



Ashland Directions

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A Green Community

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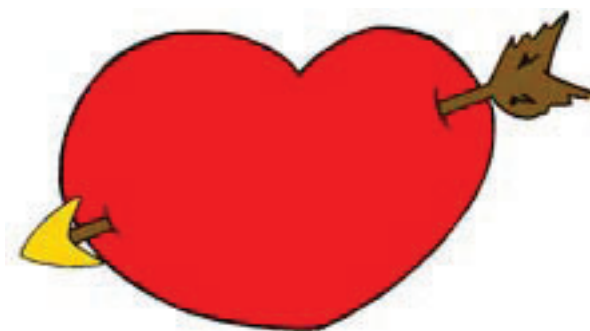
February 2015

Volume 42 Edition 6

Watch Out For The Ground Hog
February 2nd

Happy Birthday
George Washington
& Abraham Lincoln

Ashland High School Clocker Club
6th Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser
Sunday - February 1st
Ashland High - 8-11am



Happy St. Valentine's Day!

A Special Elka Troutman Thank You
See Page 9 for details



Important Inserts This Month:
The Homes Connection Newsletter

Save The Dates
Boy Scouts of America Troops 2 & 23
Pancake Breakfasts
The Boy Scouts of Ashland will be having their Annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser.
Troop 23 will hold theirs on Saturday, February 28th from 7:30 to 11:30am.
Troop 2 will hold on Saturday, March 14th from 8-11am.
See Page 11 for details

Seeking Public Input

A Public presentation and discussion related to
Regionalization of Fire and Emergency Services between Ashland and Hopkinton
When: Monday, February 9th, 2015
Time: 7:00 to 9:00pm
Where: Ashland High School Auditorium
Presented by: Ashland/Hopkinton Fire Collaboration and Advisory Group

Business Notes

-- Now Open --

Boston International Outlet
Sears Shopping Plaza
310 Pond St (Rte. 126)
(in former Blockbuster store)

-- Coming Soon --

Needham Bank
41 Front Street

*Ad Deadline for
March 2015 Edition is
February 16th*

Steeple Coffeehouse Presents
Blackstone Valley Bluegrass Band

Saturday, February 7th, 2015 at 7:30pm
Pilgrim Church, On The Common, Southboro MA

Ashland Public Schools
Henry E. Warren School
Ashland, Massachusetts 01721

Office of the Principal

Kindergarten Registration

The Ashland Public Schools will register Kindergarten Students for the 2015-2016 school year at the Henry E. Warren Elementary School, 73 Fruit Street on the following days:

Saturday, January 31st, 2015: 9am - 12pm
Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015: 9am - 2pm
Thursday, February 5th, 2015: 9am - 2pm

Please bring a birth certificate, dates of immunization and an original document that will prove residency. In order to be eligible for kindergarten, children must be 5 years old on or before August 31st, 2015. If you have any questions, call the Warren School at 508.881.0188.

Children who have been enrolled in private kindergarten who will be entering Ashland Schools for the first time as first graders this fall are also urged to register at this time. **First grade students must be 6 years old on or before August 31st, 2015.**

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An Elka Strong Thank You

Thank you. Merci. Gracias. Danke. Todah. Arigato. Obrigado. Grazie. Takk. The list could go on and on. Over the last few months, I’ve been trying to think of ways to thank all of you who have helped me and my family during this incredibly difficult time in our lives. The Ashland *Directions* newspaper seemed like a good place to start.

Since my diagnosis of advanced stage cancer in May 2014, we have been faced with challenges that we never expected, and never, ever anticipated would be part of our lives. The “new normal” that is our lives now is nothing like the “old normal” and we are still trying to figure it out every single day. We have also been given the greatest gifts we could ever imagine - the gifts of love and kindness. This community has come together for us in ways we never imagined - rides for the boys, the dog and me, activities for the boys, food, treats, flowers, gifts, notes, cards, texts, phone calls, pictures, visits, and so much more. More than that, you have given me - given us - strength with your words and support. We are running the longest marathon, and climbing the steepest mountain, but we have your support and strength pushing us and encouraging us every step of the way.

I have shared my thoughts and emotions over the months, and you have buoyed me throughout the journey. I am scared, frustrated, angry, sad and so many more emotions, and you share those emotions and keep me focused on taking the next steps, especially on the days that I need an extra push. You help the boys and Jeff get through their days with grace and perseverance. The boys are learning firsthand what it means to be “good people” and how, even in this crazy mixed-up world we live in, there is kindness and goodness all around us. We were dealt a really bad hand with this cancer, but we were dealt an unbelievably awesome hand with the people all around us.

We still have a long road and a long fight ahead of us, but we can continue thanks to all of you. Wishing everyone a happy and HEALTHY 2015, filled with joy, happiness, success, kindness, wonder, love, and peace. From the bottom of our hearts, we say a very ELKA STRONG THANK YOU.

Elka Troutman



Ashland Middle School (AMS)

It’s hard to believe that we just rang in the year 2015! Ashland Middle School is looking forward to kicking the New Year off with many exciting happenings and events. So much has contributed to a solid and exciting start to our school year. Students have been active and participating in activities in and out of the classroom. Our 8th grade student volunteers begin our days here by leading the school in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and reading the daily announcements over the intercom. Just before the Winter Break, the AMS PBIS (Positive Behavioral Supports) team organized an all student assembly to recognize AMS students who reflect and model our core values of Respect and Responsibility. Nominated students in grades 6-8 were recognized before the entire student body and received a certificate for their accomplishment. School and community members can view student recognitions and other exciting updates by visiting the AMS website to view the calendar, Tweets, and additional information at <http://ams.ashland.k12.ma.us/>.

AMS is just as active after school! The middle school is busy with students visiting teachers for extra help or attending a meeting of one of the clubs here. AMS students have been participating in Art Club, ASAP (Ashland Substance Abuse Prevention) Club and Math Counts since the fall. The Drama Club has also been in full swing since the fall and put on a production of “Back to Summer” for two nights just before Winter Break. Our Robotics Club begins after Winter Break as well. Ashland Middle School sports are in full swing as students compete in Boys Basketball and Girls Basketball this winter season. Stop by and support one of our many teams as they compete through February 9th schedules can be found at <http://sites.ashland.k12.ma.us/ashland-athletics/>.

January is a busy month at AMS for many reasons. AMS teachers have been meeting with Ashland High School teachers this past month to begin the recommendation process as 8th grade students prepare to transition to the 9th grade. An orientation, AHS visit and parent coffees are all part of the process this month as this transition takes place. 6th grade teachers take students on their big field trip to the McAuliffe Center at Framingham State University. Middle school teachers are also preparing students for the PARCC (Partnership for Readiness for College and Careers) exams they will be taking in the spring. AMS students will be taking the computer based tests beginning in March. More information can be found on the Department of Education’s website regarding PARCC testing at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/>.

Although we know there is much preparation and work to do as staff, students, and administration, all are gearing up for 2015 and all of the fun, challenges and excitement it will bring. I hope everyone enjoyed a safe and Happy New Year and I sincerely wish the coming year brings you good health and happiness. Take care.

Dave DiGirolamo
Ashland Middle School Principal

Through The Eyes Of...

By Neha Shabeer
"Not in Our Name"

Hi, my name’s Neha Shabeer and I’m a Muslim with a confession.

Being an American-born Muslim raised by minimally religious parents, the role of religion in my life is often confusing. I have to say, often times I find myself omitting the fact that I’m a Muslim. I know that it is socially acceptable in America to say I am a Muslim but the violence by extremists sometimes makes me cringe at the fact. With the frequent killings by Islamic militants, the formation of ISIS and its terror, the killings of kids at Peshwar, shooting of Malala, 9/11 attacks, killings in Syria and Israel, and most recently, the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, it seems like Islam’s always at war.

In Social Studies, we are learning about Islam and how it was one of the ancient religions that let all people coexist in peace. It makes me wonder how a peaceful religion like Islam which considers killing and stealing one of the greatest sins has become a symbol of violence. What has changed since then? The Qu’ran definitely hasn’t. The interpretation of this holy book has been changed by people in the name of Jihad!

Recently, the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, a weekly French satirical magazine, has caused a lot of commotion around the world and in the media. In the late morning hours of January 7th, two masked gunmen burst into the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* with open fire before asking specifically for the editor and four other cartoonists by name and killing them. The police arrived at the scene just in time for the shooters to escape. A three day manhunt and twelve casualties entailed this catastrophic event.

Although I in no form condone what happened in this Parisian shooting, the publishments of *Charlie Hebdo* included many offensive and racist comments. The magazine has made provocative remarks towards the Pope, voting rights, legalizing same-sex marriage, political leaders, and of course, Islam. Although I believe everyone has the right to their opinion, I think the publishments of *Charlie Hebdo* were crossing the line into harassment with the alibi of freedom of speech. The question is, “Why is it that in the claim of freedom of expression do we go to extreme measures to boost magazine sales?”

Many statements by *Charlie Hebdo* were just plain outrageous, but the attack was definitely uncalled for and cannot be justified. This is why I am glad that in the aftermath of the tragedy, people came together in support of the *Charlie Hebdo*. World leaders, such as the Prime Ministers of Israel and Palestine, set aside their differences and came together for this common cause. I think pushing the boundaries is important in arts and entertainment because it breaks the norm, forms new ideas, and changes how the world thinks, but it needs to be done in an appropriate fashion.

Then I saw the Muslim signs at Parisian riots stating, “**Not in Our Name**” and it reminded me that there are probably so many more Muslims like me wondering how our tranquil religion turned into this chaos. The people who are committing these crimes, claim to be our brothers and sisters, when they’re truly not. Most Muslims have practically disowned these extremists explaining that what all Muslims have in common is the Qu’ran and extremists have interpreted it tragically wrong. Personally, I find it very sad that people have changed this holy book which includes many good moral values into a reason for killing. I wish that more Muslims, like the ones in Paris, came forward every time an act of violence due to religious intolerance took place and said, “Not in our name,” because it most certainly is not.

For more about the world through my eyes, keep reading my monthly column :)

