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WEEKEND EDITION

MASSACHUSETTS

Red Kettle kickoff: Bells ring in the giving season

Page A7

SPORTS

Central volleyball follow McNeil's lead to state final

Page C1



INSIDE: MORE THAN

$220 IN COUPONS

Full page of local coupons, Page D5

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dams across NH ailing

Page B1

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DEBORAH GUELFI PHOTOS

Members of Nancy Chippendale's Dance Studio make their way down the street during the annual Santa Parade in downtown North Andover in 2024. Photo by Deborah Guelfi

Anatomy of a parade

Procession marches on, fueled by hometown pride

By Terry Date

NORTH ANDOVER — At high noon on the first Saturday after Thanksgiving, the North Andover Santa Parade steps off in stages from the middle school.

As it has for generations. This year on Saturday, åNov. 28.

Toward the rear, North Andover High School's marching band carries forth its mobile symphony, ringing out festive measures that proclaim "Merry Christmas" and "Happy holidays."

At the very back is the North Andover Fire Department in a shining red ladder truck with Santa Claus in full regalia waving from the platform.

In between the police and fire service are 60 to 70 parade units representing all walks of North Andover life.

Each year, families, friends and classmates stake out familiar ground along the mile-and-a-half route and line both sides of Main Street in downtown North Andover right up to the parade review stand by Town Hall.



Children line Main Street looking for Santa to arrive during North Andover Santa Parade last year.

By noon, parade watchers at every post along the route are turning, listening, looking — and listening some more.

It might be drums or horns they hear in the distance. Minutemen musket fire. Maybe cheers.

Waiting are street-side townspeople bundled against the cold in puffy winter jackets, hats and mittens.

A few of them have afghans or blankets draped like capes over their shoulders.

The youngest lie swathed, deep in baby carriages.

The town takes this festive occasion to see itself pass by, one part at a time. Some 800 or more people in total, a slice of Americana in this annual revue.

It's a tradition that dates back to at least the 1950s in North Andover.

The hometown procession has been carried forth by successive waves of volunteers, hands working behind the scenes to build civic pride, roll out traditional pageantry, and preserve local connections.

Carrying on traditions

Today's Santa Parade — and other local celebrations — is organized, coordinated and set in motion by the North Andover Festival Committee.

The members are

SEE PARADE, PAGE A5

State: Haverhill in water crisis

By Jill Harmacinski

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HAVERHILL — The state has given the city a water supply emergency declaration that will allow Haverhill to connect with Methuen for drinking water and continue construction on a new well.

The Water Supply Emergency approved by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection on Wednesday also enables the city to activate its test well for pumping, Mayor Melinda Barrett said.

"Our immediate actions will include taking all necessary steps to initiate our interconnection with Methuen, activate our test well for pumping, maintain and enforce Haverhill's mandatory total ban on any nonessential outdoor use, and encourage indoor water conservation practices until further notice," she said in a prepared statement released at midnight Friday.

Barrett said the city expects to begin withdrawing water from Methuen by mid-December and activate a test well by the end of December.

"We will continue to work collaboratively with our local, state, and federal partners to meet all requirements outlined in

SEE WATER, PAGE A2

NORTH ANDOVER SCHOOL

Educators' union petitions Committee

By Angelina Berube

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NORTH ANDOVER — The North Andover Educators Association is seeking school officials and the School Committee to address concerns ranging from understaffing and better pay for teachers and teaching assistants.

The labor union presented on Thursday a petition signed by more than 450 educators urging the School Committee to support students by fully funding and staffing the district's schools.

The petition comes amid various collective bargaining sessions between the committee and the union for teaching assistants and teachers. Teaching assistant contract negotiations are expected to continue on Dec. 1.

Denise Colman, a third grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School, presented and read the signed petition.

"Our students deserve robust elective offerings to prepare for their post secondary future, not empty class blocks disguised as 'senior privilege,'" she read. "Our students deserve skilled educators who understand

SEE TEACHERS, PAGE A2

Scanlan vows NH will keep first-in-the-nation status

By William Skipworth

» N.H. Bulletin

The Democratic National Committee has again rebuffed New Hampshire and placed it third in its schedule for the 2028 presidential primary calendar, but Secretary of State David Scanlan, citing state law, plans to disregard the decision and go first anyway. It's a saga that could set New Hampshire on the path for a repeat of the contentious 2024 fight.

New Hampshire has, for decades, held the first primary election in the country each cycle (though Iowa has selected its

SEE FIRST, PAGE A2



WILLIAM SKIPWORTH/New Hampshire Bulletin

Secretary of State David Scanlan speaks to reporters about his reelection bid during a Nov. 17 press conference at the Legislative Office Building in Concord.

INSIDE TODAY

Advice	C7	NH	A6, A7, B6
Business	D2	Obituaries	B4-5
Dear Abby	C5	Real Estate	D1, D2
Forum	A4	Spare Time	C5
Local News	B1	Sports	C1
Lotteries	A2	Stepping Out	C6
Mass	A3, A7, B3	Weather	A2

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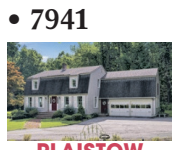

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