

Merrimack Valley 50+

April
2026

Active *Life*

Savvy Senior

**A New Monthly
Column**

**A Revolutionary
Valley**

**Things to Do:
Merrimack Valley
Community
Calendar**



Merrimack Valley 50+ Active Life

April 2026

Columns & Departments

- 3 Savvy Senior
- 4 A Revolutionary Valley
- 5 Calendar of Events

Merrimack Valley 50+ **Active Life**

Published by Merrimack Valley Parent, LLC
www.merrimackvalleyactivelife.com
 978-427-3676

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METHUEN MEMORIAL MUSIC HALL

Methuen Memorial Music Hall is opening our 80th Anniversary year with two performances of a special orchestra and organ program.

April 25 and 26 will be a spectacular weekend of concerts featuring Organ Concerto No. 1 by Josef Rheinberger. Performing will be the North Shore Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Robert Lehmann, with James Kennerley, Municipal Organist of Portland, Maine. Other works on the program are Serenade by Strauss and Symphony No.2 by Beethoven.

While the Great Organ was often heard with instruments in its original home at the old Boston Music Hall, this is only the second time that it is being played with a full orchestra in Methuen.

Reserved seating tickets for Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26 are available now from <http://www.tix.com/ticket-sales/mmmh/7203> or <http://www.mmmh.org>

For more information, e-mail info@mmmh.org or call 978-685-5914

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF THE MERRIMACK

The Civil War Roundtable of the Merrimack will meet on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 7:30pm at the Hilton Senior Center, 43 Lafayette Rd (Rte 1), Salisbury, MA.

Special guest this month will be historian and Gettysburg Park Ranger, Matt Atkinson.

Matt will present a program: "Vicksburg: from Battlefield to National Shrine."

Culling much from his upcoming October 2026 book, Confederate Gibraltar: The Vicksburg Campaign from the Fall of New Orleans through the Battles in the Bayou (SavasBeatie), the talk will discuss Vicksburg, the linchpin of the Mississippi River, where after months of siege, Grant was victorious on July 4, 1863, causing Abraham Lincoln to write, "The Father of all Waters goes unvexed to the sea."

This also follows the efforts in saving Vicksburg and making it a historic place of honor today.

The Civil War Roundtable of the Merrimack was founded October 1995 and is a non-profit group that promotes historic programs and discussion. We meet ten times a year on the 2nd Wednesday.

FREE and open to the public, more information can be found at: www.cwrtmerrimack.org



Where to Get Help with Medicare Decisions

By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior, I'll be 65 in a few months and could sure use some help sorting through all the confusing Medicare options that are available to me. Where can I get help with my Medicare decisions?

--Baffled Bob

Dear Bob, With around 11,400 Baby Boomers turning 65 every day in 2026, you're asking a very timely question.

Many people approaching Medicare are confused by all the choices available today. In addition to original Medicare (Part A and B) that has been around for more than 60 years, you also have the option of enrolling in a Part D prescription drug plan, and a supplemental (Medigap) policy – both of which are sold by private insurance companies.

Another option is a Medicare Advantage plan. These plans, also offered by private insurers, bundle hospital coverage, medical care, prescription drugs, and often extra benefits like vision, dental, and hearing into one policy. Most operate as HMOs or PPOs and require you to receive care within a defined network of providers in your area.

Medicare Advantage plans have also faced increased scrutiny in recent years over prior-authorization requirements that can delay or deny certain services.

To help you determine which path makes the most sense for your situation, there are several reliable resources available, depending on how much assistance you need.

Tools and Resources
A good starting point is the "Medicare & You" handbook, which provides a clear overview of the program and your options. You can download a copy at medicare.gov/medicare-and-you, and you should receive a printed version in the mail about a month before your 65th birthday.

The Medicare website also features a helpful "Find a Medicare Plan" tool at medicare.gov/plan-compare that allows you to compare health plans, prescription drug coverage, and supplemental policies avail-

able in your area. If you prefer to speak with someone directly, call Medicare at 800-633-4227, and a representative can walk you through your options over the phone.

Another excellent free resource is your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which provides unbiased Medicare counseling either in person or by phone. To locate your local SHIP office, visit shiphelp.org or call 877-839-2675.

You can also contact the Medicare Rights Center (medicarerights.org) at 800-333-4114 for help with specific questions.

In addition, HealthMetrix Research publishes a free Cost Share Report at medicarenewswatch.com that compares Medicare Advantage plans by area based on cost-sharing and health status.

Get Help
If you'd like more hands-on help, you can work with a Medicare insurance agent.

Keep in mind that agents are paid commissions by insurance companies, so it's important to choose an independent agent who represents multiple insurers – not just one. That gives you access to a broader range of options.

Also understand that commissions are typically higher for Medicare Advantage plans than for Medigap and Part D policies used with Original Medicare. As a result, some agents may have a financial incentive to recommend Advantage coverage. That doesn't mean the advice is wrong, but it's wise to ask questions and understand all your choices before enrolling.

You can search for licensed agents through nabip.org, the website of the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals.

Taking the time now to compare your options carefully can help you avoid costly mistakes and give you confidence in the coverage you choose.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



A Revolutionary Valley

by Gary Kalajian

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War, the Merrimack Valley has also taken on the name, "Revolutionary Valley". This additional designation pays tribute to the towns and cities that played a role in the historical events and compelling stories of the American Revolution.

Boston and surrounding towns were central to the battles, stories and day to day life of revolutionary life that occurred 250 years ago. The title also recognizes the Merrimack Valley for the contributions that this region made in the Industrial Revolution. We only have to look as far as Lowell and Lawrence to understand the significance of our region for its role in the creation of the mills and factories that produced vital goods/textiles during this transformational "Revolution". These products and the industrial growth that occurred are in large part due to the growth and development of the Merrimack Valley during this period.

The significance of the American Revolution will likely have different meanings to people who choose to honor this important time in our country's history. To most of us it represents the birth of our nation, from thirteen separate colonies to a collection of states, and eventually a unified country of the United States of America. It is equally astounding to consider that a group of American colonies under British rule, would unify their collective resolve and defeat one of the mightiest

Empire's in the world. The stories, the courage and the will/determination are all part of the lore of this great story. The significance of Boston's role and by extension, the part that the Merrimack Valley played in this transformational story, is what makes this celebration all the more vital for this region. Naturally, the stories take on more meaning and we associate our Valley as participating in this epic series of events.

Revolutionary Valley is a fitting name for the events that took place here. You only have to travel to Concord and Lexington to know that the War began with a battle between the forces of colonial Boston and surrounding towns in what would become known as "the shot heard round the world." That first shot fired touched off the firestorm that would eventually change the course of history. Citizens of towns all around Massachusetts participated in the great events that occurred. Events that cast our region into the pages of history. Where landmarks and markers would be situated around our region denoting where this history was made. Events such as the Boston Tea Party, the Boston Massacre, Henry Knox and the fortification of Dorchester Heights and the resistance to oppressive British rule, including taxes/levies placed on citizens all throughout the colonies by the British King and Parliament.

It is also important that we recognize the other "revolution" that occurred

right here in the Valley. The Industrial Revolution changed the world and paved the way for moving away from an agricultural way of life to a transformative manufacturing-based society. The significance of this cannot not be overstated. Production of textiles and other products in what would eventually become a mass-production based economy, would change the civilized world as it was then constituted. A rural and agricultural way of life would be replaced by industrial growth and mass production. The factories in Lowell and Lawrence with the power generated from the Merrimack River would play a huge role in this transformation. Let us not forget the factory laborers whose sweat and toil made all of this possible. Many of these mill workers were female laborers, including young children. They would power this remarkable industrial with their sweat, tears, and long hours, years before the changes brought on by labor unions and society's concerns over child labor. Their contribution cannot be forgotten in this story.

As noted above, our history in the Valley is replete with stories and lore regarding the Revolutionary War. Because Boston and surrounding towns are where much of the history occurred, we take particular pride in this magnificent story. We identify with the landmarks and can easily identify with these historical stories and places. All of us have the opportunity to walk the grounds in Concord/Lexington

where the famous battle took place. We can visit museums and observe markers designating important events. The Valley was central to the role in this history and the other "revolution" on Lowell/Lawrence's industrial mills. We can walk the same ground and feel the history that is being talked about throughout the world during this year's commemoration.

As we get closer to the 250th Commemoration of the American Revolution, let us not forget the sacrifices made for the eventual formation of the United States of America. The American Revolution is truly a remarkable feat that changed the world. It opened the world to the possibility that a route to self-government was not only achievable, but could lead to a shining example of lasting democracy. To prove it, a group of colonists from a far-off British Empire coalesced and fought that same empire and succeeded in forming a new country, with democracy as its central core. The anniversary also signifies our manufacturing revolution, that also transformed the world from a farming economy to an industrial based workforce that played a significant role in the Industrial Revolution. So, we can take pride in what is now being referred to as "Revolutionary Valley" and know that a good amount of the key events occurred right here in the Valley and surrounding towns/cities.

Merrimack Valley Calendar of Events

April



Wednesday, April 1
WEDNESDAY MORNING BOOK CLUB
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 10:00 AM—12:00 PM
Ihndler Room Haverhill Public Library 99
Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Wednesday Morning Book Club
No Registration Required

FIBER ARTS GROUP
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 6:30—8:00 PM
Ihndler Room Haverhill Public Library 99
Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Calling all fiber artists! Bring your current project(s) of knitting, crocheting, hand stitching, hand quilting, and embroidery, or whatever else, to work on in the company of other fiber arts enthusiasts! Instruction is not offered at this event but fellow attendees are always happy to offer advice when they can.
No registration needed. Drop in at any point during the 90-minute block!

APL READS: REVOLUTIONARY READS (BEANSTACK READING CHALLENGE)
APRIL 1-MAY 31
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 ALL DAY Beanstack
Adults, join us for the next in a series of themed two-month reading challenges! Our current theme is Revolutionary Reads. In honor of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, explore books & audiobooks about revolutions for the chance to win a prize. Non-fiction and fiction, history and fantasy, the American Revolution and other revolutions—explore these themes and more. We'll have book lists in the challenge on Beanstack and displays at the library with ideas of revolutionary reads that you might want to explore. Register in Beanstack by clicking here.
QUESTIONS ABOUT REGISTRATION? Contact the Reference Desk, 978-388-8148, option 2 / reference@amesburylibrary.org
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM? Contact Stephanie Smith, ssmith@amesburylibrary.org, 978-388-8148 x607
FUNDING CREDIT: Thank you to the Friends of the Amesbury Public Library for funding this program.
Sign up for our e-newsletter and be among the first to learn about all of our programs and events.
Register in Beanstack

COMMUNITY OF STITCHERS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 6:30—7:45 PM
Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149
Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
COMMUNITY OF STITCHERS
Do you have a sewing, cross-stitch, knitting, crochet or other craft project you are working on? Bring it to a meeting of our Community of Stitchers where you can work on your project, get advice from your fellow creators, and show off your work! Our local stitching enthusiast and advanced knitter, Sarah Chapman, will be on hand at each meeting to help attendees with their projects. All experience levels are welcome - come enjoy a creative evening with us!
No advanced registration required - walk-ins welcome!

Thursday, April 2
GAME NIGHT
THURSDAY, APRIL 2 5:30—8:30 PM
Ihndler Room Haverhill Public Library 99
Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Join us Thursdays for a night of board games at Haverhill Public Library! Strategy games, abstract games, filler games, complex and non complex alike, come and try out whatever you like. Feel free to bring your own games! All experience levels are welcome.
No Registration Required

Saturday, April 4
ON SCREEN: ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER (2025)
SATURDAY, APRIL 4 1:00—3:45 PM
Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99
Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
A former member of a revolutionary group seeks help from other revolutionaries to find his missing daughter. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Benicio Del Toro, Sean Penn, Wood Harris, and Teyana Taylor. Rated R.
No Registration Required

Tuesday, April 7
CLASSIC MATINEES: MYSTERIES
TUESDAY, APRIL 7 10:00 AM—12:15 PM
Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Join us in watching some of the best classic mysteries featuring murder, betrayal, and secret identities. Today we watch Shadow of a Doubt (1943) starring Joseph Cotton

and Teresa Wright.
No Registration Required
SIX WEEK WRITING GROUP: IN A WOMAN'S VOICE: WRITING IN RETIREMENT
TUESDAY, APRIL 7 10:00 AM—12:00 PM
Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
Women's identities evolve as work lives and childrearing responsibilities come to a close. How do we use our wisdom, voice, and capacity for growth? This writing group will explore our lives as we stand on the threshold of new discoveries. Whatever your level of experience, there is a place for you in this group.
Registration is required and is for all six weeks of the program. Attendance at all sessions is strongly encouraged but later registrations are welcome.

About the instructor: Kathleen M. Nollet, PhD, is an educator and writer who has taught writing to adults for over 20 years.
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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM? Contact Stephanie Smith, ssmith@amesburylibrary.org, 978-388-8148 x607
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Wednesday, April 8
PRINTING [AS] PAUL REVERE WITH ANDY VOLPE OF THE MUSEUM OF PRINTING!
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 3:00—7:00 PM
Ihndler Room Haverhill Public Library 99
Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Join us for this all ages, drop-in program with Andy Volpe as Paul Revere!
Andy will bring a rolling press and will be printing copper plates that he has replicated after those of Paul Revere. Visitors will have a chance to see this printing process up-close and can even help him print. He will also have a variety of display items including replicas of historical documents, models of presses, copper plates, and tools. Drop in anytime during this program! Andy will give a brief presentation at 4 PM and 5 PM, and plans to be printing from about 3:30 to 6:30 (as supplies last).
About Andy

Andy Volpe is an artist, printer and living history presenter in Worcester MA who specializes in Intaglio (copper plate) printing of the "Old Masters", 1450-1800. Since 2009 he has been involved with the Museum of Printing in Haverhill, where he provides presentations, tours, printing demonstrations and historical interpretation. He has also worked with Gary Gregory who founded the Printing Office of Edes & Gill, which replicates important documents using period printing processes like the Declaration of Independence. Volpe focuses on the works of Paul Revere, as well as printer Isaiah Thomas and his relationship with Revere. Volpe holds a degree in Fine Arts from Westfield State University, where he fell in love with the printers of the Renaissance and Early Modern Periods.
No Registration Required

SECOND EDITIONS BOOK CLUB
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 2:30—3:30 PM
Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149
Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
In cooperation with the Amesbury Council on Aging, join Assistant Library Director Stephanie Smith for a book group geared toward older adults that will meet 2nd Wednesdays from 2:30-3:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. New members are always welcome! Please use the form below to register so we know how many copies of the next month's book to bring.

This month we will discuss Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell. We will also have copies of the next month's book in regular print and large print available to borrow using your library card. Copies of the book will also be available for pickup at the Amesbury Public Library.
About the book: Agnes is a wild creature who walks her family's land with a falcon on her glove and is known throughout the countryside for her unusual gifts as a healer. Once she settles with her husband in Stratford-upon-Avon she becomes a fiercely protective mother and a steadfast, centrifugal force in the life of her young husband, whose career on the London stage is taking off when his beloved young son succumbs to sudden fever. A luminous portrait of a marriage, a shattering evocation of a family ravaged by grief and loss, and a tender and unforgettable re-imagining of a boy whose life has been all but forgotten, and whose name was given

from 5:30pm - 8:00pm.

If you are unable to attend the swap, you are welcome to drop off donations to the Program Room on the following dates and times:

Monday, April 27th: 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Tuesday, April 28th: 10:00am - 11:30am

Suggested items for donation : new or lightly used toys, beds, snacks, clothing, scratching posts, leashes, collars, pee pads, and carrying cases.

If you have any questions about the event or suggested donations, please contact a reference librarian at 978-465-4428 x 2.

No Registration Required

Tuesday, April 28

CLASSIC MATINEES: MYSTERIES

TUESDAY, APRIL 28 10:00 AM—12:15 PM

Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
Join us in watching some of the best classic mysteries featuring murder, betrayal, and secret identities. Today we watch *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946) starring Lana Turner and John Garfield.

No Registration Required

PAPERCRAFTING AND CARD MAKING

TUESDAY, APRIL 28 6:00—7:30 PM Milhender Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

Sign up for a card making and papercrafting class for beginners as well as those with stamping and papercrafting experience. We will be creating projects such as multi-layered cards, bookmarks, and 3-D items, using several techniques including stamping, die cutting, and embossing.

Workshop led by Ruth Tinkham.

Registration for this event opens Wednesday, April 1 at 9:00 AM.

DROP-IN SOCIAL SERVICES SUPPORT

TUESDAY, APRIL 28 1:30—2:30 PM Reference Desk 2nd Floor Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA

The City's licensed professional social worker Trish Boateng will offer regular drop-in hours at the Newburyport Public Library for any Newburyport resident who may need assistance on behalf of the City of Newburyport. Meetings will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis every Tuesday afternoon at the library, 1:30-2:30 pm in our study room. See Reference staff for directions. Consultations and referrals are confidential and free to all. Get connected with assistance for food, housing, transportation, health, child care, or other necessities.

The City's social worker also offers evening availability by appointment. See a librarian for more information.

No Registration Required

Wednesday, April 29

TECH CLASS: WORD BASICS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 6:00—7:00 PM Computer Lab Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

Join us to learn the basics of using Microsoft Word! This is a great class if you want to learn about a word processing program for typing letters, resumes, papers, and more. Plus, Microsoft Word is available on the library's public computers!

Led by HPL staff.

Registration for this event opens Wednesday, April 1 at 9:00 AM.

PET SUPPLY SWAP AND SWEET PAWS MEET & GREET

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 5:30—8:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950

Join us for our first pet supply swap! If you've got a furry friend, you know they have their favorite toys and can be picky about what you bring home to them. This is your chance to swap those items for something they'd like!

Suggestions include: new or lightly used toys, beds, snacks, clothing, scratching posts, leashes, collars, and carrying cases. Additionally, Sweet Paws Rescue will be joining us at this event to share all the wonderful services they provide to our community. Stop by to swap, say hello, and peek at the new furry friends available for adoption!

Call 978-465-4428 x2 with any questions. To learn more about Sweet Paws Rescue, visit their website at <https://www.sweetpawsrescue.org/>.

No Registration Required

Thursday, April 30

FROM TIFFANY TO CHIHULY: MASTERS OF GLASS ART (ART TALK SERIES)

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 7:00—8:15 PM Zoom
Join us each month to explore and appreciate different artists or artistic movements with Jane Oneail. This month, learn about...

Registration is required

This program is presented in conjunction with the public libraries of Chelmsford, Ashland, Groton, and Tewksbury and is funded in part by the Friends of the Amesbury Public Library.

This month's topic: Discover the luminous world of glass art, where molten sand transforms into breathtaking works that capture and refract light in ways that seem to defy the very nature of solid matter.

From Louis Comfort Tiffany's jewel-toned stained glass windows that turned churches into cathedrals of color, to Dale Chihuly's explosive blown glass sculptures that bring the ocean's mysteries to museum galleries, to Dan Dailey's whimsical figurative pieces that blend fine art with storytelling magic. This program illuminates how fire, breath,

and imagination combine to create some of the most spectacular and ethereal art forms known to humanity.

Image: Louis Comfort Tiffany and Agnes Northrop. Danner Memorial Window, 1913. Private collection.

About the Presenter: Jane Oneail (pronounced OH-neel) is the founder of Culturally Curious, a company that curates and presents art appreciation programs for audiences worldwide. Jane holds a master's in Art History from Boston University and a master's in Education from Harvard University. Born and raised in NH, she has worked at some of the state's most esteemed cultural institutions, including the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, where she served as Executive Director, and the Currier Museum of Art, where she held the role of Senior Educator. Jane has also taught at the college level for more than a decade, most recently at Southern New Hampshire University. For more information visit the Culturally Curious website.

QUESTIONS ABOUT REGISTRATION?

Contact the Reference Desk, 978-388-8148, option 2 / reference@amesburylibrary.org

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM? Contact Stephanie Smith, ssmith@amesburylibrary.org, 978-388-8148 x607

FUNDING CREDIT: Thank you to the Friends

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Sign up for our e-newsletter and be among the first to learn about all of our programs and events.

Please send any events you would like considered for the Calendar of Events to Editor@merrimackvalleyactivelife.com



Breakfast & Lunch

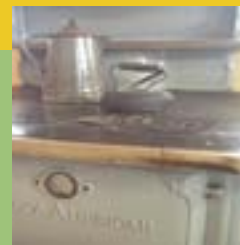
Carleen's

Thirty years serving
the Merrimack valley

*Great food & friendly staff

*Open 7 days a week

Breakfast all day
Lunch Monday thru Friday



978-682-3466.

carleens.com.

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