

## Richard Ball, Doreen Martel Named 2023 Citizens of the Year

By THERESA KNAPP

In September, Celebrate Holliston named residents Richard Ball and Doreen Martel as 2023 Citizens of the Year. The awards were presented at a community celebration at Bertucci's.

### Richard Ball

Celebrate Holliston member Jane Gilfoy introduced Ball.

"Richard Ball, better known as 'Dick', has lived in Holliston for over 45 years

with his wife, where he raised his two adult children and one grandchild. He has worked at Holliston Hardware and Holliston Oil for over 20 years.

"What makes him so special is the joy he brings to so many young people in town. When his daughter was young, he coached Little League and was very involved with Holliston's sports. What he will always be remembered for is the years he has brought Christmas magic to Regal Street, and the town, with his light shows and street

long box Christmas renditions that are updated and created yearly.

"In addition, as an avid train man, he has helped to create, maintain, and coordinate the Waushakum Live Steamer trains in Holliston. During the summer months, these events allow hundreds of kids and adults free rides on their miniature trains.

### CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

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## Ringling In The New Year With Friends of Holliston Trails


Hundreds gathered on the rail trail to celebrate New Year's Eve with the community. There were stations with activities for people of all ages!

### TRAILS


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# Select Board supports name change for portion of Lowland Street

Residential section near Woodland Street to be changed to "Fawn Road"

By THERESA KNAPP

In December, the Holliston Select Board unanimously approved a resident request to change the name of a portion of Lowland Street that is mostly residential.

Town Administrator Travis Ahern said the official request for the name change was received in Town Hall in July 2023. He shared a graphic that highlighted the portion in question.

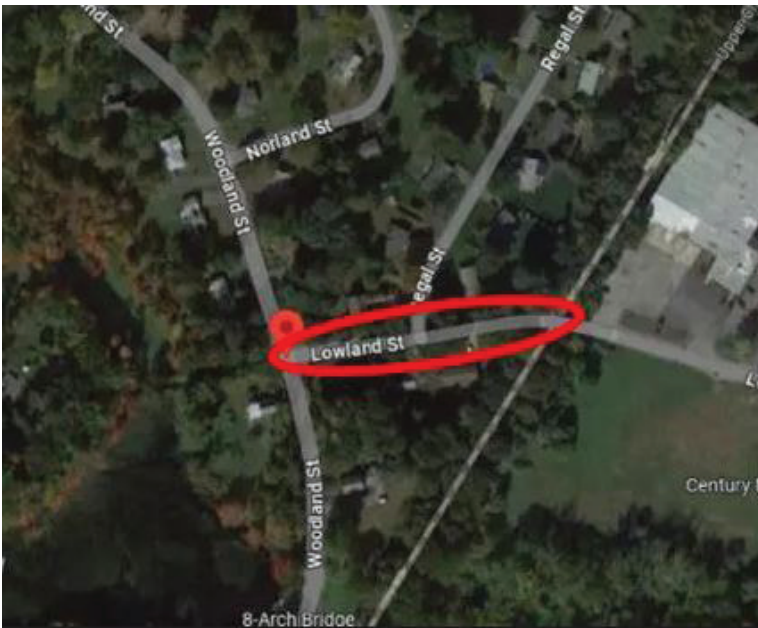
"The section highlighted in red technically has two addresses on Lowland Street that would theoretically be impacted should the board choose to make a change, and those are between the intersection of Woodland Street and Lowland Street, and the intersection of Lowland Street and the Upper Charles Rail Trail."

Ahern said the name change would essentially differentiate the residential section of Lowland Street from the industrial section.

Sara Baroud, who lives on the section in question and initiated the change, said she and her neighbor are "100 percent in favor of this name change" which they have been considering for quite some time.

Baroud said, "We are pursuing this name change to differentiate the characteristics of the residential neighborhood from the industrial park. Those include things like different usage of the two zones and the roads, pedestrian/bicycle use, trail use versus the industrial use."

She said the petitioners had been thoughtful about the proposed new name – Fawn Road – "paying tribute to the many deer that we see crossing our street and crossing the trail."



The Holliston Select Board voted unanimously to support a resident request to change the name of a section of Lowland Street, from Woodland Street to the Upper Rail Trail, to "Fawn Road." Image source: www.townofholliston.us

Select Board member Ben Sparrell said, "I don't have a problem with changing the name of the street, I hope it has some kind of impact here - that somebody who's driving down and sees 'Fawn Road'

(or whatever the name change becomes) has a second thought about going down in that particular direction, but I do have the concern that people will still go down there because of the GPS."

Select Board member Tina Hein said, "What I see are residents who are looking to create a sense of place; they're trying to create a sense of community for their neighborhood... I would really encourage the community at large to see this as what I think we really embrace here in Holliston which is building community through creating a sense of space; and if a group of residents feel that a name change accomplishes that for their neighborhood, we should embrace that."

Select Board Chair John Cronin also supported the name change.

The board's approval of the name change started a mandatory 30-day appeal period during which time any resident of the town could appeal the decision – that appeal period applies to any road that has had a certain name for more than 25 years.

At a subsequent meeting on Jan. 17, Select Board Vice Chair Tina Hein reported there had been no appeals.

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CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

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“Dick is a one-of-kind gentle man who truly exemplifies Citizen of the Year.”

Ball thanked everyone for the honor.

“Mostly I need to thank all my neighbors for putting up with the insanity,” Ball said to a room of laughter. “All the stuff in the neighbor’s houses – I decorated 26 houses I think last year; I think I’m spread to seven streets this year. So, you have my stuff all around town, I make just about everything. So, thanks again to the committee and all my neighbors and everybody for voting for me.”

Doreen Martel

Lina Arena-DeRosa of Celebrate Holliston introduced Martel.

“Doreen has lived in Holliston since 2007. She moved here after her three adult chil-

dren were married and moved away...She works currently as writer and editor for legal and financial websites and blogs, in addition to handling publishing of the Holliston Reporter.

“She began her volunteer career as a “candy striper”... You worked at hospitals and you got the “volunteer bug” that never left you, which is really cool. She is an active member of the Holliston Lions, serving as the President, then became Zone Chairperson, and finally as the District Governor of all of MetroWest. In this capacity,

volunteered with food drives especially during the COVID crisis where she delivered literary tons of produce to families in need in Holliston and MetroWest. She also did clothing drives, crocheted hundreds of hats and “squares” (used to make blankets) and got them to shelters in MetroWest. She has been honored many times with leadership and Lions Presidential Awards. Moreover, helping those who are visually impaired, Doreen coordinated the Braille Literacy Initiative by assembling and delivering Braille books to

those who otherwise could not afford them...Doreen has been a member of the Holliston Newcomers and was secretary to the Massachusetts District 33 Boy Scouts.

“Working to help those struggling with food insecurities, she is responsible for delivering countless senior and veteran lunches in Holliston, and organizes the Christmas Eve dinners to those who are less fortunate.

“As this year’s Citizen of the Year, Doreen illustrates what it is like to be the ultimate Holliston volunteer.”

Arena-DeRosa concluded, “Thank you so much for all that you’ve done to make Holliston so special.”

Martel thanked the group and noted, “Half the people in this room are Holliston Lions so it says a lot about what we do as a group in this community, and I couldn’t be more humbled by this so thank you.”

To watch the full video of the event, visit [www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1343274446277274](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1343274446277274)

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# Family-run Affordable Junk Removal takes the stress out of cleanups

By CHRISTIE VOGT  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible,



properly disposes of non-recyclables and resells many items at the Schadlers' secondhand store, Resellables. "We opened that store in Bellingham because we hated to see things thrown away," Schadler says. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around

## Business spotlight

and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back-end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children and dog, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place in Holliston, The Corner Market."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Holliston in particular, Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. "In addition to our junk removal business,

Holliston residents have been so important to The Corner Market, especially during the pandemic," Schadler says. "We have really appreciated their support." The Schadlers have also sponsored and hosted monthly fundraisers for several sports teams and organizations in Holliston.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit [affordablejunkremoval.com](http://affordablejunkremoval.com).

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TRAILS

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Friends of Holliston Trails in Blair Square. How many marshmallows were in the jar?



Flint & Steel demonstration



Jon Sutherland (JSE Corp), making s'mores



The Woodhouses brought their patio heater for extra warmth.



Trying out the 3D Photo Booth.



New inflatable friends in Blair Square



New inflatable friends in Blair Square



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St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Roast



Tickets are available for this Holliston 300th Anniversary event at town hall on Sunday, March 17, at 9 am.

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Town Moderator Bill Mayer will have the honor as master of ceremonies.

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# In search of Holliston’s ‘significant’ trees

By THERESA KNAPP

The Holliston Garden Club Treepotters Committee and Friends of Trees are working to identify “significant” trees on public land within the Town of Holliston.

The purpose of the project, which was announced in November, is to “list and identify our town’s largest living creatures, our trees, in order to document them as part of our town’s history and preserve them.”

According to the town website, the team is now asking for the public’s help to identify trees for special recognition.

To nominate a tree, or group of trees, people are asked to complete the form at [bit.ly/HollistonSignificantTrees](http://bit.ly/HollistonSignificantTrees). The form asks for the tree location (or closest address to the tree), its species, circumference, and reason for nominating the tree (age, history, beauty, rarity, size, form, function). Nominators can also include photographs.

According to the Holliston Garden Club website, “Regardless of state recognition, the HGC is interested in providing an inventory of “significant” trees to our Tree Warden, Conservation Commission, and other stakeholders for preservation and conservation purposes.”

The HGC site also says that “some categories will allow the town to apply for ‘Legacy Tree’ status with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.”

Source: [www.townofholliston.us/home/news/help-identify-significant-trees-in-holliston](http://www.townofholliston.us/home/news/help-identify-significant-trees-in-holliston)

**The Holliston Garden Club Treepotters Committee and Friends of Trees are asking for the public’s help in identifying “significant” trees in town. Photo source: [www.hollistongardenclub.org](http://www.hollistongardenclub.org)**



## What is a ‘Legacy Tree’?

According to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, there is one tree in Holliston that is registered as a “Legacy Tree” with the state. The location is not available since it is not publicly accessible, but it is listed as a “*plantanus occidentalis*” (also known as an American sycamore, buttonwood, etc.) and was measured in Jan. 2023 to have a circumference of 69.7 inches, height of 64.0 inches, and average spread of 53.9 inches.

Using a DCR calculation, the tree also has 147.2 “big tree points” in an effort to reach “Champion Tree” status.

For more information, visit [www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program](http://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program)

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Your Money, Your Independence

# Frugal February... A Different Take, One That's Sustainable.



Glenn Brown, CFP

Seen the “Frugal February” challenge recently?

The main idea is following holiday indulgences and resolutions being forgotten, use February (only 28 days) to do something difficult but important – get your finances back on track.

Popularity has grown amongst the F.I.R.E. (Financial Independence, Retire Early) bloggers. You know, the supposedly “retired at 33” gurus that post multiple times a day to promote a website with 6 Google ads and links for annual subscriptions payable to their LLC.

### The challenge with this challenge?

Many use Frugal February as a month to not spend. While noble, how sustainable is this for improved outcomes, “Wow, \$2,200 saved last month, we deserve a vacation in the Caribbean!”?

Instead, let’s discuss actions that provide yearlong benefits plus a better time to start.

### Finding Time to Focus.

Weekends are likely full of family activities, kids sports and honey-do lists. Add an unofficial national holiday, Super Bowl Sunday, and it’s easy to be derailed.

So wait, start February 12th and go through March 11th. Kids activities have a break between winter to spring and family activities may be in a lull.

### Focus One: Credit Utilization.

Run your annual credit report. If not above 780, plan to fix so it improves your future cost of borrowing.

Next, review your terms (interest rates, fees, available limits) of credit cards, loans and HELOCs, including the zero balances.

Also consolidate to 2-3 credit cards with high limits, then use one primarily that’s paid off monthly. Now it’s easier to track expenses for budgeting and maximizing rewards.

Speaking of rewards, shift from air/hotel rewards to cash back automatically used the following month on purchases. Consider how often air/hotel programs update for a destruction of stored value. A \$400 flight now likely needs 25,000 miles, whereas get 5% cash back on annual \$25,000 spend, \$1,250 was used on following month purchases.

### Focus Two: Shop Insurance.

Been 3 years since shopped home, auto, umbrella and/or pet insurance? Good chance it increased over +30% without any claims to “cover increasing costs”.

While partially true, consider, “We noticed you’re still here, so we’re betting on autopay and inertia to increase profits.”

### Focus Three: Your Automatic Payments.

Review all automatic payments and use of those services/products.

Yes, it’s easy to cancel Peacock after a NFL playoff game. But what of subscriptions on products shipped by Amazon, Instacart, DoorDash? Are you still using it, how frequently and can it be found at a lower price?

What of new bundles offered to better meet your needs? Talking about subscription plans for your cellphone, internet, cable/streaming, music, fitness, data

storage, kids gaming, kids activities, club memberships, pet supplies, etc.

### Focus Four: Organize to Live with Less.

Declutter, purge, or just throw (bleep) out. Feng Shui touts the benefits of energy and flow, but to me it reduces the need to buy stuff that will re-clutter your space.

Speaking of space, if paying for a storage unit, please stop. At \$200 a month, \$2,400 annually and \$12,000 over 5 years, is the crap not good enough to be in your home worth \$12,000?

How about even \$1,000?

Prove it by listing for sale.

Get \$600, then a \$3,000 win/win (or 3X return) over next 12 months.

### Focus Five: Finish Your Taxes.

With taxes done by March 11th, there is time to complete deadline items like funding an IRA or Backdoor Roth, plus gain ~10 months to impact 2024 from discovery within the return. Also, you’re worry-free for March Madness, St. Patrick’s Day and kid’s new spring activities.

To get more sustainable ways to improve finances, speak with your Certified Financial Planner.

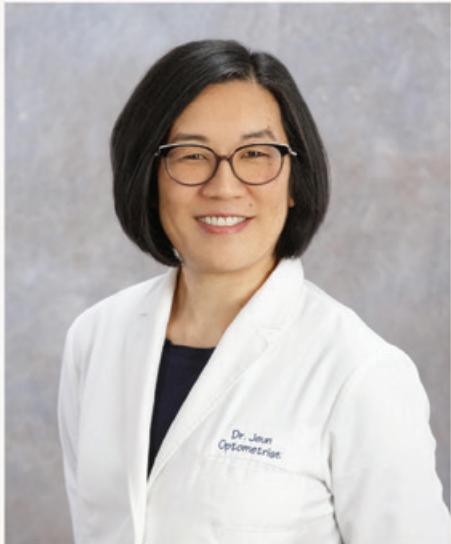
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Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, [www.PlanDynamic.com](http://www.PlanDynamic.com). Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can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

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# Holliston 300 Celebration: Back to the 80s & 90s

On Fri., Feb 9, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., Holliston 300 will host “Back to the 80s and 90s” at Anthony’s on the Green, 212 Pinecrest Rd.

It’s 2024 and Holliston is 300 years old. If that makes you feel old, then travel back to the 275th with this 80s / 90s themed dance at Anthony’s! You know you love to wear those 80s clothes and party like it’s 1999!

The event will benefit the HHS class of 2027.  
Source: [www.celebrateholliston.com/300th-calendar.html](http://www.celebrateholliston.com/300th-calendar.html)



# Annual Pancake Breakfast

The Troop 14 pancake breakfast fundraiser in Holliston has been a mainstay for over 30 years.

The pancake breakfast, at which the scouts prepare and serve breakfast to the community at large, is both a community service activity as well as a fundraising activity.

Funds earned are used to support troop activities throughout the year – camping, hiking, rank advancement, as well as community service projects.



The troop is sponsored by St. Mary’s in Holliston, and as such, that is where the event is held. This event is held in conjunction

with National Boy Scout Sunday, which is celebrated across the nation on the first Sunday of February.

**The details are as follows-**

**Date** - February 4th, 2023

**Time** - 8am till Noon

**Location** - Father Haley Hall, St Mary’s Church, Washington Street

**Cost** - \$5 per person, MAX \$20/ family – (any scout in UNIFORM free admission)

# Leap into these Leap Year facts

Leap Year typically takes place every four years. The process of adding a day to the calendar every four years was designed to realign the clock and calendar more closely with how long it takes the Earth to rotate around the sun, which is slightly longer than the 365 days attributed to a year. If not for Leap Year, the seasons would slowly shift out of place.

There are many interesting facts to learn about Leap Year, and February 29 is the perfect time to explore them.

- It takes the Earth 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45 seconds to circle once around the sun, says Time and Date. Without leap years, we’d lose almost six hours every year. After a century, the calendar would be off by nearly 24 days.

- Despite 2100, the next turn of the century, being divisible by four, it will not be a leap year. That’s because it is divisible by 100 but not 400, which means it will not be a leap year. This exception to the rule pertains to new century years.
- Forbes reports that it’s likely the calendar will need to be changed again since the Earth’s rotation rate, the

axial tilt orientation and the Earth’s orbital motion around the sun is not constant. Various effects, such as earthquakes and something called tidal braking, affect the passage of time.

- Legend states that on February 29 it is alright for a woman to propose to a man, a custom attributed to St. Bridget. Bridget complained to St. Patrick that some women had to wait too long for their suitors to pop the question. As the legend goes, Patrick supposedly provided women this day to propose to compensate.
- Some cultures view February 29 as an unlucky day. In Greece, couples are warned against planning weddings during leap years. In Italy, the phrase, “Anno biseto, anno funesto” (“leap year, doom year”) is uttered.
- Individuals who are born on February 29th are known as leaplings or leapers.



- Leap Day is not considered a legal day. Those who are leaplings have to choose February 28 or March 1 for their official and legal birthdays.
- Individuals who are paid fixed monthly incomes often work for free on February 29th because their wages will not be calculated to include the extra day.
- Guinness World Records indicates the only family it could verify as producing three consecutive generations born on leap days belongs to the Keoghs. The elder Patrick Anthony Keogh was born in 1940, his son Peter Eric was born in 1964, and his granddaughter Bethany in 1996.

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# The Return of the Pantry’s “SOUP”er Bowl Event

We are excited to celebrate the return of the Holliston Pantry Shelf’s annual “SOUP”er bowl event that was forced into a hiatus for a few years (thank you COVID-19!). The board members and volunteers alike are beaming with joy to host the 14th Annual “SOUP”er bowl event on Friday, Feb. 9. “SOUP”er bowl will be held at Saint Mary’s Parish Hall located at 8 Church St. in Holliston.

The event starts at 5 pm and ends at 7:30pm (perfect timing to swing by for a soup dinner and scoot over to Anthony’s on the Green for the “Back to the 80’s Dance”!).

We have an amazing show of support from our local businesses. The cornerstone of this event is the soups and our Local businesses responded with a resounding show of support that gives us a delicious menu this year:

- Bar Athena - Sausage, Bean, and Winter Vegetable
- Bazels - Butternut Squash Soup (GF)
- Bertucci’s - Lentil Soup (Vegan)
- Casey’s - Chicken Dumping Soup
- Outpost Farm - Broccoli Cheddar Soup
- Superette - Chicken Noodle Soup

The fundraising part of our event comes from sponsorships and ticket sales. We are thank-

ful to have secured the 26 sponsors to be on the infamous “soup mug” that is given to each adult ticket holder. It is with much gratitude that we share with you the 2024 “SOUP”er bowl sponsors:

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**Twenty (20) DIVISIONAL LEVEL SPONSORS:**

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Taking the step to support our neighbors in need shows true compassion of character. In the words of Coretta Scott King, “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members”. Based on the this, our community is pretty great!

**Tickets are on sale now.**

- General Admission is \$25
- Seniors (60 and older) are \$20
- There is a Family Cap of \$75 and children under 6 years of age are free.

All adult ticket holders will receive a “mug” at the event. Please visit our website at [HollistonPantryShelf.org](http://HollistonPantryShelf.org) and click on the “SOUP”er Bowl 2024” tab to purchase your tickets. There are also posters at many of the

14TH ANNUAL

“SOUP”er bowl

TO BENEFIT THE HOLLISTON PANTRY SHELF

DATE: Friday, Feb. 9th

TIME: 5pm to 7:30pm

LOCATION: St. Mary’s Parish Hall,  
8 Church St. Holliston

Online Ticket Sales at  
[HollistonPantryShelf.org](http://HollistonPantryShelf.org)  
(Click “SOUPERBOWL 2024” tab)

OR

Scan the QR Code below

Special Thanks to our Sensational Soup Donors

stores and organizations across town with an easy to scan QR code. There are no physical tickets needed. Your emailed receipt of purchase is your confirmation. Anyone who needs help with tickets, technology, or alternative ways to pay (writing a check) is asked to call or text Karen (774) 253 -0694 or email us at [President.HollistonPantryShelf@gmail.com](mailto:President.HollistonPantryShelf@gmail.com). We are hosting some ticket purchasing sessions with our team members at the Senior Center and Holliston Public Library in the upcoming weeks. Please call if you want more info or need help. We look forward to seeing you for some soup and socializing on Feb. 9.

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# The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

## Celebrate Your Besties This Galentine's Day!

By GINA WOELFEL

Galentine's Day falls on February 13th and is a day for women to celebrate their female friendships. It originated from the character Leslie Knope on the TV show "Parks and Recreation" and is now widely celebrated by countless gal-pals nationwide. On Galentine's Day, women recognize the importance of their female bonds and honor their tried and true friendships. It's the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to your besties who've been there for you through thick and thin.

We all have that special person in our lives: our go-to buddy, our confidant, our ride-or-die, forever friend. You know who she is. She's the person you call when you get engaged and the person who helps you cut the face out of your photographs when you break up. She's the person who cheers you when you succeed

and the person who tells you to get back up when you fall. She's part of your DNA and gets you. She's your person... That's your Galentine.

And guess what? Sometimes, your Galentine is you, and if that's the case, then February 13th is your Day to celebrate the strong, beautiful woman you are!

In The Beauty Beat, we often emphasize the importance of self-care. Last year, for Galentine's Day, we made the executive decision that spending quality time with friends is the best self-care there is. You can trust, laugh, and celebrate with your friends; they always make you feel more relaxed and beautiful after you hang out. Sounds familiar? Hmm, who else makes you feel that good? Ah, yes, The b.LUXE Beauty Team! We know how to make you look and feel fabulous, and we're excited to celebrate that this year.



2023 was a stellar year for b.LUXE. We're so incredibly grateful for you, our wonderful clients, and thanks to your unwavering support and loyalty, it was our most successful year yet! We don't often get to share how much you mean to us, but when you're in our studio, you make our days better. Your conversation and personality propel us forward in our profession, and you're the reason we love our jobs.

To celebrate this milestone and show our appreciation, we're giving back in a big way with a bevy of surprises we're sure will delight you. There'll be complimentary gifts and pop-up services, and on select dates, we will reopen our books for our popular makeup lessons with celebrity artist Madison Elliot. These are just a few of the ways b.LUXE wants to thank you. You deserve



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Day to your special someone. You know how much your wives, mothers, and significant others love b.LUXE! So, hint, hint... Grab your honey the gift they really want!

We hope Galentine's/Valentine's Day finds you celebrating with all the people and things you love the most and wish you a joy-filled February.

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# How would you handle forced early retirement?



Mark Freeman

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Provided by Edward Jones

When you plan to retire at a certain age, you can follow a strategy that incorporates your investment moves, your health insurance and other factors. But what happens if you're forced to retire earlier than you anticipated?

Unfortunately, this situation is not that uncommon. About 40% of Americans say they have been forced into retirement, according to a recent survey from

Edward Jones and Morning Consult, a research firm. If this were to happen to you because of a layoff, company downsizing or a health issue, would you be prepared to maintain your lifestyle today — and in the future? Everyone's situation is different. If your forced retirement happened only a short time before you actually expected to retire, you might not need to take any steps at all. But if it was a matter of a year or more, you may need to look into the following areas:

- **Cash flow** – Obviously, a sudden, unexpected loss of employment will affect your cash flow. And if yours was the only source of income for your household, the situation could be especially concerning. Still, you may well have options that can help. You might find a part-time job, for one thing — many employers hire seniors for various types of service-oriented work. And if you've built an emergency fund containing several months' worth of liv-

ing expenses, now might be the time to tap into it. You also might need to start withdrawing funds from your IRA and 401(k), though, ideally, you'd like to delay this move as long as possible, as these withdrawals may be taxable.

- **Health insurance** – Health insurance can be a major concern if you face an unexpectedly early retirement. Once you're 65, you'll be eligible for Medicare, but what if you haven't reached that age? Through the COBRA legislation, you might be able to remain on your employer-based health insurance for a while — typically 18 months after your job ends. However, COBRA is expensive: If you're qualified, you might have to pay the entire premium for coverage, up to 102% of the cost of the plan, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. If you're married, you might be able to get on your spouse's health insurance, but if this option

isn't available, you could explore a Marketplace plan by visiting the [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) website.

- **Social Security** – A forced early retirement could affect your decision on when to start taking Social Security. You're eligible to begin collecting payments at 62, but your checks will be considerably bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which is likely between 66 and 67, depending on when you were born. If your sudden retirement puts you in a real cash crunch, you might have to start taking payments regardless of your age, but if you have enough in savings, or your spouse's income is enough to keep you afloat, you may want to wait as long as possible so you can get the larger checks. Of course, if your retirement comes while you're still several years away from Social Security eligibility, you won't have to make this now-or-later decision right away.

Being forced to retire before you planned can certainly be challenging. But by looking at the options available to you, in terms of finances and health insurance, you may well find choices that can help you minimize the disruption to your life. If you would like to discuss your personal situation with a financial advisor contact:

Mark Freeman  
Edward Jones Financial Advisor  
77 West Main Street,  
Hopkinton, MA  
508-293-4017  
[Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com](mailto:Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com)

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"I offer my sincere thanks to Northern Management Group LLC for their donation and support to the military community"



### Thanks To Yanks

said Mike Shalin, Founder & President, Thanks To Yanks. "We are honored with your generosity in supporting our troops".

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# Holliston dog licenses due April 30

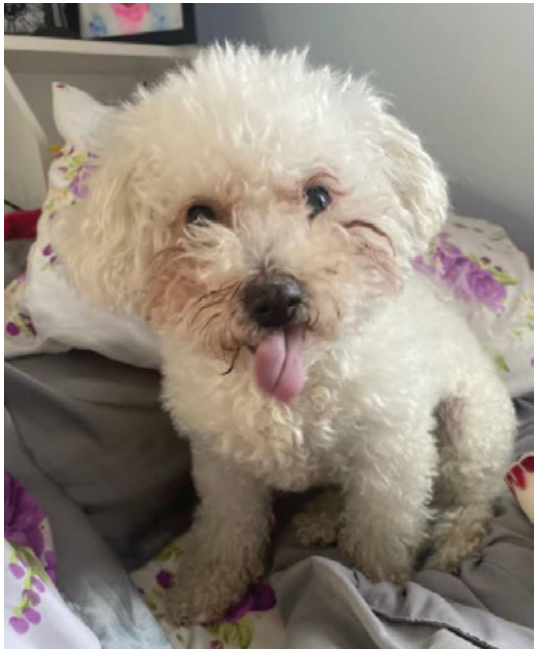
Dog licenses for 2024 are now available in the Town Clerk's Office. Spayed/neutered dogs are \$15 each and unspayed/un-neutered dogs are \$20. Rabies vaccination must be up-to-date; if not, we will need a certificate. You may license in person, or by mail with the application below, or online with UniPayGold if the rabies info is current. Please call the Town Clerk's Office at 508-429-0601 with any ques-tions.

State law re-quires all dogs six months or older must be licensed each calendar year.

A fine of \$50 will be due on all unlicensed dogs beginning May 1.

**Important links:**

[https://www.townofholliston.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf706/f/uploads/mail\\_in\\_dog\\_registration\\_form.pdf](https://www.townofholliston.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf706/f/uploads/mail_in_dog_registration_form.pdf)  
<https://unipaygold.unibank.com/default.aspx>



Be sure to register your dog before April 30.  
Photo credit: Kathryn Enos

# Newcomers Club Continues Easter Basket Donations

*Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors say "Think Spring and Easter!"*

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors is once again helping the Holliston Pantry Shelf with Easter Gifts! Donations are being accepted through March 17th so that we can provide the gift cards to the fami-lies before Easter.

HNN is asking for mone-tary donations to purchase gift cards for children 0 – 17 years

old (\$25 value.)

We do not have a count yet - so we don't know our goal - but you can donate online at <https://hollistonnewcomers.org/Donate> and select Easter Baskets, or you can mail a check to Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors, PO Box 6581, Holliston and indicate Easter Gift on the check. If you have

any questions, please email: [committee.newcomers@gmail.com](mailto:committee.newcomers@gmail.com)

Be a part of putting a smile on the faces of so many deserv-ing kids in our community. The HNN Easter Gift committee thanks you in advance for your support!

**Tricia**

**Easter Basket Committee**  
Tricia Benson  
[tbens@comcast.net](mailto:tbens@comcast.net)

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

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# Real Estate Corner

## Recent Home Sales

Date	Holliston	Amount
01/18/2024	430 Concord St.	\$720,000
01/16/2024	35 Garrett Way	\$645,000
01/09/2024	78 Jackson Dr.	\$879,900
01/04/2024	253 Rolling Meadow Dr.	\$940,000
12/29/2023	354 Gorwin Dr.	\$425,000
12/20/2023	12 Regal St.	\$507,000
12/28/2023	75 Alpine Dr.	\$1.13 mil
12/28/2023	17 Temi Rd.	\$519,000
12/28/2023	27 Regency Dr.	\$265,000
12/22/2023	86 Rockland St.	\$750,000
12/22/2023	93 Beatrice Ln.	\$365,000
12/22/2023	94 Bullard St.	\$815,000
12/21/2023	449 Underwood St.	\$597,500
12/20/2023	19 Alden Rd.	\$670,000



The 4-bed, 3-bath, 4,545 square foot house at 75 Alpine Drive in Holliston recently sold for \$1,125,000.  
Source: [www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com) / Compiled by Local Town Pages

## Have you read the new Town Administrator's newsletter?

The Town Administrator Newsletter recently debuted under the moniker, "Holliston Hometown Newsletter." Town Administrator Travis Ahern told the Select Board at its March 7 meeting that the quarterly newsletter already had 857 people subscribe as of that date.

The eight-page electronic document includes information for town meeting, updates on town projects, important deadlines, lists seasonal jobs, and much more.

To subscribe, visit [www.townofholliston.us/subscribe](http://www.townofholliston.us/subscribe)

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Sports

Olympics Got Her Going

By CHRISOPHER TREMBLAY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

While watching the Olympics in 2012, Holliston’s Emmeline Stoetzel found herself infatuated with American gymnasts Gabby Douglas and Aly Raisman as they graced her tv set.

The 6-year-old really enjoyed watching them perform their routines and the dedication that they put into their craft. It was at this point in time that she decided that she too wanted to be a gymnast and began taking part with a club team in Holliston.

Originally, she was just going to stick with the club team, especially since the high school didn’t have a gymnastics team, but things would change. Before they got better, things got worse for the then-freshman. While working on a routine she felt something pop in her shoulder when she was in mid-air.

“I dislocated my shoulder and had to have surgery so I couldn’t compete for 6 months,” the Holliston native said. “Then as soon as I got back onto the floor, I pretty much did the same thing to my other shoulder and was out for some more extended time.”

Although it was not extremely pleasing to sit on the sidelines and watch her teammates compete, one good thing about that year was that it was during the Pandemic and there wasn’t a lot of meets that were taking place.

In October 2021, in addition to a lot of physical therapy, Stoetzel started working on her skill sets and basic conditioning enroute to her getting back onto the floor with her teammates. She found things rather rough as the other girls were working with the coaches, while she had to make up her own condition skills during practices.



“It was really hard, but I stuck with it. It motivated me, especially after having the second surgery I found that I had been away from the sport way too long,” she said. “I started by doing handstands and progressed from there and although I used to do all four events, I never went near the bars again as it was just too much for my shoulders.”

While Stoetzel was working on getting back to her old self, her high school was joining forces with the Medway co-op gymnastics team (Millis and Milford are also part of the co-op that performs under the Medway title). At the last minute, the sophomore decided that she wanted to try out for the team and although coming off back-to-back surgery’s she had a decent season.

“My skills were not as advanced as they had been, but I felt good getting back into it,” Stoetzel said. “I went to the individual states where I finished high on the floor and was named a Tri-Valley League All Star, which was a total surprise to me.”

Medway Coach Breanna Vacca noted that Stoetzel had a great comeback that season competing on the vault, beam, and floor.

“It was a learning experience because we really didn’t know what she could or could not do. The only thing we were sure of was that she was going to stay away from the bars,” Vacca said. “While she did well, the following year was crazy as she progressed a lot. She did, however, hurt her ankle near the end of the season and missed out on the League Championship and the Sectionals, but was back in time for the States.”

Over the past two years Stoetzel has been named to the TVL All-Star team both years and finished 9th on the floor exercise as a sophomore and improved to 7th as a junior.



As she enters her senior campaign with the Medway co-op team as a two-time captain, she and her coach both have the same goals – stay healthy. Vacca said that as long as she is able to stay healthy, she should be able to compete in the three events all season long. During the team’s first meet this season Stoetzel finished with a 9.45 on the vault and a 9.3 on the floor.

“I am looking forward to staying healthy this year so that I can compete and do well in my three events. I’m still staying away from the bars all together, it’s just not worth getting hurt again,” the senior said. “I want to stay consistent in all three events with my routines, especially the beam. If I can do that, I’m hoping to get back to the States again.”

While participating on the floor is a lot of fun for the senior, she has been practicing a lot on the vault this year, so she is hoping to improve upon that event as well.

Photo correction




The January edition of Holliston Town Pages omitted one of the captains on the boys’ ice hockey team. The captains are, from left, Evan Kuharich (junior, assistant), and seniors Cole Fanara, James Givens, and John Piselli.

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