

## Spooky Season Hits Natick



Driving around town last month, there was plenty of spooky scenery to be found as residents prepared for Halloween! Photos by Sean Sullivan

More photos on page 2



## The Giving Season

By SEAN SULLIVAN

Autumn is harvest season, and for many local aid organizations, that means gathering as much inventory as possible as a bulwark against cold weeks to come.

On the cusp of winter, residents struggling materially seek to stock up on necessities for days when light grows scarce and months seem to linger. Food with a formidable shelf life, warm clothing to weather New England winter, etc.

And by extension, the organizations dedicated to offering aid also work harder to fill and

maintain the food pantries and coffers that fuel their outreach and assistance.

Now that those heady days of Covid seem further in the rearview, there seems a sense that the need for public assistance has receded apace. Yet most of the pandemic programs that bolstered so many people in 2020 and 2021 have expired. Policies slashed child poverty by more than half, for instance, but those gains are losing ground now that such

**GIVING SEASON**  
*continued on page 3*

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# Spooky Season Hits Natick

Photos by Sean Sullivan



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**GIVING SEASON**

*continued from page 1*

programs haven't been renewed.

"You would think things have been doing better," said Tina Noonan. She is director of development and outreach for the Natick Service Council. The organization has become a staple in the town for people and families in need, offering a wide range of tangibles and services to neighbors working through difficult circumstances.

"It's been really challenging.



We're seeing more people coming through the door."

In response, Natick Service Council has lengthened the time that patrons can shop during food pantry appointments.

"I've also noticed that more people are applying," said Noonan, referring to the number of aid organizations vying for donations to fund their operations. "The pool is getting bigger," she added, meaning there's less to go around.

Groups like the Natick Service Council are buoyed by fundraising drives, grants and

individual donors of food, clothing and financial gifts. Since 2020, said Noonan, the NSC has seen a drop in donations.

"Since Covid, we've had to purchase more food."

About 80 percent of the NSC's pantry stores come from individual donors, she said, adding that such giving has declined somewhat in months since Covid. That may owe, in part, to that broadening pool of organizations seeking aid, which of course is a reflection of the population in need of such services.

If individuals and groups are looking to bolster shelves at the Natick Service Council, or any other of the many local aid groups doing similar work, the NSC's Ali Griffin has recs. She manages the organization's food pantry.

Canned and non-perishable food of all varieties are encouraged. Children's breakfast cereals of all sorts are in demand. Flour, soup, Bouillon cubes, black tea and Cheer-

**GIVING SEASON**

*continued on page 4*

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# Keila Wakao Wins 2023 Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition

Keila Wakao '24, a senior at Walnut Hill School for the Arts, received First Prize at the Boston Symphony Orchestra's



(BSO) annual Concerto Competition on Thursday, Oct. 12. The 17-year-old Wakao was chosen as the winner out of 22 applicants, nine musicians hav-

ing advanced to the final round. Wakao performed Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor at the Competition. As the first prize winner, she gave a public performance of the work's second movement with the BSO on Oct. 28, at Symphony Hall in Boston and will receive a \$1,000 cash prize (the Cornelius A. & Muriel P. Wood Award).

Concerto Competition participants from Walnut Hill School for the Arts swept the top placements at the event. In addition to Wakao's first prize, second prize went to Jiyu Oh '25 (violin) and third prize was tied between Yuxuan Daniel Ma '25 (french horn) and Andrew Sijie Li '25 (piano).

Last year's BSO Concerto Competition was also won by a Walnut Hill student, bassoonist Ye Sol (Joanna) Yi '24.

"I am so grateful to have won the Boston Symphony Concerto Competition, as it has always been a lifelong dream to perform with the BSO in Symphony Hall," commented Wakao, who studies privately with Donald Weilerstein and Soovin Kim at the New England Conservatory of Music. "I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my teachers, family, and friends for their unwavering support. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the incredible dedication and hard work of all the competitors who participated."

"The Boston Symphony is delighted to congratulate Keila Wakao on winning first prize in our Concerto Competition," said Catherine French, a BSO violinist and Robert Bradford Newman chair, and one of the Concerto Competition judges.

## GIVING SEASON

*continued from page 3*

ios were singled out by name as ranking high on the list of what's needed. With the colder months drawing ever closer, warm clothing of all kinds is much appreciated. Monetary

period, landing in the mailboxes of already financially-precarious people.

If aid organizations like the NSC can help pay those utility bills, at-risk residents can keep the heat and lights on during winter. Failing that, a stack of unpaid utility bills can become another entry point in a mate-



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donations are, of course, accepted and put to good use.

The steep and seemingly incessant rise in housing costs is another culprit putting more pressure on groups like the Natick Service Council.

"Rents are going up in Natick," said Noonan. And that increase means there's less money for other necessities – food, clothing, fuel, etc.

Early autumn, she said, is a critical time for residents at risk of not being able to afford utility bills. If the service is required to heat a residence, then utility providers in certain instances are prohibited from shutting off that service between Nov. 15th and Mar. 15th.

As a result, a fleet of cancellation notices are often launched in the months just prior to that protected grace

period, landing in the mailboxes of already financially-precarious people.

"A lot of the challenges that our clients face are intertwined," said Noonan. "So, what we do is try to help them out on all levels."

That means addressing deprivation in all its many and mutually-injurious forms. Not being able to afford a suit or professional attire can hurt an applicant's prospects during an interview and on the job. A lack of funds for fuel and/or car repairs can mean the loss of a job. Being short on school supplies can arrest a child's progress and potential. And so on it goes.

"Our goal is self-sustainability," said Noonan.

*Courtesy photos by Sara Sniderman Photography*

# Kindness Week Natick 2023 and other events from SPARK

## 6th Annual Kindness Week

We invite you to celebrate SPARK Kindness Week in Natick, Nov. 4-11, 2023! KINDNESS WEEK is a time to shine the spotlight on the good that happens every day and inspire people to spread

tions and community members, we seek to promote small events and initiatives throughout the week that will inspire community bonding around kindness and have a lasting impact all year long. Everyone is welcome to join us in the celebration of

through kindness. Share your pictures, stories, and messages with us at [info@SPARKKindness.org](mailto:info@SPARKKindness.org) or tag us on Facebook @SPARKKind and on Twitter and Instagram @sparkkindness #KindnessConnectsUs #SPARKKindnessNatick

one!), and bring a smile! Elizabeth at [enolangreer@sparkkindness.org](mailto:enolangreer@sparkkindness.org) for more information or visit [www.sparkkindness.org](http://www.sparkkindness.org)

Please join SPARK during Kindness Week in connecting and serving our neighbors a delicious community dinner! We are looking for help making food and serving! Email Elizabeth at [enolangreer@sparkkindness.org](mailto:enolangreer@sparkkindness.org) for more information or visit [www.sparkkindness.org](http://www.sparkkindness.org)

**Kindness Week**  
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### Connect and Serve: Community Big Leaf Rake

Sunday, Nov. 5 from 9am-noon, at Cedar Gardens, 14 Cedar Ave., Natick

Join neighbors and friends from Keep Natick Beautiful, The Rotary Club of Natick, Natick Housing Authority, and SPARK Kindness for an inter-generational Connect and Serve Community Big Leaf Rake. Come rake and show kindness to neighbors

during SPARK's Kindness Week. Bring your family, bring your friends, bring a rake (if you have

### Community Connecting & Mindfulness Walk on the Rail Trail

Sunday, Nov. 5 at 1-3 pm, meeting location Natick Amvets, 79 Superior Dr, Natick on the Cochituate Rail Trail. Join the SPARK Kindness team and neighbors for a walk along the rail trail. We will connect with each other, and in nature, for this special community walk. Meeting location AMVETS (79 Superior Drive, Natick). Please note, this is not a public parking lot but we have special permission from our AMVETS friends to park here for our connection walk! No need to register, just come and walk with us!

### Natick's Open Door Community Meal Connect and Serve Event

Monday, Nov. 6, from 4:30-6:30 pm, at the Natick Elks Club, 95 Speen St, Natick

### SPARKing Gratitude in Ourselves and Others

Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 7pm, at the Community Senior Center, 117 E. Central St., Natick — For adult community members

Join us for a SPARKly gratitude gathering! During the busy end of year, we invite you to join us for an informal, relaxed, and uplifting evening. Gratitude is not something to add to our "to do" list, but rather an authentic way to connect and be energized by the goodness all around us.

Learn more about all of SPARK's programs, connect with resources and register for the programs, learning and fun at [www.SPARKKindness.org](http://www.SPARKKindness.org)

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# An Artist's Third Act

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

In the recent film "Mr. Turner," the celebrated 19th century painter of that name shuffles into and out of the rarified world of fine art. The watercolorist's works are rendered, judged, celebrated and sold, as the artist navigates the politics and pomp of that segment of society.

Yet it's hinted that the advent and adoption of photography is on the horizon, a technology that would capture in a instant what took the painter for all of preceding human history weeks, months, years to create on canvas.

The coming of the camera looms and gathers like silent storm clouds in the background distance, the force of nature that Turner would often render in his roiling and wreck-inducing paintings of the ocean in all its fury.

Painted portraits and vistas predominated the art world for another solid century – think John Singer Sargent for a good example close to home. That perhaps owed to the one feature that photography couldn't yet reliably



Natick artist Natalia Broude

reproduce, but that the painter was always awash in - color.

Yet even with a camera in every pocket nowadays, the ability to capture high quality images instantaneous, the appeal of painting for artists and aficionados has not notably faded.

Natick artist Natalia Broude's recent exhibit at Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary is a vivid example; about a third of her paintings sold at the showing. The exhibit ran August and September, and featured between 40 and 50 of Broude's pieces.

Broude, like Turner, is a watercolorist. Though departing from

her distant creative predecessor, the Natick artist's paintings lean toward the serene. She favors tranquil tableaus in lieu of Turner's raging seas.

The life that Broude relatively recently embarked upon is her third act - a quite creative one. And in the narrative of a long life, it's a chapter that seems barely begun. Now in her early 80s, she took up painting in 2017, though the quality of Broude's languid watercolor landscapes suggests a hand that's been working in the medium for far longer.

"The history is very short, actually," she said.

That's partly true. More accurate to call it a calling deferred.

Born and raised in Russia, Broude recalls being drawn to art as a child, though that budding vocation wasn't nurtured by those around her. Her parents encouraged her to pursue a career in the sciences instead, which could be said to be close cousin of creativity. She attended university and earned a Ph.D in molecular biology in Moscow.

"Every child is an artist," Picasso is alleged to have said. "The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up."

That wasn't so much a problem for Broude as it was a matter of timing. She moved to the United States during the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, and to Natick in 1996. Teaching at Boston University for a quarter century, she retired in 2017.

It was then that Broude picked up the paint brushes and artistic expression that she'd set aside all those years ago. Some dabble in this or that pursuit during their golden years. Broude dived into the world of watercolors, im-

mersing herself in workshops by renowned artists of the art form, going so far as Spain to learn from the best.

"When I retired, I discovered a lot of sources I did not know about," said Broude about her burgeoning talent and the avenues that seemed suddenly available to refine her technique. "The community of artists in our area is so rich and so friendly and so welcoming."

her outdoor environments, banishing hard edges and boundaries - nature's interconnectedness captured on canvas.

"It was very, very pleasant and satisfying," she said of her exhibit at Broadmoor. The nature sanctuary's gallery was an effortless fit for the subject matter of Broude's paintings. "It was a very big deal for me."

Indeed. Fresh off the success of her summer exhibit, she with-



The studying shows in Broude's strokes. Tendrils of willow trees lolling pond-side in full flush of summer, the Boston Public Garden Footbridge standing a stalwart focal point of the serene scene.

Or a rustic wooden fence wandering along a waterway beneath a muted blue sky, kept company by a row of tall, golden-tipped grass.

The bleed of Broude's watercolors unifies the elements of

drew her works from a library showing slated for early 2024. The ado of the event would be too much so soon after Broadmoor. A Cape Ann exhibit is a possibility for next autumn.

The artist instead will spend the next few seasons seated before her easel, burnishing her brushstrokes. Admirers of her work will have to bide their time.

"So now, that is my major occupation," said Broude. "No more exhibitions in sight."

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# How to design the perfect outdoor living space



Chris Hopkins

## LANDSCAPE INSIGHTS

It may sound strange, but some clients say “My favorite room at home isn’t inside my house.” They just love their green spaces. But creating the perfect outdoor living spot doesn’t just happen. It takes planning. And now’s the perfect time of year to be think-

ing about designing a spectacular outdoor space for the Spring. Here’s some things to keep in mind as you start to plan.

### 1) Ask questions

When you look at the green space you want to transform ask “what do I want from this space” — to entertain, relax, let kids and pets play freely, grow fruit or vegetables, or host cozy gatherings...a green space can do many things, but it helps to prioritize. What’s the primary use and what’s a “nice to have”?

### 2) Talk to friends, neighbors, and the pros

Ask friends or neighbors about outdoor spaces you admire. Talk about the process, how their plans evolved as they built. Don’t be afraid to ask about what they’d do differently. Remember, building an outdoor greenspace is just like renovating a space in your house —it should include planning and might require town permits.

### 3) Create an idea board

Outdoor living spaces come in all shapes and sizes. Before you finalize your plans, it helps to know exactly what you want — not just how the space will be used, but what style you want. Think English country garden vs modern minimalist. Do some research online and save images of green spaces you like. Social media is a great place to brainstorm and create a Pinterest board.

### 4) Set a budget

Finalizing your budget will keep your project on track. The last two years have seen prices go up. So, when you talk to friends or neighbors about recent projects ask them about their final cost. You’ll find the estimate and the final total may vary based on how the project evolved during the build. Remember a change in the original design or a problem uncovered means a change in price. Allow a 15% to 20% buffer (over and above your budget) just in case of hiccups. And don’t

be tempted to use a lowball price as it will probably involve cutting corners or worse.

### 5) Work with a professional

You’ve got your vision and a rough budget, now you can talk to a professional landscape contractor.

Here are some questions you’ll want to ask before hiring:

- Have they completed a project like yours—size and budget?
- References— can you talk to previous clients or suppliers?
- Discuss contract details, including: payment schedule;

proof of liability insurance and worker’s compensation payments; a start date and projected completion date. Good contracts insure no misunderstandings.

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# BCBS Works With Natick Nonprofit On Service Day

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts employees gathered last month to volunteer for service

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across the Commonwealth and beyond that reflect the company's commitment to supporting a healthier, more equitable, and just Commonwealth. This year, 1,500 employees volunteered at community partner sites throughout Massachusetts, while 650 participated in projects at Blue Cross' Hingham office and another 800 volunteered virtually.

Many of this year's Service Day projects focus on health justice in communities, including food justice, environmental justice, and racial justice.

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# Stop Making Sense: Massachusetts Updates Estate Tax Laws

It's taken 2 years, but Massachusetts lawmakers finally provided legislation for Governor Healey to sign on October 4th impacting the lowest (worst) U.S. estate tax threshold as part of a "\$1 billion tax relief package".

There are several positives in this package. Benefits for expanded childcare credit (over 30% of package), seniors, renters, septic systems, low-income housing, commuters, and short-term capital gains reduced from 12% to 8.5%.

Recall an estate tax may be owed based on net value of the estate of a deceased person before distribution to non-spousal heirs. To calculate net value, add all assets (real estate, investments, IRAs, small business, life insurance proceeds, personal property etc.) minus liabilities.



Glenn Brown, CFP

- Retroactive for estates of decedent's death on or after January 1, 2023.
- Filed 2023 estate tax returns or estimates paid are entitled to a refund.

### This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody).

Before celebrating a victory for the Commonwealth by echoing legislators that this "doubles the previous threshold", understand there are only 12 states in the U.S. that still tax estates.

Yes, you can live in 38 other states and pay \$0 state estate tax regardless of your wealth.

Furthermore, the federal estate tax exemption is now \$12.92 million, over 6X greater than MA. For most, there's little concern of having a life's work of earning, planning and saving being taxed upon death by the federal government.

### Same As It Ever Was, Same As It Ever Was...

The new \$2M threshold moves MA from tied for 49th worst to 48th of U.S. states.

Consider actions of other states since 2018 per [taxfoundation.org](http://taxfoundation.org).

New Jersey and Delaware eliminated their estate tax.

Vermont raised to \$5M, Maine \$6.4M, New York \$6.58M and Connecticut now aligns to federal government's \$12.92M.

Additionally, Illinois (\$4M) and Oregon (\$1M) legislators have proposals to increase to the federal government's \$12.92M or higher.

### Take Me To The River (or another state)?

How quickly can one's estate

exceed \$2 million in MA?

Consider the median single-family home sale price in Middlesex County is \$845,000. Add savings, 401(k), 403(b), any insurance proceeds, value of a small business, maybe a generations Maine lake house... it can add up.

**Connect with an estate planning attorney.** New laws and life events are opportune times to connect as well as provide an updated net worth and review your process. Remember, revocable living trusts bypass probate, not estate tax laws.

**Know your net worth.** Run updated estate tax estimates after \$99,600 credit applied. MA is still a graduated tax rate starting 0.8% up to 16%. For example, \$3M is now ~\$82,400 in MA estate taxes, \$5M is ~\$292,000 taxes, and \$10M is ~\$968,000 taxes.

**Plan to be agile in retirement.** Connection to seasons, family and friends can be strong. However, proper planning can create alternatives for residency in 38 states to no longer deal with state

estate tax or 5% MA state income tax (make that 9% if earning over \$1M).

At \$10M net value, does one put \$1M towards a new or 2nd home in another state, declare residency so heirs receive this value? Or stay in Massachusetts to pay ~\$1M in estate tax?

As a fiduciary, it's a responsibility to educate on the possibilities for those interested.

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 Plan-Dynamic, LLC, [www.PlanDynamic.com](http://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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### Key facts on MA update:

- Estate tax exemption rises to \$2 million from \$1 million, first increase since 2006.
- Provides a uniform credit of \$99,600.
- Eliminates "the cliff effect" when all assets were taxed if over threshold.

Have an upcoming event? Do you have a concern about things happening around town? Email us at [editor@naticktownnews.com](mailto:editor@naticktownnews.com) and let us know!

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# Natick Community-Senior Center Events

**Trust Basics- In Person**  
 Wednesday, November 8, 1:30-2:30pm, free  
 Do you wonder “what is a trust, really?” What is the difference between a revocable trust and an irrevocable trust; or an implied trust and an explicit trust? Are there different kinds

of trust? Should I talk to a lawyer about getting a trust?  
 In this presentation Elder Law Attorney Timothy Loff will discuss basic trusts and how they work and what they might accomplish, and answer your questions about trusts.

**Meetup At Mfa Boston**  
 Thursday, November 9, \$5 registration fee payable upon registration.

We will meet at 5:00 pm at the Museum Rd/Handicapped Accessible Entrance (this is by the museum pay parking lot by the Japanese Garden). I will pass out reserved tickets for the special exhibits (Fashioned by Sargent (ticketed) and Strong Women in Renaissance Italy (not ticketed). Our entrance to Fashioned by Sargent will be in the 5:00-5:30 window. Limited to 15. The New American Café is open until 8 pm (located in the Atrium near the special exhibit and larger menu); Taste Café is open until 6 pm (this is smaller with limited menu); Garden Cafeteria is closed at that time. Hope we can meet up for dinner after the Sargent exhibit- maybe around 7:00. The museum is open until 10:00 pm. Paid parking is available at the MFA parking lot off Museum Rd and also across the street is another pay parking garage facility. Street parking is limited.

**Don't Fall For Scams!- In Person**  
 Tuesday, November 14, 1:30-2:30pm, free

Join Security expert, Jim Caimano for an overview of common scams targeting seniors and how to avoid them. Learn to identify the warning signs, red flags and things NOT to do.

**Culturally Curious- Durer To Brueghel: Masterworks of the Northern Renaissance- ZOOM**

Wednesday, November 15, 1:30-2:30pm, free

The Renaissance in Northern Europe was a period of ground-breaking artistic achievement. Artists like Albrecht Durer and Peter Bruegel the Elder created works that described daily life in astonishing detail, often with religious overtones. This program introduces leading artists from the period and decodes their meticulously rendered symbols. Zoom LINK <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85124565749>

**Borrow Our Member Pass**  
 Passes must be reserved in advance by calling our Center at 508-647-6540 x1908 between 9:00 am-4:00 pm on Monday-Thursday and 9:00 am-2:00 pm on Friday.

**Tower Hill Botanic Gardens:** 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA

Open year-round, 7 days a week, 10:00 am-5:00 pm

We have six available admissions per day.

The pass may be reserved in person or by phone 508-647-6540 and can be picked up at the Center or emailed to you. Thank you to Whitney Place for sponsoring this program.

**Mindfulness Meditation- Zoom & In Person**

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.

**SENIOR CENTER**  
*continued on page 11*

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## A Cappella Singers Holiday Concert

The A Cappella Singers, a MetroWest treble chorus, is holding its annual Holiday Concert on Saturday, Dec. 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church, 106 Walnut St., Natick.

The chorus was formed over 60 years ago and is directed by George Sargeant.

The program consists of winter/holiday compositions by Randall Thompson, Philip Stopford, J.S. Bach, and more, ending with our popular sing-a-long.

There will be a reception following the concert.

Tickets are \$18 in advance and \$20 at the door; and \$15 for students and seniors.

For more information or to reserve tickets, go to [www.theacappelasingers.org](http://www.theacappelasingers.org), or contact us at [info@theacappelasingers.org](mailto:info@theacappelasingers.org), or call 774-231-1963.

New members will be welcome in January.



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**SENIOR CENTER**

*continued from page 10*

**Mondays At A Museum- November**

Monday 3-4pm, free.  
Join us as we visit museums all over the world and view artwork with commentary by artists, curators and more.  
November 6- Honoring Veteran's Day with a visit to the WWI Museum, KC  
November 13- Westminster Abbey  
November 20- Coit Tower Murals; Los Tres Grandes Mexican Muralists  
November 27- Norman Rockwell; and Dogs in Art

**Book Talk With Lorna Ruby- New And Holiday Books- Zoom**

Monday, November 13, 10:30-11:30, free, call to register 508-647-6540  
Join experienced Book Buyer from Wellesley Books, Lorna Ruby, for her round up of NEW books and Holiday Books for the season! Perfect for your holiday list or gift giving ideas. She'll cover fiction, non-fiction, cooking, mystery, coffee table books

and more! Join zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87988656770?pwd=ZjIvdnFyTEN6QUUpBTGhhYkh-FQRZZz09>

**Music Of Wwi- John Clark Great American Music Experience**

Wednesday, November 15, 11:00am-noon, free  
Join host John Clark in this highlights program of some of the most popular music of the war years (1939-1945). You'll see and hear songs tied to specific events of WWII, like My Sister and I, Chin Up, Cheerio, Carry On and The Last Time I Saw Paris; songs of great heroism like Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer; songs that expressed the feelings of soldiers and spouses and families whose relationships were disrupted by this global conflict: As Time Goes By, Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree; and songs of longing for the war to end: When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World. Featured artists include the Andrews Sisters, Glenn Miller, Jimmy Dorsey, Johnny Mercer, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Vera Lynn, Kate Smith, Vaughn

**Nature Travel Talks- The Wilds Of Southern Belize- In Person And Zoom**

Thursday, November 20, 1:30-2:30pm, free  
Join Joy Marzolf from The Joys of Nature. Located in Eastern Central America, Belize shares borders with Guatemala and Mexico. From the crystal blue ocean waters and inland to the nearby mountains, it is amazingly diverse. Wildlife along the Southern coast, and nearby rivers, includes magnificent tiger herons, fast flyers like the cinnamon hummingbird and the peregrine falcon, and large swimmers like manatees and crocodiles. Traveling inland to the rainforest brings sightings of spectacular butterflies, birds, like the black headed trogon, but also mammals like the elusive jaguar and bands of coatimundi. Join us for a virtual trip to see some of the stunning wildlife of Southern Belize.

**Day Trip- Newport Mansions At Christmas Time**

Wednesday, November 29, \$125 per person due upon registration, 8:45 am departure from

Fisk Methodist Church, 107 Walnut St, Natick, return approximately 5:45 pm.

Join us on a festive, fun filled day trip celebrating Christmas time in Newport RI travelling on a luxurious tour bus. We begin with a walking tour of The Breakers mansion, a Gilded Age 70-room mansion built in the late 1800s for the Vanderbilt family. Followed by a sumptuous lunch at The Atlantic Resort—please choose: Baked Stuffed Scrod, Chicken Piccata or Pasta Primavera at the time of your registration. After lunch we then have a walking tour of the beautiful Marble House a more modest 50-room, Gilded Age 'summer cottage' for the Vanderbilt extended family. The holiday decorations of lights, trees and festive decorations galore create an over-the-top experience of great holiday wonder. Registration deadline is Tuesday, November 7.

Please note: There is some walking, stairs, uneven surfaces and standing for this day trip. This is a non-refundable purchase. Questions? Please call Sharon at Natick CSC 508-647-6540 X1907, [skirby@natickma.org](mailto:skirby@natickma.org)

**Day Trip To Boston Holiday Pops**

Thursday, December 14, for the 7:30pm show at Symphony Hall; \$175.00 per person due upon registration. Bus departs 3:30pm from Fisk Methodist Church, 107 Walnut St, Natick and returns approximately 10:45 pm.

Join Bloom Tours for a delightful performance at historic Symphony Hall decked out for the season of holiday music favorites, a Pops sing-a-long and even a visit from jolly old St Nick! Before the show, we will go to the Cheesecake Factory for an early dinner. We order off the menu- you may request a copy of the menu from our front desk. This trip includes roundtrip transportation on the luxury bus, early dinner and second balcony tickets to the Boston Pops! Registration deadline is Tuesday, November 14.

Please note: There is some walking, stairs, uneven surfaces and standing for this day trip. This is a non-refundable purchase. Questions? Please call Sharon at Natick CSC 508-647-6540 X1907, [skirby@natickma.org](mailto:skirby@natickma.org)

**Saint Bridget School - Framingham**  
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# Sports

## NHS Volleyball Team Tourney-bound In Spite Of Rebuilding

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Rebuilding is rarely a word that makes one think in positive terms.

But, Natick High volleyball coach Peter Suxho wasn't shy about using the term when the Redhawks started preseason workouts in August and September. "We're a young team and we're rebuilding after losing seven seniors to graduation," he said.

Those seniors helped Natick compile an 11-5 regular season record and their skills were a factor in the playoffs where the Redhawks advanced to the round of 16 where they lost to Lincoln-Sudbury, the state runner-up.

The 2023 edition of Natick High's volleyball program is indeed in rebuilding mode with five sophomores on the 12-player roster. But, with the state tournament about to begin, Suxho and his forces are in a good position for a tourney berth. The Redhawks were 6-3 at Local Town Pages deadline and were at No. 10 in the power rankings.

"We have six seniors, one junior and five sophomores on the squad," Suxho noted. "Hard work and staying focused are what gets a team into the tournament. Playing with desire and energy is a plus and I always stress the importance of offense. An

offensive team can be your best defense."

The Redhawks may have been young and inexperienced in pre-season practice but they've relied on other attributes to achieve their 6-3 record. "Our girls have good technique and a high volleyball IQ," said Suxho who's in his 19th year as Natick's coach. "Our work ethic and athleticism are strong, we've developed mental toughness and our team chemistry has improved."

Natick's five senior captains are a key to helping the Redhawks go from rebuilding to likely tourney participants.

They include Aya Munger (setter), Leah Austin (middle hitter), Ava Fosberg (outside hitter), Lauren Hallah (outside hitter) and Kylie Woo (libero). "The captains lead by example on and off the court," Suxho said. "They also are vocal and supportive and they communicate effectively with all the players."

Munger and Austin are experienced second-year starters. "Aya is a confident setter," Suxho said. "She's consistent, has good court sense and controls the tempo. Leah is also confident. A good blocker, she hits hard and she hits smartly."

Fosberg, Hallah and Woo are all starters. "Ava was the first substitute off the bench last year," Suxho said. "She's got a strong work ethic, she's focused

and she's a solid attacker who hits smartly. Lauren is a powerful hitter and a very good server. Kylie has experience, serves well, utilizes technique and has a high volleyball IQ."

Senior Marianne Bouchereau (outside hitter) and junior Eva Sotiri (right-side hitter/setter) are key contributors. "Marianne has experience and is an all-around competitor," Suxho offered. Eva can play in the front row or the back line. A left-hander, she works hard and jumps very well in the front row."

The sophomores include Katelyn Huie (outside hitter), Scarlett Jones (libero), Kiera Moriarty (middle hitter), Aiya Dottin (middle hitter) and Ruby Jasper (setter).

"Aiya is the best jumper we have," Suxho said. "She's tall and has adapted to her role as a starter. "Our other sophomores will provide depth. They're young but they have lots of potential. In the long run, all our sophomores will help the team."

Munger and Austin offered their thoughts on Natick's ability to put rebuilding in the team's past.

"In practice, from day one, all the upperclassmen worked with the sophomores to ensure they were comfortable asking questions," Munger said. "Every captain teamed with a sophomore who played a similar position. We



Natick's volleyball captains are, from left, Ava Fosberg, Lauren Hallah, Kylie Woo, Aya Munger, and Leah Austin.

took them under our wing and helped them with any struggles or concerns."

Austin said she knew qualifying for tourney play would be a challenge but she also was acutely aware that pre-season workouts and scrimmages would help smooth out any wrinkles. And, having five senior captains with experience would be an asset. "We knew we had a young team going into pre-season practice but it was clear we were growing," she emphasized. "A good sign of progress was having an excellent scrimmage against Wayland, which is a good team."

Both Munger and Austin emphasized that Suxho leans on his captains for leadership and to familiarize younger players with the system.

"Coach Suxho stresses that his captains must be a strong leadership group," Austin said. "He expects us to be responsible for building team chemistry." Munger agrees and adds that "our coach wants his captains to be role models and to help everyone to execute the plays correctly."

Another key for Natick in overcoming inexperience is the number of younger players who competed for club teams and worked in the off-season at camps and clinics.

"Coach Suxho expects his

players to be loud, cheering often, and being energetic," said Austin. "Maintaining energy and a positive attitude are the key elements to earning a tournament berth."

Suxho and volleyball are as natural as apple pie and ice cream. He coached the Albanian National Team before he arrived in the U.S. in 1996. And, before joining the Natick staff to coach the boys and girls teams in 2005, he guided Millis High to a pair of state championships in 2003. The Mohawks' boys and girls teams became state champs that year.

During Suxho's tenure as the Redhawks' boys coach, his teams have won six Bay State Conference titles, six sectional crowns and one state championship. Three times, in 2006, 2010 and 2019, the Natick boys squad was the state runners-up.

A coach who's a legend in volleyball circles, Suxho is acutely aware that competing in the Bay State Conference is no picnic.

"Newton North is the defending state champion and Needham and Brookline are also difficult opponents," he said. "Those schools all have teams with talent and tradition. It's important to be ready when playing a team in the BSC. The league is well-balanced and it's one of the best conferences in the state."



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# Bacon Free Library in November

**Library Hours**  
 Monday through Friday, 9:30-5:30 with extended hours on Tuesday until 7:00pm  
 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. (if 55 degrees or warmer, held outside)

**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, Nov 13th @ 10am. Join us for dog-approved stories and a chance to pet a calm, sweet, and soft therapy dog.

**Jammin with You** -- Fridays, Nov 3rd & 17th @ 10:30am: Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam your way through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun! This performance is geared for kids ages 1 – 7, but fun for the whole family. With modern takes on children's classics and classic original tunes, you'll be humming and bopping your way all the way home.

**Read to a Dog** -- Saturday, November 4th, 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.

**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 from October 20th to December 13th.

## Adult Programs

(Virtual) Guastavino Archi-

ecture with Rena Henderson of the Guastavino Alliance -- Tues, November 7th @ 7pm: Learn about Guastavino's buildings and his technique. This program will be held over Zoom. Please register at the BFL website to receive the program 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  
 Nov 2nd: More Than You'll Ever Know by Katie Gutierrez

**History Book Club** - second Thursday of the month @ 11am on Zoom  
 Nov 9th: First friends: the powerful, unsung (and unelected) people who shaped our presidents by Gary Ginsberg

**Environmental Book Club** -- second Tuesday of the month @ 7pm on Zoom  
 Nov 21st: Planta Sapiens: the new science of plant intelligence by Paco Calvo

**Tuesday Night Book Club** - fourth Tuesday of the month @

6:30pm, both Zoom & in person  
 Nov 28th: The Book Woman's Daughter by Kim Michelle Richardson

**Nonfiction Book Club** - Dec 2nd: Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann

**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.

# Eyes on Owls

Join First Congregational Church (FCC), Natick for Eyes on Owls, Saturday, November 18, 7:00-8:00 pm

Marcia and Mark Wilson have thrilled audiences of all ages with their live owl presentations for the past 28 years.

This lively couple introduces you to 6 live owls up close and personal! Marcia brings the owls out one by one. Each bird is safely perched on her glove as she walks close to everyone, providing intimate views of these secretive birds of prey. And, everyone gets to practice the owls' calls during the hooting lessons! The Wilsons highlight the owls' unique adaptations, habitats and behaviors

in the wild, while sharing tips on how you can look for owls yourself. Questions are welcomed.

Recommended for ages 6+.

Mark Wilson is the author of award-winning children's books- Owling (Hachett 2019) and The Snowy Owl Scientist (Harper Collins 2022).

First Congregational Church, Natick is located at 2 East Central St, Natick; at the corner of Rts 27 and 135. Parking is available in our side lot and throughout town.

\$5.00 In Person ticket sales at FCC, Sundays 11:30-11:45am

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# Real Estate Corner

## Sell my house in November?



John McHugh

### REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Spring Market! This has become a very popular phrase in real estate. Many families choose the spring and summer months to move. The time can

be ideal to find a home and get settled prior to the start of the new school year. People move for many different reasons and a home which is properly exposed and priced will sell at any time of the year! Let's look at why listing in November may work to your advantage.

Regardless of the season, buyers are always interested in desirable homes, more importantly, being one of the few homes offered in November can be favorable. There will be even fewer homes on the market in this period of historically low inventory, which may make it easier for buyers to zero-in on your home. Fewer homes for sale means less competition!

Winter temperatures and shorter days have no impact on

real estate websites and internet searches. Therefore, if buyers are looking online, fewer listings equal less searching to find your home. A property transaction may proceed more rapidly if fewer homes are for sale as well.

Recently, with the lack of inventory, we have seen multiple offers on properties and sale prices tens of thousands of dollars over the list prices (or more..). Many buyers put in reasonable offers over the summer, yet weren't yet ready to consider offering over list price or waving terms such as a mortgage contingency or inspection and therefore did not have their offer accepted. Many buyers lost out two or three times and are NOW ready to compete more fero-

ciously. Buyers who are looking at homes in November typically have a good reason for doing so. They may have started researching because of a recent work move or another relevant event in their lives. Buyers who are looking in November are sincerely interested, regardless of their motivations.

There may be homes on the market at this time that have been listed for a while. There are always those homes that were priced too high and not perceived as a value by the buyer pool. Perfect time to introduce a fresh new listing!

When someone is asking to see a home for sale when the weather is cold and snowy they are likely to have a genuine desire to purchase. This time of

year will find far fewer people wanting to "just have a look." Fall and winter are natural filters for serious, ready, willing and able buyers.

Right now we know for sure that there are many buyers out there; and very few homes for sale. Not all sellers will be waiting until the springtime to list. What will you do?

To learn more contact John McHugh, Senior Sales Associate with Coldwell Banker for over 20 years. JohnSellsNow@gmail.com, 978.902.5646

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# Real Estate Corner

## Recent Home Sales

| Date       | Natick              | Amount     |
|------------|---------------------|------------|
| 10/17/2023 | 19 Bradford Road    | \$675,000  |
| 10/13/2023 | 8 Walden Drive #14  | \$405,000  |
| 10/13/2023 | 67 Everett Street   | \$1.98 mil |
| 10/12/2023 | 11 Wayside Road     | \$1.38 mil |
| 10/11/2023 | 18 Walcott Street   | \$650,000  |
| 10/11/2023 | 30 Walden Drive #10 | \$360,000  |
| 10/10/2023 | 6 Stanley Street    | \$700,000  |
| 10/10/2023 | 4 Lookout Avenue    | \$660,000  |
| 10/10/2023 | 150 Mill Street     | \$1.48 mil |
| 10/05/2023 | 16 Walden Drive #18 | \$455,000  |
| 10/04/2023 | 8 Lenox Street      | \$712,000  |
| 10/04/2023 | 28 Pauline Drive    | \$850,000  |
| 09/29/2023 | 65 Macarthur Road   | \$915,000  |
| 09/29/2023 | 10 Silver Hill Lane | \$436,000  |
| 09/29/2023 | 3 Point Street      | \$1.73 mil |
| 09/28/2023 | 26 Vernon Road      | \$657,000  |
| 09/28/2023 | 33 Curtis Road      | \$1.05 mil |
| 09/27/2023 | 16 Village Way #3   | \$375,000  |
| 09/27/2023 | 11 Walden Drive #10 | \$342,500  |
| 09/22/2023 | 8 Westfield Road    | \$1.46 mil |
| 09/22/2023 | 30 Walden Drive #9  | \$435,000  |
| 09/15/2023 | 18 Union Street #1  | \$645,000  |



The 4-bed, 3-bath 2,882 sf house at 150 Mill Street in Natick recently sold for \$1,475,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

**Looking to advertise in our Real Estate Corner? Contact Susanne Odell Farber at 508-954-8148 or by email at sue@sodellconsult.com**

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7 HUNTERS LANE, NATICK \$1,699,000 - FOR SALE



61 WASHINGTON STREET, NATICK \$1,100,000 - FOR SALE



78 W. CENTRAL STREET, NATICK, \$895,000 - UNDER AGREEMENT



15 HIGH STREET, NEEDHAM, \$810,000 - SOLD



20 FLORENCE STREET, NATICK, \$925,000 - SOLD

# THANKFUL FOR MY CLIENTS

Happy Thanksgiving from my family to your family!



CALL JANICE TODAY, START PACKING TOMORROW!



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## THE ALLAIN GROUP'S THANKSGIVING \$150 Give Back Giveaway!

This November, the Allain Group is giving away two \$150 gift cards to local grocery stores, and matching them with two \$150 gift cards to donate to the Natick Service Council!

Every \$150 donation allows the Natick Service Council to feed a family of five a complete Thanksgiving meal. Shop for your own holiday dinner (on us!) while knowing that another family's meal will also be taken care of this holiday season.



**JESSICA ALLAIN**  
#1 in Natick Homes Sold Since 2018\*  
617.820.8114  
theallaingroup@compass.com  
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### HOW TO ENTER

1. Follow the Allain group on Instagram (@the\_allain\_group) or Facebook (The Allain Group)
2. Like and comment on our Give Back Giveaway post by 11/17/2023



**WINNERS WILL BE RANDOMLY SELECTED AND POSTED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES ON 11/18/2023!**

Want to know how else you can help? Check out [natickservicecouncil.org](http://natickservicecouncil.org) to learn about more opportunities to support our community.

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No purchase is necessary to enter or win. Winner will be drawn at random by the date specified above. Winner will be notified by social media message. Winner will have 5 days to claim prize, or another winner may be drawn. If you are unable to collect the prize in person, you will be responsible for shipping and handling. If prize is accepted, it is as is. No alterations or modifications. One entry per person. Drawing will be held on 11.18.23.

