have committed to 100% renewable energy years ago.

Massachusetts has one of the least transparent statehouses in the country. With few exceptions, our legislators vote in secret. This fosters a corrupting system in which legislators are more accountable to corporations and special interests than to their own constituents. The result is that our Statehouse fails us by prioritizing modest, incremental changes which appease lobbyists instead of truly reflecting the values of citizens.

Popular progressive policy dies in our Legislature year after year, thanks to a system so confusing and complicated that voters cannot influence the process.

A serious lack of transparency means constituents are left in the dark as to how

their representatives vote. It means you can go to a hearing to support legislation but then watch helplessly while a private committee kills that bill without having to justify its decisions.

If you ask your representatives why action wasn't taken, you'll usually get a long answer about backroom deals and "how the game is played." But this isn't a game.

My decision to join Act on Mass and the Transparency is Power campaign was the culmination of frustrations I've had with my government's lack of accountability. The campaign is ready to change the status quo.

With support from over 2,500 people in the state we've asked legislators to change the session rules to: 1. Make all committee votes public; 2. Make all bills available to the public at least 72 hours prior to a vote; and 3. Lower the threshold for calling for a publicly recorded roll call vote from 16 representatives to eight representatives.

My representative, Rep. Frank Moran, has voted against similar transparency amendments in the past. In order for change to be made this time, a majority of state representatives must agree in a vote that usually happens at the beginning of the legislative session but this time has been postponed in the House.

We need at least 81 state representatives to commit.

There is much at stake if we fail.

The climate crisis may not threaten my future as severely as many other Massachusetts residents. People of color, refugees and immigrants make up the majority of the 17th Essex District and are the vulnerable to the effects of a decaying planet.

The crisis will only exacerbate social inequalities and will continue to do so absent

urgent action by government.

Our broken Statehouse not only halts progress on climate-related issues but on almost every consensus issue that affects constituents' daily lives. Without transparency we cannot pass policies with broad popular support such as same-day voter registration, police reforms, proper public school funding, fixing the housing crisis or protecting immigrants from Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The people of Massachusetts deserve a Statehouse that represents and serves them. Moran and our other representatives are supposed to work for us.

ELLIE DENISON
Andover

Transition showed contrast between presidents

Editor, Townsman:

"To heal, we must remember" — finally, words from a leader of conscience, President Joe Biden.

How poignant is the stark difference during this transition of power between the departing despot who refuses to acknowledge his loss in the presidential election, who doesn't have a modicum of empathy for the 400,000 lives tragically lost to the coronavirus pandemic or the incomprehensible economic and personal suffering of millions of Americans, and who willingly incited a violent, extremist mob to disenfranchise millions of American voters in order to ultimately destroy our democracy and establish a dictatorship.

Compare this to our new president, who chose to start his path to inauguration by mourning the victims of the pandemic and who exhorts our citizenry to unite in a collective effort to heal and

proactively deal with the urgent social, economic and pandemic response issues our country faces.

I cried as I witnessed the finale of four years of moral abandonment, the desecration of truth and our Constitution, and the unrivaled carnage of President Donald Trump's legacy, as "Amazing Grace" was sung by Michigan nurse Lori Marie Key early on the eve of Biden's Inauguration.

We all face a moment of reckoning, either to continue being partisan to a politic of lies or to instead position ourselves to renew faith in democracy.

Together we can truly declare our allegiance to America and to realize the vision that we can again be a beacon for justice and humanity for our nation and the world.

WILLIAM KOLBE
Andover

Join discussion of future of town government

Editor, Townsman:

The Andover Town Governance Study Committee has opened another opportunity for public input via the town website.

Concerned that the great majority of residents, for time constraints and other reasons, opt not to participate in either Town Meeting or traditional, structured public input forums, a private Google group open only to residents interested in further discussion of town governance (whether or not we should continue Town Meeting) has been established.

Please email info@andovergovernance.com to learn more, if you are interested in contributing or listening.

KEVIN COFFEY
Andover

WEB QUESTION

Last week's question

Should teachers be moved up the priority list to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Educators in K-12 classrooms are part of the Phase 2 group now eligible to get their COVID-19 shots, however teachers are in the middle of that priority list. They come after other workers whose jobs could bring them into close contact with the coronavirus, as well as senior citizens age 75 and above.

Teachers throughout the state have argued they should be bumped up the list and given higher priority. Do you agree?

GIVE THEM THE SHOTS: Not only do teachers

face the possibility of exposure, their health is key to getting kids back into classrooms on a full-time basis. The state and its students need teachers to be vaccinated. (50 votes)

WAIT THEIR TURN: Well, a lot of people have important jobs that could expose them to the coronavirus, and for a lot of people the risk of contracting COVID-19 is much more serious. Teachers will get their shots soon enough. (30 votes)

This week's question

How long can former Patriots quarterback Tom Brady keep going?

On Sunday, he padded his Super Bowl resume with another ring. His seven championships are three more than those of the next-closest QBs on the all-time list, Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw.

Brady is the first NFL quarterback to play for a championship in three different decades. And, at 43, he's the oldest quarterback to win a Super Bowl, having beaten the record he set two years ago.

On Sunday night, the Tampa Bay QB, who won the first half-dozen of his rings while playing in Foxborough, said he's not done.

So, just how long can the Greatest of "All

Time" keep going?

HOWEVER LONG HE WANTS: With a religious regimen of electrolytes, brain exercises and plyometrics — not to mention a diet free of nearly ingredient worth eating — Brady can will his body to keep playing, and keep winning Super Bowls, as long as he wants. Why not aim for double digits?

A YEAR OR TWO: Brady may be the "GOAT," but he's mortal. Time or injury is bound to intervene, probably sooner rather than later.

BRADY WHO? When he left New England for Tampa, Brady turned his back on all of us. Any game he wins now doesn't matter.

READER ACCESS

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Baker, Neal press for more federal aid

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
 Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Republican Gov. Charlie Baker is reaching across the political aisle as he calls for more federal assistance for the state and its cities and towns.

On Monday, Baker joined with U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Springfield, to call for passage of a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill being considered by Congress. Baker said money for COVID-19 vaccine distribution, local governments, food insecurity, child care, school reopenings and small businesses is at stake.

Congress to pass significant relief, swiftly, to help us beat down the pandemic and get our economy back on track," Baker said at a briefing.

Neal, chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, said there is a sense of urgency to get the bill approved by mid-March, when a \$300 per week federal unemployment supplement expires.

"Those unemployment benefits are a lifeline for millions and millions of Americans," he said. "This is about stabilizing people who can't make their rent or mortgage payments."

Baker seldom appears publicly with members of the state's all-Democrat congressional delegation, despite having good working relationships with most of them.

He said the bipartisan appeal underscores the need to provide more help for individuals and businesses to survive the next year.

President Joe Biden's proposed relief package would include \$1,400 in direct payments to households, a \$400 per week unemployment benefit through September, \$350 billion in state and local government relief, \$170 billion for K-12 schools and colleges, and a \$30 billion rent and utility assistance fund.

Another provision, spearheaded by Neal, would create a new \$3,000 to \$3,600 per-child benefit that would be paid out over the next year for families that qualify.

Republicans and some economists question the package's price tag, which they argue will add to a rising national debt and do little to boost overall spending.

Last year, Congress passed emergency bills totaling upward of \$4 trillion to deal with the health and economic crisis created by COVID-19.

A group of 10 Republican senators, including Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, have

pitched a scaled-down alternative relief package of \$618 billion, which would not include direct aid to states and cities.

It would also cut direct payments to individuals to \$1,000, and limit those to people earning less than \$50,000 a year.

Biden says people are still struggling amid the economic fallout of the coronavirus and a new stimulus plan would put the nation on a quicker path to recovery.

He has expressed a willingness to work with Republican lawmakers but says he's prepared to rely on the Democratic majority in Congress to push the

package into law.

"A lot of folks are losing hope," Biden said in a speech Friday. "I believe the American people are looking right now to their government for help, to do our job, to not let them down. So I'm going to act. I'm going to act fast."

Last week, the House and Senate approved a budget resolution that will allow Congress to fast-track passage of Biden's plan without support from Republicans.

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

Governor seeking to put a limit on sick pay

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
 Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Gov. Charlie Baker is making another attempt to cap expanding sick time banks for state employees that have taxpayers on the hook for tens of millions of dollars.

Baker's plan, tucked into his preliminary \$45.6 billion budget, would limit a vast number of state employees to accruing 1,000 hours of sick leave, or about six months' worth. The limit is expected to save the state more than \$8 million a year.

Baker has argued that capping sick time accruals will save taxpayers money and align state benefits with those of other states and the private sector.

The cap would only affect



Gov. Charlie Baker proposal is expected to save the state more than \$8 million a year if passed.

the executive branch. As of Friday, at least 5,400 employees whose departments answer to the governor had banked 1,000 hours of sick

time or more, according to Baker administration. That's roughly 12% of the executive branch's workforce.

Those figures don't include

quasi-governmental agencies, the state court system or the five-campus University of Massachusetts, the state's second-largest employer with more than 24,000 employees.

Beacon Hill watchdogs say the state's current policy is unsustainable, especially with a sizable portion of the workforce set to retire in the coming years.

"Sick pay shouldn't roll over, year after year," said David Tuerck, president of the Beacon Hill Institute. "It only drives up the overall cost of the state budget."

That's because retiring state employees are allowed to cash out 20% of their unused time.

Under current state law, public employees get up to 15 days of sick time a year. Benefits vary but all state workers can accrue unlimited amounts

of sick time during their time on the job.

In 2017, state Inspector General Greg Cunha found more than 10,400 employees — about 12% of the state's 90,000-member workforce — sitting on 1,000 hours or more of unused time. That represented a liability of more than \$117 million for taxpayers.

Baker's efforts to reel in the state's payroll liabilities face resistance in the Legislature, which is reviewing his budget. Similar proposals by the governor have been flatly rejected in the past by the Democrat-controlled House and Senate.

Public employee unions oppose changing sick leave policies, accusing the Baker administration of bypassing the collective bargaining process.

"This is a benefit that was

negotiated in good faith and included in a contract signed by our union and the governor," said Jim Durkin, legislative director for the Massachusetts chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents 35,000 government workers.

"Any changes to that benefit should be negotiated through the same process."

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

Mass. gets hundreds of COVID-19 complaints

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
 Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Health officials logged hundreds of complaints about violations of the state's reopening rules last year, ranging from allegations of employees and customers not wearing face coverings to a lack of social distancing.

A list provided by the state Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development shows more than 1,400 cases have been investigated since late May, when the state began allowing some businesses to reopen under restrictions.

Of those cases, only 25 led to citations, while another 159 resulted in warnings, according to a list provided by the state. Another 56 businesses received cease and desist orders from state or local health boards.

Others are still under investigation.

Businesses hit with complaints run the gamut from gyms, ice cream parlors and nail salons, to restaurants, bars, supermarkets, retail stores and golf ranges.

Many stemmed from reports by workers, the public or local elected officials.

Complaints were also lodged against local governments. A town administrator on Martha's Vineyard, for example, needed to be "reminded" about wearing a face covering in town buildings, according to a complaint log provided by the state.

Sanctions for not complying with the state's reopening rules, meant to limit the spread of COVID-19, range from a written warning to a \$300 per violation fine to an order that can shut down a business.

The complaints include one reported to the state on Jan. 19 against Pfizer's Andover research facility, alleging that employees weren't wearing masks or practicing social distancing, and that contact tracing wasn't being used to inform other employees about potential infections.

The pharmaceutical giant developed one of several COVID-19 vaccines that are being distributed worldwide.

In a statement, the company said it investigated the complaint and "responded to all relevant officials including the Department of Labor's Industrial Health and Safety Inspector who confirms our Andover site is in compliance."

"Pfizer Andover treats any safety and health concern very seriously, and we have worked hard to provide a safe workplace aimed at minimizing employee risk during the COVID-19 pandemic," the company said.

The cases disclosed by the state are only those reported to the Labor Department. The log doesn't include actions taken by local boards of health on mask requirements, quarantining or travel restrictions.

Enforcement of the state's reopening guidelines has fallen largely to those local officials, who've been given far-reaching powers under the state of emergency.

Gov. Charlie Baker has been slowly easing many of the state's reopening

restrictions, some of which have been in place for months, amid improving trends on COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations.

On Thursday, he lifted capacity restrictions on many businesses from 25% to 40% citing improving metrics.

The state is currently in Phase 3, Step 1 of its reopening plans, and many indoor performance venues and recreational businesses remain closed. Indoor

gatherings are still limited to 10 people and outdoor gatherings 25 people. A statewide mask requirement remains in effect.

"People's work is paying off on this one," Baker said at a Thursday briefing. "We just need to keep it up for a few more months."

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

Advocates push statewide ban on plastic bags

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
 Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Nearly 140 cities and towns have restricted single-use plastic bags, creating a patchwork of local laws, that lawmakers and environmental groups want to replace with a blanket, statewide prohibition.

A number of proposals to phase out single-use plastic bags in convenience stores and supermarkets are expected to be considered in the upcoming two-year legislative session.

They include one filed by Rep. Lori Ehrlich, D-Marblehead, that would allow retailers to charge a 10-cent fee for reusable and recycled paper bags.

Supporters of a statewide ban say single-use plastic bags clog the waste stream and litter oceans, parks and beaches.

"There is too much waste — in our neighborhoods, our parks, our playgrounds and our environment," said Janet Domenitz, executive director of the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group. "The pandemic has only made the situation worse so we need to take action now."

The food industry supports a uniform ban on plastic bags to replace the patchwork of local restrictions and create an "even

playing field" for businesses.

"There's so many different local restrictions now and that makes it difficult for the industry, especially multi-store or multi-state operators," said Brian Houghton, senior vice president for governmental affairs and communications for the Massachusetts Food Association, which represents supermarkets and other food retailers. "It's really getting to a tipping point."

Efforts to phase out the bags are opposed by the plastics and paper industries, as well as some retail groups, who call the restrictions unnecessary and costly. Beacon Hill has wrestled with the issue for years. Attempts at a statewide ban have faltered amid industry pressure.

In 2019, a similar proposal fell apart after a legislative committee, deliberating behind closed doors, stripped the fee and added a "pre-emption" clause that would effectively override local plastic bag bans, many of them voter-approved.

Nearly 140 Massachusetts communities — including Salem, Gloucester, Newburyport and Haverhill — have enacted outright bans or restrictions on plastic bags,

according to MassPIRG.

Retailers in two bag ban communities, Boston and Cambridge, are allowed to charge fees for paper bags. Boston allows 5 cents, Cambridge 10 cents.

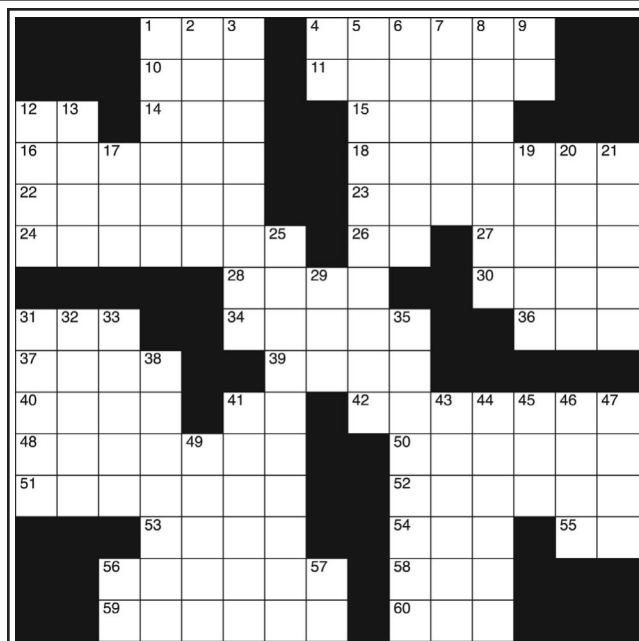
Last year, Gov. Charlie Baker suspended local plastic bag bans and banned the use of reusable bags as part of a raft of measures to stop spread of the coronavirus.

Many grocers were already prohibiting workers from handling reusable bags, citing a risk of COVID-19 infection.

The state rescinded those limits in July as it proceeded with reopening plans in light of research that the virus doesn't survive well on plastic surfaces.

Environmental groups say the temporary rules set back efforts to reduce both the amount of plastic being sent to landfills as well as solid waste costs for cities and towns.

Advocates throw away some 100 billion plastic bags a year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which says the average bag takes up to 1,000 years to break down. Most bags are used an average of 12 minutes.



CLUES ACROSS

- Big tech firm
- Picked
- Type of whale
- A woman of refinement
- New England state
- Common gibbon
- Tall coniferous tree
- State capital
- Making a liquid muddy
- Vinegary
- Peninsula
- Thee
- Atomic #55
- Used in units of measurement
- Welsh female name
- Arab ruler title
- One's mother
- Trap
- Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

- Small islands
- Skullcap
- Unexplained events
- One hundredth of a meter
- Beloved baseball announcer
- Repulsive
- Northern European languages
- Match or surpass
- Northeast
- Chew the fat
- Innovative industry
- Land to put down to grass
- Products
- Nostril
- Surprise Icelandic politician
- Conclusive acts

Solution in Classified Section

- Assn. of oil-producing countries
- Holy fire
- Emit coherent radiation
- Atomic #81
- Orthodox Jewish college
- Herbs
- Ran after
- Begin again
- Named
- Barbary sheep
- Unwell
- Postscript
- Drivers
- One point east (clockwise) of due north
- Prim
- A facility equipped for sports or physical training
- Inform on
- Grinding tooth
- Keep up
- Tablelands
- Raising
- Mythical creature
- Hums
- Mountain in Antarctica
- Neighborhood in Manhattan
- Distinctive practice
- Vice president
- Contributes to
- Small bones
- Oil company
- Empire State

Announcements

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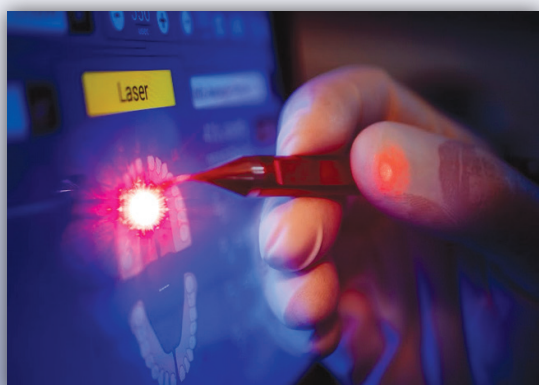
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'Friday paddle'

This image won Donna Bambury of Andover second prize in the 2020 Essex National Heritage Area Photo Contest "People of Essex County" category. The photo is called "Friday Paddle."

Susan McKelliget

Andover Center for History and Culture

100 Years Ago: Feb. 1921

That minstrel shows are the most popular source of amusement in Andover. This was proven during the past week when the Town Hall has been filled out on two occasions; first at the R.C.O.A. show on last Friday evening, and again on Tuesday evening when the Athletic Association of Smith and Dover Mill gave their second annual performance. The attendance at both shows was large with standing room being at a premium. At the R.C.O.A. show, J. Everett Collins made a big hit on his three appearances as a Japanese Sandman, again when he led the "Mississippi Volunteers" in a march around the stage.

Patronize the food sale at the old express office, Musgrove block and help to give judicious aid to some of Andover's deserving poor, 2 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11.

Ice cutting at Haggett's has begun. The ice is good and it is hoped that everyone around

the Parish will seize this opportunity to get ice houses filled to capacity so that there may be no shortage during the summer.

The camp of George Bancroft at Foster's Pond was broken into recently. Several articles were stolen and the camp left in a disorderly condition.

75 Years Ago: Feb. 7, 1946

The obituary for Frank H. Hardy noted that he was a member of the class of 1896 at Phillips. His first shop was in a little barn in West Andover. Gradually, he added new equipment and in 1910 he moved to the old Smith and Dove Mill in Frye Village. When Shawsheen was built, the old brick mill was replaced by the present structure. Today it is the largest factory in the world specializing in textile brushes. During the building of Shawsheen he had charge of the building of all the mills, the administration building and the power-house.

Take your true love and go to the Valentine party and dance which will be held in the Memorial gymnasium on Thursday evening, Feb. 14th. The dance is sponsored by the Punchard Alumni Association,

and Harold Phinney will be master of ceremonies and furnish the dance music. Appropriate refreshments will be served during intermission.

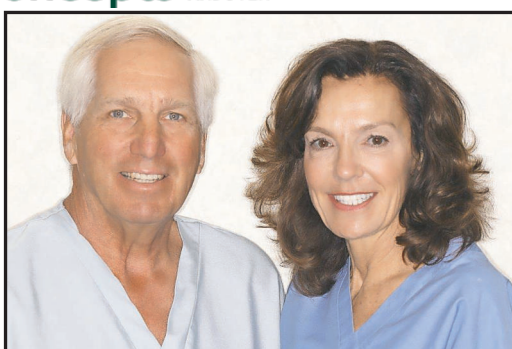
50 Years Ago: Feb. 11, 1971

An Andover High School student and his history teacher flew to Washington, D.C. to be guests at a two-day Senate House foreign affairs conference on U.S. China policy last week. The teacher, John McCusker, then carried on his Friday morning 20th Century American History Class by the high school's new special telephone hook-up which allows a roomful of student to hear and question a teacher speaking from a Washington D.C. motel, or a national figure visiting Andover High, via electronics.

While this was going on, the student, Bruce Need, of 13 Glenmeadow Road, was back in Room 207 of the Capital building listening to Andover's representative Bradford Morse, who was a moving spirit behind the conference and arranged the invitations for the Andover twosome, plus Presidential hopeful Sen. George McGovern, Sen. Harold Hughes and other luminaries on foreign policy.

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Contested School Committee race in upcoming election

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsm.com

Three Andover residents will compete for two School Committee seats in May's town election.

Current committee Vice Chair Susan McCready and incumbent Tracey Spruce are being challenged by newcomer Shishan Wang.

Other local offices had unopposed races as of Monday afternoon.

Current Select Board members Christian Huntress and Ann Gilbert are running for the board unopposed.

The following incumbents also are running:

- Melissa Danisch and Eric Stubenhaus, Trustees of the Punchard Free School.
- Sheila M. Doherty, town moderator.

- Marilyn Fitzgerald, Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District Commission.
- Daniel Grams, Andover Housing Authority.

Candidates have until Feb. 18 to withdraw from the race.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Peter A. Paquette, Eldora M. Paquette to JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., dated March 9, 2011 and recorded in the Essex County (Northern District) Registry of Deeds in Book 12437, Page 92 of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. to NewRez LLC F/K/A New Penn Financial, LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, recorded on June 23, 2020, in Book No. 16360, at Page 199 for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 1:00 PM on March 8, 2021, on the mortgaged premises located at 157 Andover Street, Andover, Essex County, Massachusetts, and all singular the premises described in said mortgage,

TO WIT:

The land together with the buildings thereon located in Andover, Essex County, Massachusetts and shown on a "Plan of Land in Andover, Massachusetts prepared for Anne E. Kiduff" dated January 12, 1984, Kaminiski and Associates, Inc. Said Plan recorded in the North Essex Registry of Deeds as Plan No. 9698, being more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Northerly by land now or formerly of Henderson One Hundred Nineteen and 24/100 (119.24) feet; Westerly by land now or formerly of Cloutier in Two Courses, Twenty-Eight and 80/100 (28.80) feet and Seventy-Three and 28/100 (73.28) feet;

Southerly by land now or formerly of Duhing, Eighty-Eight and 76/100 (88.76) feet; and

Easterly by Andover Street Seventy-Six and 50/100 (76.50) feet.

Meaning and intending to convey the so called original Parcel together with Parcel A and Parcel B, containing a total of 8,776 square feet, however the same may be bounded and described on said Plan. Being the same parcel conveyed to Peter A. Paquette and Eldora M. Paquette from Anne E. Kiduff, aka Anne E. Mosher, by virtue of a Deed dated 12/18/1984, recorded 12/18/1984, in Deed Book 1905 , Page 332, as Instrument No. 24408 County of Essex, State of Massachusetts.

Assessor's Parcel No: ANDO M:00137 B:00020 L:00000

For mortgagor's(s') title see deed recorded with Essex County (Northern District) Registry of Deeds in Book 1905, Page 332.

These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

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Sports

NEVER GIVE UP

Once nearly cut from freshman team, Aruri now starting guard and captain for unbeaten boys hoops

By DAVID WILLIS
Staff Writer

Despite what seemed to be long odds, Andover's Zayn Aruri never gave up on his basketball dream. When he was one of the final players selected for the Andover High freshman basketball team three years ago, he could have been discouraged. Instead, his focus only intensified. As a sophomore, when Aruri found himself as a backup on the JV team, struggling for playing time, he could have been overcome by frustration. Instead, he only worked harder. Then, when he made the varsity team last winter, but was at the end of the bench as a reserve for nearly the entire season, he could have been disappointed. Instead, he did everything he could to prove he deserved his shot. "I never, *never* thought about giving up," said Aruri. "I just kept playing and working every day. I worked on my shot, improved my game, kept learning, and when I got my shot I took it." That persistence has paid off in a big way for both Aruri and the Golden Warriors. After a surprise breakout at the end of last winter, Aruri has emerged as a go-to starting guard and tri-captain for Andover, which entered the week with a perfect 8-0 record.



CARL RUSSO/staff photo

Andover's Zayn Aruri sails to the hoop against a pair of Central Catholic defenders during a Golden Warrior victory earlier this season. Aruri is a top guard for the Warriors.

"Zayn epitomizes what ever coach dreams of," said Golden Warriors head coach Dave Fazio. "I never imagined he would be a key part of his program. He barely made the freshman team. But he's hard-working, dedicated and earned his shot. In this day-and-age, when so many athletes think their life is over when they don't make the varsity team as a freshman, Zayn never gave up and earned his shot." Last Wednesday, Aruri scored a career-best 18 points, including four 3-pointers, in a win over Billerica. "This has been quite a journey!" said Aruri. "There have been a lot of ups and downs. I never expected to be a starter and captain. To be where I am now is really a proud feeling. To go from one of the last guys on the freshman team to starter on one of the best teams in the state is amazing."

DREAMING, TOUGH START

Growing up in Andover, Aruri dreamed of playing basketball for Fazio and the Golden Warriors. "I was going to Andover basketball games from the time I could walk," said Aruri. "My dad would bring me to games all the time,

FOOTBALL NEXT

After basketball wraps up, Andover's Zayn Aruri will turn his attention to football, in "Fall 2." Aruri saw varsity time as a defensive back last fall. He made three tackles in a win over Methuen High. "It's going to be an exciting football season," said Aruri, whose sister Leila Aruri ran cross country and track at Andover High and UMass Amherst. "I really liked the team we had last year, and we have really good players back this year, guys like Scotty (Brown) and Lincoln Beal."

and I loved it. They had some great teams. I loved watching guys like David Giribaldi. And coach Faz has been there for so many years. I loved watching the games and being a part of them." But chasing that dream would prove a challenge when he entered high school.

"I knew I was right on the line to make the team during (freshman team) tryouts," he said. "I didn't have big expectations, but about 40 kids were cut and I made the team, so I was happy to make it. But it was tough at times." As a sophomore, he made the JV team, but saw limited playing time. "I wasn't getting on the court a lot," he said. "I was at the end of the bench. When I got in, I thought I played well, but there were a lot of guys ahead of me. We had kids coming down from the varsity team, and that was tough. But they were also my friends."

VARSITY BREAKTHROUGH

After an impressive summer league season, Aruri made the Andover varsity team as a junior. But, admitted Fazio, for most of the season, "I didn't even consider putting him into games." While at the end of the bench,

Aruri kept himself busy learning and helping out. "I did everything I could to be the best teammate I could be," he said. "I cheered, carried bags and water bottles and learned a lot from guys like Kyle Rocker and Michael Slayton. I stayed ready to go when I got my chance, but it took a while." That chance finally arrived when Aruri scored four points in a matchup with MVC rival Lawrence. "The Lawrence game was the first I got big minutes," he said. "I hit a shot and had a couple steals. Then my minutes started to increase. We played Lawrence again, I really showed up (six points) and earned a spot in the starting lineup." "I was really nervous at first. I never really thought I would be a starter at some point. It was a big moment. I felt like my hard work really paid off." Aruri junior season,

unfortunately, was cut short in the state tournament due to a hyperextended knee. But her returned with a bang this winter. Now an established starter and captain, Aruri opened this winter with a pair of nine point performances in wins over Central Catholic. His breakout day was 18 points in a win over Chelmsford. He added 10 points on Saturday. He now hopes to keep Andover unbeaten as the Golden Warriors head into the final weeks of the season. "It's really tough to not have a state tournament," he said. "We think about it all the time. Being senior year, we felt like this was our year to make a run. It's tough to lose the tournament because of how good we are, but our mindset doesn't change. We still want to every game." TWITTER: @DWillisET

MVC to hold championship tourneys this winter

By DAVID WILLIS
Staff Writer

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association might not be holding state tournaments this winter, due to COVID-19, but Andover High sports teams will have the chance to play for titles this winter. The Merrimack Valley Conference announced over the weekend that it will hold league championship tournaments, to be played during February vacation. "The Merrimack Valley Conference is excited to announce that this winter season will conclude with end of season cup championships and tournaments," said the MIAA in a press release. "These tournaments and championship meets will take place over February vacation week." Boys and girls basketball and boys hockey will follow the same format, with each sport seeding schools 1-10. The top four seeds will play in the MVC Division 1 tournament, and seeds 5-8 will play in the Division 2 tourney. The bottom two seeds will play home-and-home consolation games to close out their season. Official dates will be announced later this week. Tewksbury High will host the boys title game, Chelmsford will host the girls championship game and the Tsongas Center in Lowell will host the boys hockey title game. Semifinals will be



CARL RUSSO/staff photo

Andover's Lauren Adams shoots on net while Methuen/Tewksbury's Emma Girodano defends earlier this season. The Golden Warriors and Red Rangers could face off in the recently-announced MVC Division 1 title game.

hosted by the higher seed. "This is great!" Andover boys basketball coach Dave Fazio said on Twitter. Girls hockey will seeds teams 1-5. The top seed will earn a bye into the final (on Feb. 20 or 21 at the Tsongas), while seeds 2-3 will play a semifinal (Feb. 17). Seeds 4 and 5 will play a consolation game. "We're very excited for the chance to play in the

playoffs," said Andover girls hockey legend and current Methuen/Tewksbury coach Sarah Oteri. "Our league is super competitive, and the majority of the games have been very close. So it's awesome the athletic directors found a way to let us add some more competition. "It's also great for our seniors to continue experiencing some sort of tournament, as we have in previous

years, and for our younger players to learn from the playoffs." Boys swimming will compete in a virtual MVC meet during championship week, with teams reporting their times and scores to decide champions. Gymnastics will seed teams 1-8, with the top four competing for the MVC Division 1 title and 5-8 competing for the Division 2 title.

► LOCAL ROUNDUP

Bresnick takes all-around title for gymnastics team

GIRLS GYMNASTICS

Gabby Bresnick won the all-around (36.6), sweeping wins in the vault (9.35), bars (9.0), beam (9.05) and floor exercise (9.2) as Andover beat Chelmsford 138.55-133.7 on Sunday. Molly Foster added a second in every event, and Amanda Oltman was third in the bars.

Molly Foster placed second in the floor exercise (9.05) and was third in the beam (8.4) and all-around (32.85), but Andover fell to Chelmsford 137-133 on Saturday.

GIRLS GYMNASTICS

Blanch takes diving Davis Blanch won the diving (150.6) to lead Andover past Central Catholic (119-61) and Haverhill (122-55) on Saturday. Adding victories for the Golden Warriors were Dylan Wang (200 freestyle), Eric Xu (50 freestyle), Henry Campbell (100 butterfly), William Moulson (500 freestyle) and Patrick Soong (100 breaststroke).

BOYS BASKETBALL

Aruri, Warriors stay perfect

Zayn Aruri scored a career-high 18 points, hitting four 3-pointers, and Luke

Porter chipped in with 10 points as Andover rolled past Billerica 76-46 last Wednesday.

Aidan Cammann scored a team-high 11 points and Zayn Aruri added 10 points as Andover defeated Billerica 73-35 on Saturday, to remain undefeated on the season (8-0).

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Shaw keeps on scoring Tatum Shaw scored 23 points as Andover bested Billerica 52-21 last Wednesday. Senior Paige Gillette added eight points for the winners.

Amelia Hanscom scored 14 points to help Andover top Billerica 48-32 on Saturday. Tatum Shaw added a team-high 17 points.

GIRLS SKIING

Lichtenburg impresses Amanda Lichtenburg finish a team-best 14th overall (29.25) as Andover beat Austin Prep (81-54) and Manchester-Essex (99-36) last Wednesday. Amanda Lichtenburg took 18th place (30.05) as Andover beat Haverhill (85-50) and Cape Ann League foe Newburyport (95-50) last Thursday.

Local teens help 'blanket' needy for storm



Brita Martin of Andover stands with more than 100 blankets for the nonprofit, Blanket Me.

By MADELINE HUGHES
mhughes@andovertownsmen.com

Organizing her classmates to help, Brita Martin of Andover delivered more than 100 fleece blankets to the North Andover non-profit Blanket Me.

The junior at Lawrence Academy in Groton had more than 50 classmates involved in making the no-sew blankets over the school's winter break. A school sponsor provided the funds for materials.

After Martin gave them to Blanket Me founder Sue Laurin, they were distributed last Monday, just before the Nor'easter blanketed the Merrimack Valley with snow.

"With the upcoming storm and freezing temperatures, we are very grateful for this amazing, heartfelt donation of handmade blankets from the students at Lawrence Academy," Laurin said. "There were a lot of smiling people today!"



Brita Martin, left, of Andover, gives blankets to Blanket Me Founder Sue Laurin.

COURTESY PHOTO

Blanket Me is a hands-on mission to care for the homeless unable or unwilling to find shelter in the Merrimack Valley.

Blanket Me is a hands-on mission to care for the homeless unable or unwilling to find shelter in the

Merrimack Valley. The recipients use the blankets not only to cover themselves, but also to protect

themselves from the cold, frozen ground.

The organization also provides coats, hats, gloves, food, and other necessities, helping over 1,000 people a year.

For more information, visit Blanket Me on Facebook.



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