



Christmas Countdown

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

In the Christmas lights department, residents of Natick's Surrey Lane give Clark Griswold a run for his money. That fictional, try-hard and fail-harder father from the classic holiday film seeks to outdo his neighbors with an epic display of holiday lights.

Plugging them in sets dials on his electrical meter spinning like propellers, drains and dims

houses throughout surrounding suburbs.

Where Griswold won in terms of sheer wattage, Natick resident Michael Ricard gets top marks in the creativity category. For connoisseurs of Christmas lights, his Natick display has long been a staple and favorite. The elaborate holiday light show features an ensemble of illuminated Christmas icons, timed to the melodies of classic

seasonal songs.

Via radio, viewers can tune into the streaming music from their cars, watch the synched light show play out on Ricard's lawn. He uses technology the Griswolds hadn't access to (the film premiered in 1989), such as led lights, the software and hardware needed to choreo-

LIGHTS

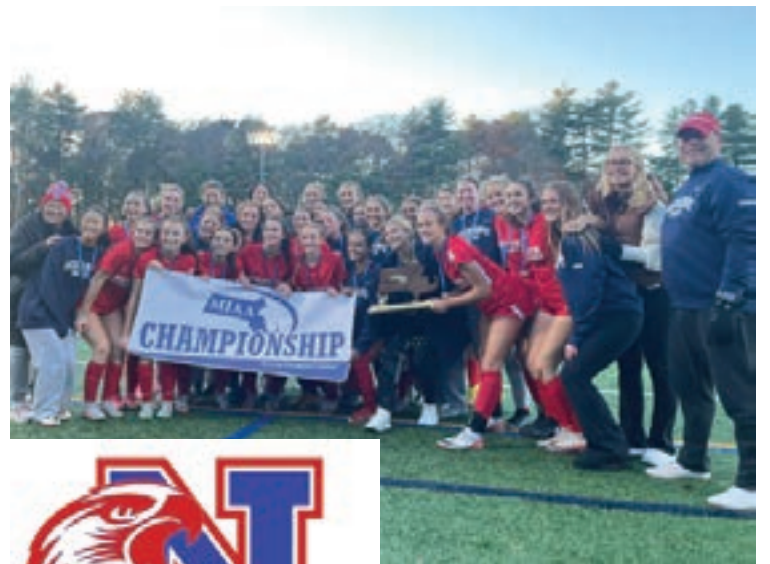
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Natick Girls Soccer Team Wins State Championship

By KEN HAMWEY
 STAFF SPORTS WRITER

First-half goals by Kira Henderson and Cassidy Moriarty,

and the effective goal-tending of Katie McMahon, were all Natick needed to shut out Bishop Feehan, 2-0, for its second Division



1 state soccer championship in three years.

The top-seeded Redhawks

SOCCER

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LIGHTS

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graph lights and music.

Ricard said he spent a good portion of his summer and winter downtime days on maintenance duty for the impending holiday light and sound show. With tens of thousands of individual lights to account for, it's a deliberate and painstaking process.

New songs were added to the playlist also, and each had to be programmed into the system to sync with its software. Ricard is an engineer by trade, and thus all that patience and attention to detail was within his wheelhouse.

"So this is a fun hobby for me," he said. "We've replaced a lot of old lights."

On December 15th and 16th, the Ricard family will host a collection bin for non-perishable food items, destined for the Natick Service Council. The bin will of course be impossible to miss, marked with an illuminated sign all its own.

The light show has its own dedicated website, where details of the December extravaganza can be found. Ricard flipped the



on switch for his "Christmas on Surry" display on Nov. 23rd.

A week earlier, Bacon Street Farms had its long strings of overhead bulbs installed. They would illuminate the small forest of Christmas trees that customers would meander among and choose from. In the middle of last month, those netted trees' branches were still snugly bound, stacked like logs on the lawn, soon to be whisked away atop many a car roof.

A few miles away, the switch

will be flipped on the Natick Common's holiday lights on Saturday, December 2nd. Department of Public Works crews were busy in weeks prior, threading bulb-studded strands through this anchor and around that pole.

"We're looking to make this a really nice event for everybody," said Tori Magarie. She's Assistant Director of Programs and Special Events for Natick's Recreation and Parks Department. Having taken on the role in September, this will be her first time planning

the holiday event.

Magarie grew up in Natick, taught 7th grade English in Wellesley for 15 years. She's kept connected with Natick now and then since she was a teenager, but her new role with the town is a milestone.

"It's like coming home."

In leadup to the lighting, the guy in the red suit will tour the town atop a ladder truck, on loan from the Natick Fire Department.

"So it's kind of like a mini parade," said Magarie. "And decorations, which I love."

A map of Santa's route is available for onlookers who want to catch a glimpse of the big guy riding by. His tour of the town will end at the Natick Common, where he'll do the honors of kindling the Christmas lights for the season.

"You have that magical moment," said Magarie. "He is kind of the pinnacle of the event. This is an opportunity for people to come together."

The December 2nd event will also feature activities for kids and families, and a holiday story read by a member of the Select Board. The festivities surrounding the common were sponsored by Sin-

cere, a technology company.

Unlike the Ricards, who give an approximate bulb count (nearly 42,000) for their front-yard festivities, Magarie said the town hadn't kept track of all those points of light as town employees deployed them over weeks.

"They deserve a lot of credit for that," said Travis Farley of the DPW's work in stringing holiday lights and adorning the space with decorations. On the big night, "We just flick a switch."

Farley is Natick's Deputy Director of Recreation and Parks.

An appearance by children's singer and songwriter Stacey Peasley is also planned, as are several "breakfast with Santa" events over the course of the month.

"We're adding a lot," said Farley, "trying to get out there more. Should be a lot of fun."

To inspire some friendly and festive competition, the town will also host a holiday decoration contest. Residents must register to take part, to be considered in the running for the top prize.

"People are signing up, which is nice to see," said Farley. "We can't get enough of the holidays."

We hope you have a happy and healthy holiday season.

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SOCCER

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captured the program's first title in girls' soccer in 2021 when they defeated Hingham, 3-2. Their



unbeaten Hopkinton, 1-0.

The Redhawks scored at the 21-minute mark when Megan Mela crossed a pass inside the box, enabling Henderson to find the net for a 1-0 advantage. Natick added another goal nine

minutes later when Moriarty scored on a header for a 2-0 advantage. Feehan managed to apply pressure in the second half, but McMahan stopped all three shots she faced.

Natick coach Dave Wainwright was elated about his team's second state crown.

"It's been great," he said. "Once the girls got a taste of it, success bred success. They were eager to get back and get another one."

Natick finished its season with a 21-1-1 record, while second-seeded Feehan ended its campaign at 20-1-1. The Redhawks advanced to the final by downing Bay State Conference rival Brookline, 5-2, and the Shamrocks earned their way into the finale by blanking previously



Winter Farmers Market

The Natick farmers market is a year-round market serving the MetroWest community for over 20 years.

There are close to 50 food vendors offering great food,

great variety and a welcoming atmosphere.

It is located in the Common Street Spiritual Center, on two floors, every Saturday until the end of April, moving back to

the Natick Common the beginning of May for the next season.

The market is sponsored by the Natick Center Cultural District.

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The community is invited to this special upcoming SPARK program....

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selves and Others
Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 7pm at the Community Senior Center

list, but rather an authentic way to connect and be energized by the goodness all around us.

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MetroWest Visitors Bureau Announces New Executive Director

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) is pleased to announce the appointment of Stacey David as their new Executive Director. Ms. David most recently served as Deputy Director of the Bureau, and previously served as a Board member for the organization, representing the arts and culture sector.

“We are so excited to have Stacey David as the new ED at the Visitors Bureau,” the MBVB Board of Directors said in a statement. “Stacey is such a strong leader and has already shown how she plans to positively impact the organization’s effectiveness, visibility, and ability to promote the local area as a tourist destination. We are excited to watch her guide the Bureau to success by providing clear direction, building a strong team, and adapting to the evolving landscape of tourism.”

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau promotes travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region, which includes Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough. Affiliated with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT), the MBVB conducts a number of marketing and advertising campaigns each year to draw both domestic and international visitors into the region, as well as enticing tour groups and meeting planners to consider MetroWest as a destination. The Bureau’s membership includes hotels, restaurants, area attractions, arts and cul-

tural organizations, and retail establishments, all of which are promoted through the annual Visitors Guide and marketing campaigns.

“I am delighted to take over the helm of the Visitors Bureau,” Ms. David said, “and look forward to continuing the great work we started this year. We are continuing to expand our marketing and advertising programs, which include both ads and editorial coverage in Yankee magazine, Down East, Rhode Island Monthly, New Hampshire magazine, and Connecticut magazine, all of which highlight the amazing things to see and do in MetroWest. We launched a beautiful new Visitors Guide this summer, which can be found on our website as well as in visitor information booths all over New England. In conjunction with our partner tourism councils, we are working on a huge PR campaign as well as a digital marketing campaign. We have expanded our website, and will continue to do so, and hope that both residents and visitors see us as a resource for exploring MetroWest.”

Now that businesses are starting to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bureau has once again offered paid memberships that include a variety of benefits.

“We see ourselves as a partner to our members who can provide a wide variety of marketing and promotional assistance at a fraction of the cost were they to undertake the same campaigns on their own. Our members can participate in co-op advertising programs and

MVB

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Sable Homes Metro-West Expands Real Estate Team



Nina Sable (right) recently welcomed Claudia Shepherd to her team.

BY CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Nina Sable, a real estate specialist known for her expertise in selling “as-is” homes, is now leading a team under the new umbrella of Sable Homes Metro-West. With the addition of bilingual real estate agent Claudia Shepherd, Sable’s Natick-based group is now able to meet the demand “seven days a week” as well as serve Spanish-speaking clients.

“Even with the market cooling down, it has been busy enough that we needed to have agent support,” Sable says. “Now, we can respond more quickly to clients, have more open houses, schedule extra showing appointments and really be accessible to sellers and buyers.”

One of the team’s specialties is working with remodelers and helping homeowners who are selling their distressed

Sable Homes Metro-West Business spotlight

homes. “We’re good at finding remodelers for such homes, and Claudia in particular works very well with that population,” Sable says. “We have a lot of clients who are fluent in Spanish who come to us looking for that type of property. So, we have worked with a lot of business owners looking for property and business owner investors looking to remodel property for extra income.”

Another population Sable Homes works with is people who have tax ID numbers rather than social security numbers. “We help them purchase homes and provide resources like mortgage brokers, attorneys and other folks who work in that space,” Sable says.

Sable Homes is also unique because of the rental assistance it offers. Especially in

the suburbs, not many real estate agents will do rentals and rental listings, Sable says, but her team “offers full service, all the way from listing the property to helping maintain it. If the owner isn’t on-site, we can go over and take care of things, for example, or we can make showing appointments for them.” Although they work with sellers and buyers across the region, Sable Homes only offers rental assistance in the Natick, Framingham, Ashland and Marlborough areas.

When it comes to selling properties, Sable says December is a good time because more serious buyers are out looking, even though sales tend to slow down a bit in the winter. “Especially for absentee owners who don’t want to maintain their properties in the winter, now is an ideal time to sell,” Sable says, “so you won’t have to worry about cold weather problems like pipes bursting and snow removal. You also won’t have the headache and pressure of the spring market.”

Sable also works with people looking to purchase on Cape Cod, and she says that winter is a good time to buy

in that area. “You can get into your new home by March, for example, and then enjoy the entire spring and summer on the Cape,” she says.

While based in Natick, Sable Homes works up to 50 miles west and south of Boston. The group’s range of clients is also vast. “We will work with just about any candidate in any price range,” Sable says. “That separates us. We can really customize our services to what clients need.”

With Sable Homes, there’s also no rush to jump into a decision. “If people are one to two years away from wanting to sell, it’s still a great time to meet with us and build a rapport,” Sable says. “We can give you a market report and evaluate your home, too. Sometimes clients get to us and they are already in a rush to sell. This way, we can build trust and a relationship early on in the process.”

For more information, contact Sable Homes Metro-West at 508-733-8935, nina.sable@raveis.com or visit www.sellwithsable.realtor.

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MVB

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other initiatives with very little investment on their part, either financially or through human resources. We love having engaged members because there are so many ways we can promote them.”

Residents and visitors can ac-

cess the Bureau’s regional events calendar, attraction listings, and the Visitors Guide online at www.metrowestvisitors.org. Businesses interested in more information on the Bureau, membership, and current marketing initiatives should email Stacey David at sdavid@metrowestvisitors.org.

Natick 180 Coalition Events

Tips for Talking with Your Teen about Drugs & Alcohol in Today’s World

Tuesday, Dec. 5

6-7 PM via Zoom

Register: <https://bit.ly/475yc3m>

10th Annual Interfaith Community Vigil

Remembering loved ones

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Sunday, Dec. 17, 7-8pm, with a reception from 8-8:30pm.

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Community-Senior Center Events

MONDAYS AT A MUSEUM- DECEMBER

Monday 3-4pm, free, call to register 508-647-6540
Join us as we visit museums all over the world and view artwork with commentary by artists, curators and more.

- December 4- Barnes Foundation
- December 11- Grandma Moses, Rockwell, winter scenes
- December 18- Christmas celebrations at various museums
- December 25- COA CLOSED

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION- ZOOM & IN PERSON

Free, call to register 508-647-6540 Every Thursday with Sharon 2:00-2:40 pm. Everyone is welcome to join for some guided meditation, some quiet sitting and some reflection with Q & A and sharing.

HOLIDAY CONCERT WITH SANDI BEDROSIAN TRIO- IN PERSON

Monday, December 11, 1:30-2:30pm, free, call to register 508-647-6540
Get into the holiday spirit with Sandi Bedrosian who has been performing professionally for the past 30 years as lead vocalist singing Jazz, Swing, Rhythm & Blues, and Classical, as well as Top 40 and Gospel/Liturgical music. She has been the opening act/lead vocalist for Gary Charone of Van Halen/Extreme, Sheena Easton, Tom Sullivan, Barbara Mandrell, and the Capital Steps. Sandi has also starred in many musical productions, theater and opera, including Carousel, Die Fledermaus and has directed South Pacific, Godspell, and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat, www.sandibedrosian.com. Thank you to Riverbend, Rehab Associates, South Natick for sponsoring this program!

CELEBRATING HANUKKAH WITH Rav Hazzan Ken Richmond- In person

Wednesday, December 13, 1:30-2:30 pm, free, call to register 508-647-6540
Join Rabbi Ken, Temple Israel's co-senior rabbi and longtime cantor, for a fun celebration of Hanukkah with songs, snacks, stories and sharing.

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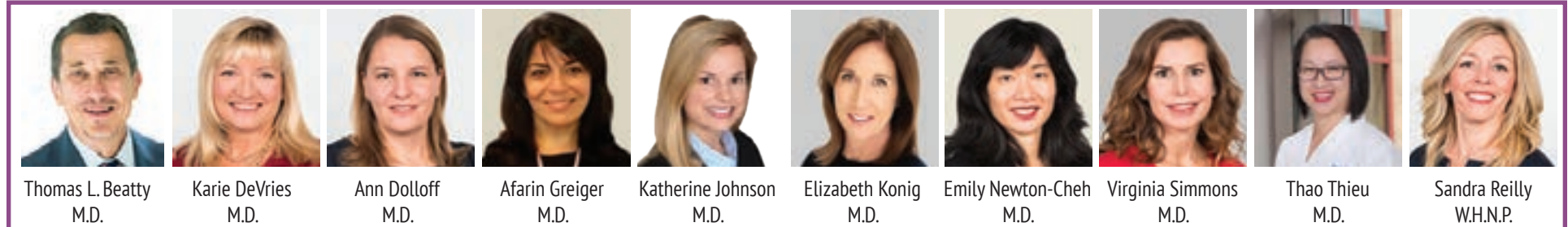
The Nativity in Art from the Renaissance to Modern Day-ZOOM
Thursday, December 14, 1:30-2:30pm, free, call for the zoom link 508-647-6540
Celebrate the season with a program that explores the artistic interpretations of the story of Jesus' birth. For centuries artists have imagined and reinterpreted the central characters in the story of the nativity. Compare and contrast works and see how important iconography has been utilized and adapted over the years.

Fatima Shrine Of Festival Of Lights Begins Dec. 7

Our Lady of Fatima Festival of Lights 2023 will be open Dec. 7 to 27. more will be available. The lights are on from 5 to 9 PM every night. The event is wheelchair accessible, with a path that winds



Shrine in Holliston for the traditional Christmas lights as they prepare this Advent for the Christmas season. Hot chocolate, donuts, and throughout the exhibit. Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is located at 101 Summer St., Holliston. There is no charge for this event.



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Are you ready for another New England winter?



Chris Hopkins

shovels ready!

How can you make sure you're ready for whatever Mother Nature has in store this winter? Here's some tips

1) Winterize all outside pipes

When temperatures drop below 32° F outside faucets, sprinkler heads, and irrigation lines will freeze and burst if they aren't winterized. Make sure to turn off all water at the mains inside the house then open faucets to let water in the pipe drain out. Irrigation systems require a professional, so make sure you make an appointment for winterization well before the first frost.

2) Get gutters cleaned

This summer's rain brought a ton of leaves, sticks, and other yard waste down on roofs. Chances are, that debris is now in your gutters. Left in place all that debris is a recipe for disaster as it freezes into an icy mass. That can get under shingles, damage your roof and cause ice dams. Clear gutters so rain

and snow can drain. If you're not comfortable on a ladder it's worth talking to a professional. Act now to avoid costly repairs in the future.

3) Prune, mulch, and protect perennials

Time to get the clippers out. Most of your perennials should have died back. Cut back the vegetation to 2 - 3 inches above the ground. It makes your garden look nice and neat, and it stops harmful insects from making a home. Want your evergreens to stay greener all year round? Now is the time to feed and protect them from harsh winds and colder temperatures. Add some mulch around the base to protect roots from freezing temperatures and any winter salt runoff. And consider burlap wraps to protect your evergreen investment. Winter burn can wreak havoc on tender evergreen leaves.

4) Trim trees and bushes

Take a good look at your

trees and shrubs. Look for large limbs overhanging your roof line, power or utility lines. A Nor'easter's high winds and heavy snow can bring down branches and cause thousands of dollars' worth of damage to roofs, porches, or siding. Plus, regular pruning encourages healthy spring growth and prevents disease and insect infestations. If you're not sure what should go and what can stay, consult an Arborist.

5) Repair paths and pavers

The winter's freeze and thaw can turn a loose patio or paving

stone into an accident waiting to happen. Frost heaves can trip even the most seasoned New Englander. Get loose stones reset by a mason before the frost starts.

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Bacon Free Library December 2023

Library Hours

Monday through Friday, 9:30-5:30 with extended hours on Tuesday until 7pm

Saturdays 9:30-1:30

Curbside pickup is available during all open hours

Check our website for the most up-to-date information and to register for programs: <https://baconfreelibrary.org>

Children's Programs

Story Time -- Mondays and Tuesdays @ 10 am -- We'll feature a combination of stories for listening and songs for singing & dancing.

Baby Time -- Wednesdays @ 10am -- Join us for a cozy story time filled with lap bounces, rhymes, songs, and simple stories. Geared toward infants and young toddlers with their grownups.

Dog Tales Story Time -- Monday, Dec 4th @ 10am -- Join us for dog-approved stories and a chance to pet a calm, sweet, and soft therapy dog.

Jammin with You -- Fridays, Dec 1st & 15th @ 10:30am -- Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam your way through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun! Registration is required.

Music Time with the Rashi School -- Friday, Dec 8th @ 10am -- Join us for a special music time with one of The Rashi School's incredible teachers! Geared toward ages 2 and up, but all are welcome.

Read to a Dog -- Saturday, Dec 16th, 10-11:15am -- Kids build confidence and practice reading skills by reading out loud to a registered therapy dog. Children ages 5 and up can sign up for a 15-minute reading session with Sophie, a gentle golden retriever who loves belly rubs, stories, and cuddles. Registration is required.

Winter Drop-in Craft -- Tuesday, Dec 26th, 11am - 12pm -- Stop by to make a simple, winter-themed craft with cotton balls, foam stickers, crayons, and more. Geared toward ages 0-5, but all are welcome.

Button Making -- Tuesday, Dec 26th, 4-6pm -- Stop by anytime between 4:00 and 6:00 to create your own cool button using our button maker! You can draw your own design or use a page from a discarded book or magazine. Geared toward ages 5 and up, but all are welcome.

Build a Fort at the Library! -- Weds, Dec 27th, 2-4pm -- Bring a few blankets and pillows from home and combine them with our tables and chairs to build a cozy fort in the library! Then you can spend the afternoon reading in your fort and doing a fun scavenger hunt and other activities. All ages are welcome, with adult supervision.

take it to her studio to fire it and send it back to you. Limited to 10 participants ages 12+. Registration required.

The Boston Tea Party - 250 Years Later (Virtual) -- Saturday, Dec 16th @ 2pm -- On the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, learn about the brewing political problems tea presented in its history with Anglophile and former UK resident Claire Evans. Then, author, genealogist, librarian, and former UK resident Debra Dudek examines the history of the Boston Tea Party's most famous partiers (and phonies), as well as how to trace bona fide participants through lineage societies and historical groups. **This is a virtual program; Register to receive the Zoom link.**

Adult Book & Film Clubs - registration required for all clubs <https://baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/>

Mystery Book Club - first Thursday of the month @ 1pm on Zoom
Dec 7th: The Golden Spoon by Jessa Maxwell

History Book Club - second Thursday of the month @ 11am on Zoom
Dec 14th: West with Gieraffes by Lynda Rutledge

Environmental Book Club -- second Tuesday of the month @ 7pm on Zoom
Dec 19th: The Darkness Manifesto: On Light Pollution, Night Ecology, and the Ancient Rhythms That Sustain Life by Johan Eklöf

Cinephile Mondays -- last Monday of the month @ 4pm on Zoom; watch and discuss films. Check the BFL website for the film of the month and to register.

All Ages Programs

Featured art display: Elizabeth Cohen's art work, which is inspired by organic elements in nature, will be on display at the BFL until December 13th.

Adult Programs

Create Fused Glass Key Rings -- Tues, Dec 5th @ 5:30pm -- Join artist Deenie Pacik for this fun fused glass workshop. You will be working with fusible glass including dichroic glass and chopped glass, as well as colorful paints. Create your key ring and Deenie will

Museum Passes

The Bacon Free Library and Morse Institute Library offer passes for free or reduced-admission to 30 local museums. Check one out and plan your next day trip!

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Your Money, Your Independence

The Clash Against The Magnificent Seven



Glenn Brown, CFP

Never before has the S&P 500 been this top-heavy.

The seven largest companies by market capitalization (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, Nvidia, Meta, and Tesla) comprise more than 29% of the S&P 500 index. These companies dubbed the “Magnificent Seven” have performed very well in 2023.

The Only Band (of stocks) That Matters?

A November 14th Goldman Sachs report shared that the Magnificent Seven have gained 71% this year while the other 493 stocks in the S&P 500 have gained just 6%.

Given market cap distribution, which allows larger stocks to contribute more to the index’s move-

ments, the S&P 500 has gained +19% this year.

Thus, if one owns the other 493 stocks but not the Magnificent Seven, they’re trailing the S&P 500 Index by ~13%.

“Di-worse-ification”?!

As for other asset classes YTD through 11/14:

- +9.1% - MSCI EAFE (International) Index.
- +7.5% - Gold.
- +5.1% - Dow Jones Industrial Average (Apple, Microsoft are components).
- +5.0% - MSCI Emerging Markets Index.
- +3.4% - U.S. Small Cap (Russell 2000) Index.
- +0.4% - U.S. Aggregate Bond Index.
- 0.6% - Morningstar U.S. Real Estate Index.

What of dividend stocks? Vanguard’s Dividend Appreciation +7.9% trails S&P 500 Index by ~11% even though its largest holdings Apple and Microsoft are ~9%. It can’t own other Magnificent Seven stocks because they don’t pay dividends (yet).

Before asking, what about NASDAQ 100’s +34.6%? Understand, Magnificent Seven are 44% of that index’s 100 stocks.

Death or Glory.

Yes, Magnificent Seven 2023 returns are eye-popping, but let’s

review 2022 then add together for net total return (not average) from 01/01/22 -11/14/23.

- Apple: **2022 -26%**; 2023 +45%; Net +7%
- Microsoft: **‘22 -28%**; ‘23 +56%; Net +12%
- Amazon: **‘22 -50%**; ‘23 +74%; Net -13%
- Alphabet: **‘22 -39%**; ‘23 +51%; Net -8%
- Nvidia: **‘22 -51%**; ‘23 +240%; Net +69%
- Meta: **‘22 -64%**; ‘23 +179%; Net 0%
- Tesla: **‘22 -65%**; ‘23 +93%; Net -32%

Still, since 2018 the Magnificent Seven have outpaced the S&P 500 and Nasdaq 100. Not the first time a concentrated group of tech stocks outperformed 5 years to sit near the top of S&P 500.

The Four Horsemen.

In the late 90s, Dell, Cisco Systems, Intel and Microsoft were deemed The Four Horsemen.

To end 1999, the Top 10 S&P 500 Index holdings were - Microsoft, General Electric, Cisco,

ExxonMobil, Wal-Mart, Intel, Lucent, IBM, America Online and Citigroup. Notice 7 out of Top 10 were technology. Dell was #18, between Nortel Networks and MCI Worldcom.

A “What Happened To...?” article should be done, but understand from 2000-2009, aka “The Lost Decade”, the S&P 500 Index lost -9%. The best performing Four Horseman, Microsoft, had a -36% decline for 2000s.

Diversification and Equal-Weight At Work.

If S&P 500 was negative for the 2000s, so was everything else. Right?

Nope. Per indices cited previously, Gold returned +274%, U.S. REITs +162%, Emerging Markets +154%, U.S. Bonds +85%, U.S. Small Caps +44%, and International stocks was +12%.

Additionally, the Equal-Weight S&P 500 Index was +65% for the 2000s.

An equal-weight index is when all components are weighted equally. In today’s terms, a Mag-

nificent Seven stock impacts the same as Lululemon, Hubbell and Blackstone, all recently added to S&P 500 Index.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

This isn’t to say sell this or buy that, as everyone’s situation is different with goals, taxes, risk tolerance and timelines. It’s to help educate, understand what you own and why you own it.

You should go to your CFP for your customized recommendations.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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Charles River Chorale to Perform

The Charles River Chorale and the Charles River Children’s Choir will be presenting their Winter Concert on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. at the Medway High School Auditorium. Doors open at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students. Children 5 and under are free. Tickets can be purchased prior to the concert by visiting our website at www.charlesriverchorale.com/tickets.

Tickets can also be purchased at the door with payment by cash or check. No credit cards will be accepted at the door.

The theme of this concert is Joy to the World, Celebrations Around the Globe.

This year’s program will feature music celebrating cultures and seasonal events across the globe, including Chinese New Year, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali and more!

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End The Year With The Friends Of Holliston Trails

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

End of the year with friends and neighbors at the Friends of Holliston Trails Annual First Night Trail Walk.

According to Gretchen Rice Prieve Chair, First Night Trail Walk, and President, Friends of Holliston Trails, the event is highly anticipated.

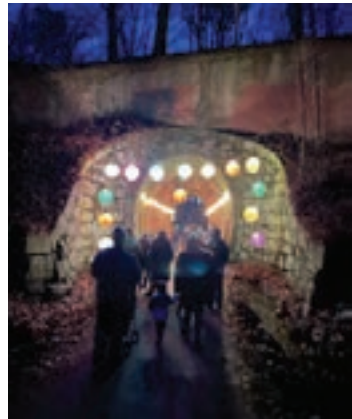
“The trail has been called the crown jewel of Holliston and this event invites people to explore the trail in a new way. One of our goals as a nonprofit is to raise awareness of the trail and it’s important to show off the trail in fun ways. Along the walk, we’ll have volunteers staffing fire pits for warmth, entertainment, decorations, and snacks,” she said.

Prieve said the inaugural First Night Trail Walk was 10 years ago and, “We have hosted this event most years since 2013.”

The Trail Walk is Dec. 31, from 5-8 PM.

With the walk and dinner early, it allows for “time to get outside for fresh air, exercise, and to chat with neighbors early

in the evening, leaving plenty of time for more traditional New Year’s celebrations,” said Prieve. She said over the years, the organization has had different entertainment features to engage walkers of all ages. From live ice



sculpture demonstrations to a unicyclist roaming the trail, they try to make it family friendly for all to enjoy.

“This year we will welcome back The Unlikely Strummers, a community-based group of ukulele players. They are sure to get a crowd singing and perhaps even dancing on the trail. In Blair Square we are adding a DJ this

year. Erosbooth will bring energy to Blair Square like we’ve never seen with music, lights, and a 3D photo booth. Three Ring Creations is also new to Holliston this year with an LED juggling act to dazzle our youngest walkers,” said Prieve.

Another favorite are the fire pits along the trails.

“Our fire pit hosts often bring their own, unique offerings to shape this event—bells to ring in the new year, laser light shows, and resolution burning have all been featured along the trail. People have a story—and they integrate that story into the event, making this experience truly unique,” she said.

There will be a variety of snacks along the trail. Many of the fire pits offer snacks—s’mores, trail mix, hot chocolate—and Holliston Boy Scout Troop 73 will grill up hot dogs for walkers in Phipps Tunnel.

Prieve is excited for the event. “This is Holliston at its best. It’s a family-friendly, fun way to celebrate New Year’s Eve. Whether a participant walks the entire length of our event or just a short portion, they’ll experience the trail in a way that is unique—visually they’ll see lanterns hanging from Phipps Tunnel, lights lining the trail, and fire pits guiding the way.

“They may engage by smashing a gong to ring in the New Year, listening to music, talking with neighbors at different fire pit stops, or simply spending time as

a family without the distraction of phones and iPads,” she said.

As an all-volunteer organization, the group depends on neighbors to support this event and are still in need of fire pit hosts. Fire Pit Hosts are responsible for building, maintaining, and extinguishing a fire pit in a specific location along the trail. If anyone is interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity, email president@hollistontrails.org. Prieve said “Middlesex Savings Bank is a key sponsor of our 2023 First Night Trail Walk. We’re thankful for their financial support, which allows us to bring more entertainment to our event this year.”

Know before you go

Participants may begin their walk from either Blair Square (corner of Central and Railroad Streets) or Cross Street, to make their way to Phipps Tunnel. The walk from Blair Square to Phipps Tunnel is about 1 mile and the walk from Cross Street to Phipps Tunnel is about 0.25 miles.

Many businesses around Blair Square—CVS, Casey’s Pub, and Depot Package Store specifically—are open for business and we ask that trail walkers do not park in their lots, so they may serve their customers. Parking is available in the following locations:

- Blair Square parking lot
- Exchange Street municipal parking lot
- Robert Adams Middle

School parking lot

- Placentino Elementary School parking lot
- Cross Street parking lot

The event is free of charge to the public. Should walkers wish, there will be three onsite opportunities to donate to Friends of Holliston Trails.

One thing to note: For the safety of the animals, dogs are not welcome at this event.

“While our four-legged friends are typically welcome on the trail, we respectfully ask that people leave their dogs at home for this event. In past years we have welcomed more than 3000 walkers, so the trail is crowded. Additionally, the lights, music, and decorations create a lot of stimulation that may frighten animals,” she said.

Friends of Holliston Trails (FOHT) is a registered 501c3 founded in 2012. It was established to support the 6.7-mile rail trail created through years of work by the town of Holliston.

The FOHT collaborates in close partnership with the town-appointed Holliston Trails Committee (HTC). We’re comprised of volunteers who drive awareness of the trail and fund-raise on behalf of trail needs. The money we raise supports trail maintenance, on-trail amenities, and community programming to drive awareness.

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Dancing Arts Center Presents The Nutcracker at The Norwood Theatre

Dancing Arts Center is pleased to announce the return of The Nutcracker at the Norwood Theatre on Dec. 15-17. This will be Dancing Arts Center's ninth production of The Nutcracker presented in Norwood and will feature fresh choreography, fun surprises, and guest artists. Telling the story of Clara's Christmas Eve dream battling the Mouse Queen alongside her Nutcracker, dancing through the Land of Snow, sampling the Kingdom of Sweets, and meeting the Sugarplum Fairy and Cavalier, The Nutcracker has been captivating audiences and inspiring young dancers for generations. The beautiful and historic Norwood Theatre located in downtown Norwood, makes an ideal setting for this family-friendly and professional production of the traditional holiday ballet.

Dancing Arts Center co-Directors Patrick Notaro and Gregg Saulnier anticipate their spirited, diverse cast will bring much joy to the community this holiday season. The role of Clara will

be danced en pointe by 13-year-olds Brooke Holden of Medfield and Amelie Perrott of Holliston, while the featured roles of Spanish, Arabian, and Dew Drop Fairy will be danced by Gabrielle Schmid of Holliston and Meghan Bourque of North Attleboro, both aged 17. Holliston natives Jacqueline Vaughn (aged 15) and Avery Marion (aged 14) will perform Columbine Doll, with 18-year-old John Fumia of Hopedale reprising his role as the Nutcracker Prince. "While much effort goes into ensuring our dancers are physically prepared, we really emphasize the storytelling aspect of our production," said Mr. Saulnier. "With Brooke and Amelie each bringing unique artistic interpretations to 'Clara' and our mix of newer and more seasoned dancers, our Nutcracker has a tremendous energy."

These young dancers will be joined by professional guest artists Kirsten Evans as the Sugarplum Fairy and Mamuka Kikalishvili as the Cavalier. Ms. Evans, a native of Seekonk, Massachusetts,

danced many roles in her career with Ballet Rhode Island (formerly Festival Ballet Providence), while Mr. Kikalishvili is from Tbilisi, Georgia and danced with Hungarian National Ballet and Hong Kong Ballet. Dancing Arts Center is thrilled to have artists of such experience and caliber dance alongside its students for the 2023 production of The Nutcracker.

In effort to support accessibility to the arts for the youth in our community, Dancing Arts Center will present a special Student Matinée performance of The Nutcracker at 10 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 15. Student Matinée tickets are offered at a deep discount for public and private school groups of 10 or more. Home school and distance learning groups are also welcome.

Tickets are on sale now for four general public matinées and evening performances from Dec. 15-17. Purchase options are available at <https://norwoodstage.com/the-nutcracker-2023>.



About Dancing Arts Center:

Located in Holliston, Massachusetts, Dancing Arts Center provides world-class instruction in classical ballet grounded in the American Ballet Theatre® National Training Curriculum, modern dance, improvisation, tap, jazz, and choreography to children of all ages as well as open classes for teens and adults. With a faculty of teaching artists, a variety of performance opportunities throughout the year, exceptional summer programs, and exposure to professional

companies, Dancing Arts Center is committed to providing a uniquely supportive artistic environment where young people can embark on their own journeys of personal growth. Open Enrollment is available year-round with prorated tuition and discounts for families.

For more information about the Dancing Arts Center contact DAC Directors Patrick Notaro and Gregg Saulnier at (508) 429-7577 or dancingartscenter@gmail.com, or visit www.dancingartscenter.com.

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Sports

Infanger Returns To Coach NHS Boys Hockey Once Again

A Former Medway Coach And A.D.

BY KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Karl Infanger always aims high when he sets goals, and walking away from a challenge is not in his DNA. Those traits no doubt played a major role when he decided to return to Natick High for a second stint as the Redhawks' varsity hockey coach.

The 48-year-old Infanger has a top-notch hockey pedigree at the interscholastic, college and professional levels.

During his four years at Billerica High, where he excelled in hockey volleyball and golf, he had offers to play college hockey but he wanted to compete for a Division 1 school. He chose Merrimack College and as a walk-on he finished his career playing defense in 118 games at the Division 1 school.

"I enjoyed playing three sports at Billerica," Infanger said. "But, I decided to focus on hockey and competing for a Division 1 college was what I strived for. I worked hard, got playing time and became a starter as a sophomore and junior. I played in packed arenas at Boston University and the University of Maine. Some of my best days were at Merrimack.

"I always dreamed about playing pro hockey, so I gave it

a shot after college and played two years in the International Hockey League and the East Coast Hockey League."

"I played in Wheeling (W. Virginia) for Peter Laviolette for a year in the ECHL and a year later I became a league all-star," Infanger said. "I also spent time in Orlando in the IHL but my pro career ended with the Mississippi Sea Wolves where we won the ECHL championship. Two years in the pros was very rewarding."

When Infanger, who has a masters degree in educational administration from Cambridge College, got married, he decided it was time to begin a career in education. He became a wellness teacher at Medway and has worked in that role for 22 years. In 2003 he became Medway High's athletic director. He also was a Medway assistant coach in boys hockey and a volunteer coach with the girls co-op team. He also served as an assistant coach at Framingham State for two years.

Infanger eventually took varsity posts at the interscholastic level (five years at Natick High) but when his daughter began playing for Medway, he became head coach of the Mustangs' girls squad for five years.

When Natick High began its

search for a varsity coach last summer, Infanger received calls from friends there and it didn't take him long to return to the high-powered Bay State Conference.

"It was an easy decision to go back to Natick," he noted. "My heart never left the town, especially after one of my players, Justin Bailey, died suddenly at 18 in 2012. I left after five years there for family reasons. My kids were starting to play high school hockey and I'm a family-first guy. Now both my son and daughter are playing in college, so the time was right to coach again. Natick High's athletic culture and pride is special."

Infanger got positive results in his varsity coaching tenures at Natick and Medway. He had four winning seasons in five years with both programs. And, both schools qualified for tournament play in four of five years. He led Natick to a state semifinal appearance in the 2011-12 season and he registered eight playoff victories in five years with the Redhawks.

Local Town Pages deadline arrived before Natick's pre-season practices got under way, but by watching film, Infanger has a sense of what kind of team he's inheriting.

"The players have a superb work ethic," he noted. "I see good effort. There's talent and players appear to have a good hockey IQ. I see a team that looks well-balanced."



Karl Infanger, who enjoys coaching hockey, has taken the varsity reins for a second stint at Natick High.

Infanger's goals for the Redhawks will be similar to the objectives he had during his previous days at Natick's helm.

"We'll improve daily in practice and in games," he emphasized. "We'll always move forward and learn from losses. We also want to compete for the Carey Division title, qualify for the state tourney and go deep."

Natick will open its season by hosting Shrewsbury on Dec. 9. Non-league games are slated against B.C. High and Woburn, and an in-season tourney will enable the Redhawks to face two teams from a pool of Malden Catholic, Winthrop, St. Mary's of Lynn and Bishop Guertin of New Hampshire.

"Playing in the Bay State Conference will be challenging," Infanger offered. "There are no days off. It's a solid league that gets teams prepared for the playoffs. The BSC is well-balanced and it usually has five or six schools that qualify for the state tourney."

Infanger's on-ice style will feature Natick's relying on a strong defense but still employing "an explosive offense."

In his previous posts as

a head coach, Infanger has banked on an athletic philosophy that focuses on winning, reaching one's potential and having fun. "Winning is a by-product of reaching one's potential and enjoying competition," he said. "Team chemistry also plays a key role."

Infanger tries to instill some valuable life lessons while focusing on his on-ice goals. Overcoming adversity is one. "That helps players to become resilient," he said. "Sports can also teach kids to be good teammates, to be leaders and to be accountable. A strong work ethic leads student-athletes to be improved players, better teammates and good human beings."

Infanger and his wife Julie have lived in Medway for 24 years. Their children, Alex and Emily, are playing collegiate hockey — Alex at the University of Delaware and Emily at Assumption.

Medway is home for his family, but for Karl Infanger, Natick still occupies a place in his heart. "Part of me never left," he said. "It's a town that's special."

Happy Holidays!

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Sports

Natick Women's Tennis Team Finishes Third in Country

An adult team from the Longfellow Natick Club finished third in the country on



at the National Championships.

The championships, run by the United States Tennis Association (USTA), took place at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla.

The USTA League National Championships are a two-day event that features the best teams from each of the 17 USTA Sections across the country.

The Longfellow Natick Tennis Team played in the Women's 55 and Over 9.0 categories and was captained by Susan Corey and Sandra Allen.

This group of women has worked extremely hard throughout the season to reach the pinnacle of USTA adult tennis.



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11/17/2023	18 Terrane Ave.	\$999,000
11/17/2023	60 Speen St.	\$674,000
11/17/2023	6 Alden St.	\$1.53 mil
11/14/2023	15 Roxbury Ave.	\$771,350
11/14/2023	9 Wayside Rd.	\$1.38 mil
11/10/2023	1 Jennison Cir.	\$1.58 mil
11/09/2023	1 Park Ave.	\$750,000
11/08/2023	7 Windsor Ave.	\$825,000
11/03/2023	164 Boden Ln.	\$855,000
11/02/2023	19 Coachman Ln.	\$1.02 mil
11/30/2023	8 Spring Valley Rd.	\$849,900
10/27/2023	26 2nd St.	\$605,000
10/27/2023	20 Florence St.	\$925,000
10/27/2023	7 Wayside Rd.	\$1.33 mil
10/26/2023	17 Stacey St.	\$951,000
10/26/2023	56 Park Ave.	\$700,000
10/25/2023	30 Walden Dr. #7	\$323,000
10/24/2023	44 Graystone Ln.	\$2.35 mil
10/23/2023	4 Malden St.	\$900,000
10/23/2023	22 Hillcrest Ave.	\$1.63 mil
10/19/2023	10 Nouvelle Way #T722	\$825,000
10/19/2023	13 Morgan Dr. #109	\$720,000



The 3-bed, 2-bath 2,578 sf unit at 56 Park Ave. in Natick recently sold for \$700,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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Happy Holidays

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Thank you to our joyful clients who made our year merry and bright. We wish you peace and light in 2024!