

Funding and Finding a Cure

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

In “Lorenzo’s Oil,” parents of a young child afflicted with a rare disease go to extraordinary lengths to find a cure.

The 1992 film is based on the true story of Lorenzo Odone, who was diagnosed with adrenoleukodystrophy after his health began to deteriorate. Told their son likely had less than two years to live, Odone’s parents embarked on an epic quest to formulate a remedy.

Their efforts were met with skepticism and resistance from a medical community that saw them as irrational actors, out of their depth in the realm of medicine in which they had no prior expertise or training.

Yet Lorenzo’s parents pressed on, and their persistence paved the way for development of a treatment for their son’s affliction (if not a cure). Dubbed Lorenzo’s Oil, the medicine had mixed results. It sometimes slowed and in some cases seemed to reverse the physical degeneration caused by the disease that had been debilitating him.

The Dion family might find fellow travelers in the odyssey of



that story.

Two of their three young children were diagnosed with a rare form of muscular dystrophy,

one for which there currently is

CURE

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SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

The Art of Going Small

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

For some things in life, it’s counted as progress when things get smaller.

The balance on a debt you owe is a notable one. A shrinking tumor on one’s pancreas? For sure. Our waistlines would be yet another.

In this case, what started out as merely little has shrunk even more so. And that was the goal.

The “Free Little Art Gallery” (FLAG for shorthand) was a public project started by Natick local creatives Virginia McEachern and Denise Girardin. It was a showcase in miniature, on display just outside the doors of the Morse Institute

Library.

The FLAG featured scaled-down works of art, pieces that would fit into the small diorama-like case that sheltered the gallery from the elements and small-time art thieves. From kids to novices to fine artists, “Anyone can participate,” said Girardin.

That the little gallery was so accessible, in several senses of the word, made the presentation a success. Still, Girardin set her sights on something even smaller. Like the nano-technology nerds in some science-fic-

SMALL

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Claudia Shepherd & Nina Sable

CURE

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no cure. And like Lorenzo's parents, the mother and father of the Dion children embarked on a mission to save their kids.

"We kind of noticed he was having trouble with stairs," and other activities, said Courtney Dion. She's mom to Peter, who started showing symptoms a few years ago of a disease that very few people have likely heard of.

Limb-Girdle Muscular Dystrophy is an "ultra rare" form of MS, a condition that deteriorates motor and organ function.

His parents Courtney and Joseph had Peter tested and received the unwelcome news. And because MS is a genetic disorder,

the Dions had their two other children evaluated as a precaution. Those tests revealed that Peter's younger sister Maggie also evinced the mutation which causes the disease.

Yet unlike the Odone's of Lorenzo's Oil lore, the Dion family would leave the quest for a cure largely to professional researchers. They decided their energies were best spent raising funds and awareness – two precious commodities in a race against time and an obscure disease.

"That's when we decided to make the foundation," said Courtney Dion. That organization bears the family's surname, and its mission is to shine a light on Limb-Girdle Muscular Dystrophy and resource a cure for it. Family and friends serve on the

Dion Foundation's board.

"We wanted to move the needle a little bit."

The Dions and their new foundation began a nationwide search for specialists with expertise in their specific form of MS, no easy task owing to its rarity.

To "get more players in the game for this drug development," said Dion, a crucial facet in any strategy to find a cure.

There are government programs that incentivize research for rarer ailments like Limb-Girdle MS, which often come in the form of rewards for drug companies that develop effective treatments. These financial prizes are often far in excess of what a pharmaceutical company could earn by selling their new drug directly to the public, an attractive enticement for smaller and start-up firms. The reward can also keep the eventual cost of the drug affordable, whose makers would otherwise price the treatments to recoup their investment in research and development.

The foundation's fundraising efforts have come in the form of a 5K race, golf tournament, and a Boston Marathon team. Its lobbying efforts include the family

traveling around the country to garner support from legislators and advocates.

In the few years since their diagnoses, Peter has turned 11 and his sister Maggie 8. The family favors stay-cations, as travel can be taxing even under the best of circumstances. They reside in Marshfield and summer at local beaches.

"For them, a school day is really challenging," said their mom, adding that the two often come home exhausted after classes are out. "We feel like we have a clock ticking against us."

"They were really shocked at this diagnosis," said Jocelyn Sage Mitchell. She works for the Dions in the family's chain of local stores (one of them a longtime Natick staple), and is a board member and ambassador for the foundation. "That was the impetus behind them starting the organization."

The Dions have donated an annual sum of the company's profits to fund their foundation and help find a cure.

Further efforts to raise awareness have included lobbying Congress for support over the past few years – again, a race against

the clock. Some afflictions carry with them the prognosis of a prolonged decline, perhaps many years or even decades. They're slower moving and better known to the medical community, and thus can be treated or even cured.

"This is not one of them," said Sage Mitchell.


Peter and Maggie were diagnosed with the disease two years ago. And theirs is counted among one of the more aggressive forms of Limb-Girdle Muscular Dystrophy, which can implicate the lungs, heart and muscles. It threatens to shorten lifespan, and can consign victims to a wheelchair by their teenage years.

"That's an insane thing to find out," said Sage Mitchell. "They're really being brave putting their story out there."

"Time is muscle," is a refrain used among the relatively small community of people touched by the disease. In the race against time, Limb-Girdle MS saps its victims of strength and the freedom of movement so many of take for granted.

"Every day," said Sage Mitchell, "their children are deteriorating before their eyes."

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SMALL

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tion film, she wanted to go smaller. Smaller!

Girardin came across the idea for Natick's upcoming "Micro Gallery" exhibit while scrolling creatives on Instagram. It's a fitting platform on which to discover the discipline of smallish works of art – perusing thumbnail galleries on the small screens we all now carry around in our pockets.

"I stumbled upon these micro galleries," said Girardin. "I just became obsessed with it."

And just as the size of the art in Natick's micro gallery will be reduced from its predecessor, so too will the roster of talent from which it's selected. It will be comprised of "gallery quality art," which will be evaluated through a jury process. A "blind" panel will do the choosing, said Girardin, "so there won't be any bias."

Entries for inclusion into the micro gallery's inaugural exhibit were being accepted up until late last month.

Downsizing one's work is a special kind of challenge for art-

ists, being confined in this case to a creative canvas four inches square. Those are the parameters in which submissions must be constrained. Like creating the classic ship in a bottle, the discipline is its own special breed of fine art, requiring extra attention to detail.

"People really take it seriously, making things that miniature," said Girardin.

The micro gallery itself will be about 32 inches long, 17 inches high and 13.5 inches deep.

"We had to be very conscious," of the gallery's girth, said Girardin, as it will live in its own nook on Adams Street. The one-way byway has become a canvas of sorts in its own right, its facades and fixtures serving as murals and art installations over the last several years.

Adams Street has long hosted an artist's collective of studios, and the creativity has since spilled out into and onto the fire escape-draped avenue.

Opening day for the micro gallery is planned for the third Thursday in July, the night on which the town's Artwalk event will fall. The jury-selected pieces will run for about six weeks, after

which rolling submissions will be added to the collection.

Adams Street will be shut down to motor traffic that evening and also for Natick Nights during the summer, during which it assumes somewhat of a Mardi Gras mask of local talent in performance, art and culinary expression.

The micro gallery will serve as a newcomer in the festivities, a unique attraction for merry-makers to marvel at.

"When they do it," said Girardin, "it will be so fun out there."

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Natick Senior Community Center Events

WONDRUM GREAT COURSES- HYBRID

Join us for this weekly exploration every Tuesday from 11:00am-noon of a range of talks given by experts in their fields. Zoom from home or join us at the center to watch in person.

July 2- World Heritage Sites-Iceland's Great Assembly at Thingvellir & The West Norwegian Fjords

July 9- World Heritage Sites-Mount Fuji, the Symbol of Japan & Japah's Himeji, the Great White Heron Castle

July 16- World Heritage Sites-Persepolis, The Great Persian Capital & Samarra Of Iraq and Abbasid Caliphate

July 23- World Heritage Sites-Teotihuacan, Largest City of Mesoamerica & Timbuktu, Islam's Center by the Sahara

July 30- World Heritage Sites-Ancient Egyptian Thebes & Angkor Wat, the Great Khmer Temple

WEEKLY WALKS- TUES-DAYS

Every Tuesday (7/2, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, 7/30) meet us at 9:30 am at Wellesley College to walk the paths on campus. We meet at the Sports Center Complex Visitor Parking- entrance off Central St/135 (one-way entrance/exit). We will walk as a group for an hour led by Sharon or other volunteer, wear comfortable shoes/sneakers, dress appropriately for the weather, goes rain or shine. Free, registration requested.

MONDAYS AT A MUSEUM - HYBRID

Join Sharon as we visit museums from around the world. Mondays 3:00-4:00 pm, free

July 1- Fashioned by Sargent
July 8- NO Mondays at a Museum

July 15- Tiny Treasures: the magic of miniatures

July 22- Jewelry Up Close with a Curator

July 29- Hear Me Now: The Black Potters of Old Edgefield, South Carolina

August 5- Photography and the American South since 1845

August 12- Sky & Sea: Understanding Climate Resilience and Innovation through Dutch Art

August 19- Ancient Mesopotamian Cylinder Seals

August 26- Turner: Forerunner

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY - a talk with Paolo DiGregorio

Tuesday, July 9, 1:30-2:30pm, free

The Statue of Liberty is an international icon, a symbol recognized around the world. Yet, most people do not know the story behind the statue. This talk will explore how and why the statue was built, what the original symbolism of the statue meant, and what the statue means to millions of people today. Along the way, we will meet some of the colorful characters who were involved in creating this symbol of our nation, and learn some interesting facts about Lady Liberty. G. A. Di Gregorio, the Artifactual Scholar, is an historian, archaeologist, and educator with a passion for telling the stories of our past. He has presented numerous historical lectures and discussions on a variety of topics in American, European, and World history.

Mr. Di Gregorio is a Visiting Lecturer in the History Department at Bridgewater State University (Bridgewater, MA) and an

Instructor in the Anthropology Department at Wheaton College (Norton, MA). Additionally, he has several years of experience as a Park Ranger with the National Park Service and as a professional archaeologist.

SUMMER BEACH PARTY WITH MICHAEL GOODWIN

Tuesday, July 16, 1:30pm, free

Kick back and enjoy classic summer hits from the Beatles, Beach Boys, Elvis and more with vocalist/tenor, Michael Goodwin. It's a multi-media presentation with performance, lecture and video clips and audience participation encouraged to sing along! Wear your Hawaiian shirt/summer ensemble! Refreshments included.

CULTURALLY CURIOUS- Revolutionary design: Modern Architecture in New England

Wednesday, July 17, 1:30-2:30pm, free

New England is known for its history and its traditions, but it is also home to some daring and inventive modern designs from some of the world's leading architects. Frank Lloyd Wright, Gropius and Maya Lin to name a few that we'll discuss. Thank you to Whitney Place for sponsoring this program!

GAME SHOW- WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Monday, July 22, 1:00-2:00pm, free

Come and be a contestant on our LIVE game show Wheel of Fortune with MC Kevin Richman. In this fun competition, you will compete for prizes while solving word puzzles on the Wheel of Fortune, spinning giant carnival wheel. Snacks and beverages included!

DAY TRIP- LOBSTER ROLL CRUISE- DENNIS ON THE CAPE

Tuesday, July 23, \$116.10, non-refundable, payable at registration. Luxury bus departs from Fisk Methodist Church, 106 Walnut St, Natick at 10:00am, returns approximately 6:15 pm.

Join us as we head to Dennis on Cape Cod launching on our dinner cruise boat. Enjoy views of Sesuit Harbor on the calm waters of Cape Cod Bay while you enjoy a choice of Lobster Roll, Roast Beef Rool Up or Vegetarian Roll Up (choose lunch option at registration). Back on land, we have some free time in downtown Hyannis to shop and enjoy a complimentary ice cream cone at Katie's Ice Cream Shop.

Registration Deadline is Monday, July 1.

For more information, please call Sharon at Natick CSC 508-647-6540 X1907, skirby@natickma.org. Please note for all trips: 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

SUMMER BBQ LUNCH AND TUNES AT NATICK CSC

Thursday, July 25, noon-2:00pm, \$12.00 per person due at registration

Nothing screams summer like BBQ and your favorite tunes! Join us for Tennessee's BBQ choose BBQ Chicken pieces or BBQ Ribs, sides include cornbread, Mac & Cheese and Southern Style Green Beans and beverages and ice cream novelties. DJ Kevin Richman will spin classic summer tunes. Dance, sing-along, chat with friends and enjoy the lunch! DJ Kevin will take requests too

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“Trail of Love”: Crocheted Mandalas on the CRT

A New Community Public Art Project



A dedication was held on the CRT next to the Mechanic Street parking lot at 4PM on Saturday May 25th. Many families and friends attended, and Krentzman was happy to have the opportunity to meet some of the amazing crocheting volunteers.

The “Trail of Love” project was overseen by the Natick Center Cultural District, and partially funded by Middlesex Bank, Leese Foundation, and Home Depot. If

A new community public art project has been installed high up on fourteen large tree branches overlooking the Cochituate Rail Trail from Mechanic Street north to the Route 30 bridge.

The crocheted mandala project adds beauty and joy with swaying, twirling hoops of different sizes and colors that will remain on view through the fall. Take a walk, look up, and see how many you can find!

The project was conceived in a Natick Public Art meeting in February. Local artist, Carol Krentzman, took the lead and purchased wire wreath hoops of various sizes.

A request for people willing to crochet was put out on Facebook by Krentzman’s daughter in March. Thirty volunteers responded. After a second request, another 30 agreed to each crochet one or two mandalas.

Sixty hoops were labeled with volunteers’ names, placed in a bin on Krentzman’s porch, and picked up at their convenience. Finished mandalas began to show up on the porch in the

same bin starting in mid-April, as the deadline of May 1st was approaching. The variety, skill level, and beautiful colors were a treat to behold. In the end, Krentzman received 70 unique and amazing crocheted mandalas.

To be ready for installation, Krentzman walked the CRT four times to identify possible tree

volunteers over several days helped with this process too. After coordination with the Natick DPW and other Town officials, the first day of installation was planned for Friday, May 17th. Luckily it did not rain that day. At noon, Krentzman met with two Town employees, one from NDPW who brought a buggy to carry the mandalas, and one from NFD who brought a bucket truck, which was necessary to reach the high branches. All went smoothly, and six of the 14 chosen trees had



person from NDPW, because a second bucket truck was needed for some of the higher branches. By 3PM all the beautiful mandalas were installed by a really great team.

anyone would like to help offset the remaining costs of this beautiful project, donations marked “Trail of Love” are welcome and accepted at NCCD: natickcenter.org/donate.

branches and labeled them with pink caution tape. Subsequently, the mandalas were grouped by color, received strings for ease of hanging, and were organized into fourteen numbered bags. Many

their mandalas by the end of the day. The next Friday, May 24th at 10AM, was agreed upon to install the remaining mandalas on eight more trees. The same employees helped, along with one more

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Temple Israel of Natick Honored Rabbi Ken Richmond

Temple Israel of Natick invited the community to “Harmony,” a musical tribute honoring Rav Hazzan (Rabbi/Cantor) Ken Richmond on Sunday, June 9 to honor of his 18 years of dedicated service to Temple Israel and the wider community.

“Over the past 18 years with our community, Rav Hazzan Richmond has been a model of kindness, compassion, and composure. His musical talents as cantor and pastoral leadership as rabbi are a rare combination to find in one person and we are so grateful he is here for us,” said Temple Israel President Idy Lanier.

During his tenure, Rav Hazzan Ken Richmond has set a model for living a life of integrity, treating everyone with respect and compassionate caring. As a spiritual leader, he has provided pastoral counseling, officiated at life-cycle events, delivered insightful and thought-provoking sermons, and enhanced prayer services with beautiful music. As a mentor, he has inspired many young families to join the congregation. As a teacher, he has prepared hundreds of bar and bat mitzvah students to chant from the Torah and motivated many dozens of adult congregants to acquire new ritual skills and engage more fully in congregational life. As a musician, he has introduced his love of Yiddish music nurtured since college when he founded a Klezmer band.

“I have known Rav Hazzan Ken Richmond since he started working at Temple Israel of Natick. I have had the privilege to be a congregant, work with him as a lay leader and now as Temple Administrator. Ken has provided me and my family much guidance and support through simchas and sadness, and he has always demonstrated compassion, thoughtfulness and wisdom. I am grateful

for his leadership at Temple Israel of Natick,” said Temple Administrator Michelle Weiner-Taylor.

Rav Hazzan Richmond has also shared his expertise



with the wider community, including organizing community-wide holiday programs. An adjunct faculty member at the Hebrew College School of Jewish Music, he has taught professional seminars, classes on Jewish prayer, coached students, and directed cantorial student interns. A member of the Rabbinical Assembly (the International Association of Conservative rabbis), he served on its Mahzor (High Holiday Prayer Book) Committee where he wrote original music for piyyutim (liturgical poems).

An honors graduate of Yale University, Rav Hazzan Richmond holds rabbinical ordination from the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College as well as cantorial ordination and an M.A. in Jewish Music from the H.L. Miller Cantorial School of the Jewish Theological Seminary where he was a Wexner Graduate Fellow. He trained as a chaplain at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. He and his wife, Rabbi Shira Shazeer, have raised their three sons in a bilingual Yiddish-English household.



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Nina Sable can help with your cherished home and move to a senior living facility

BY LINDA CHUSS

Considering moving from your lifelong, beloved home to an independent or assisted living community is a topic many older people do not want to address. It can be difficult to picture, but seniors will be better off starting to envision it for themselves.

“It’s best to begin the process sooner than you think you need to,” said Nina Sable, a real estate agent with the William Raveis office in Natick. “Things can move quickly if required, but you may have to make compromises on your proceeds, new location, or the timing. To help ensure the best results, begin planning and preparation before you’re forced to act.”

People who contact Sable when they are just beginning to consider options benefit from her extensive experience with older people looking to move, and referrals she can provide for special situations. Having her level of understanding helps homeowners avoid mistakes, and she tailors

the experience to each homeowner’s needs.

“We work together under a six-month agreement,” Sable explained. “Some people find the concept of a contract scary, but it’s standard in the industry and not complicated. Typically, things can move faster, on the order of three months.

“When we first meet, I answer questions and provide advice. Start by identifying the long-term facilities to consider and narrow it down before applying, because application fees can be on the order of \$1,000. Find out if that deposit is refundable. And ask about timing requirements: they may give you 60 days to move in once you’re accepted, so you want to know their stipulations before applying.

“You should also work with an accountant and/or lawyer familiar with elder topics. They’ll help you determine the finances you’ll need for the facility you’re considering. They may recommend you set up a trust, or that your home sale proceeds go directly



Nina Sable, with William Raveis Real Estate in Natick, can walk seniors through the process of selling their home to move to a senior living facility.

towards the senior living facility. I can offer suggestions for facilities and financial experts, if that’s something the homeowner wants.

“Then we get into the real estate aspects. I provide a market analysis of your home, so you know the expected price given the home’s condition. You can

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Business spotlight

see how that aligns with the funds needed for your new residence. Next, we turn to timing and consider the target date for the sale and move, along with the condition of the home and any plans for updating it.

“If you have a reverse mortgage, it could take longer. I just completed the sale of a home with a reverse mortgage, but because of the specialist I worked with, it didn’t slow things down.”

Next, Sable said, the process is to make updates to the house, if that is in the plans, and work with her to stage the home and get professional photos. She then markets the home online, finds

the buyer, and completes the sale. “I can line up the home sale to coincide with the senior living property’s timeline.”

Sable offers tips for other special situations. “If your payments have gotten ahead of you and you’re heading towards foreclosure, act quickly: you may have enough equity to sell the home before the bank possesses it. For anyone who needs to expedite a sale, we’ll want to set an at-market price: listing above market hoping for higher proceeds usually slows things down. And a common misconception is that anything found during an inspection means the price needs to be lowered: inspections are for the buyer’s education and the seller is not obligated to offer a pricing concession for something uncovered.”

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After a year of critically-acclaimed performances, the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (BPYO), a tuition-free, 120-member ensemble of talented 12-21 year-olds who wish to become leaders in both music and life, performed at five of Europe's top concert halls from June 15-25 (departing June 12 and returning June 26), led by co-founder and conductor Benjamin Zander. Venues include the Stadtcasino in Basel, Switzerland (June 15), the Rudolfinum in Prague, Czech Republic (June 17), the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany (June 19), the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria (June 23), and the Philharmonie in Berlin, Germany (June 25).

The program featured Schumann's Cello Concerto, with cellist Zlatomir Fung as soloist, and Mahler's Symphony No. 5, both of which the Orchestra performed at their final concert of the 2023-24 season on May 3, at Symphony Hall. "Mahler 5 is quite an undertaking for a group of young musicians who are at

the beginning of their musical journey," says Conductor Benjamin Zander. "But I believe that young musicians can master extraordinarily complex music with the right guidance."

Zlatomir Fung, who hails from Westborough, and now lives in New York where he is on the faculty of The Juilliard School, is the youngest cellist ever to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition. As Artist-in-Residence with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2023-24 season, Fung has appeared at London's Cadogan Hall and is touring the UK with the orchestra. At age 25 he has been hailed as one of the most promising young cellists of his generation. In describing his recital debut at Carnegie Hall in 2021, Bachtrack wrote, "[He is] one of those rare musicians with a Midas touch: he quickly envelops every score he plays in an almost palpable golden aura."

Benjamin Zander's profound connection to Mahler's music has earned him significant recogni-

tion, including receiving the very first Titan Award from the Mahler Society of New York in 2023. His passion for Mahler's compositions infuses every note with a profound sense of meaning and emotion. "Mahler's Fifth Symphony represents the quintessential journey from darkness to light, which puts an orchestra at the limit of expression," says Zander.

In keeping with the BPYO's motto to "shape future leaders through music," orchestra members will also meet and collaborate with other youths and youth orchestra in each city.

Shining Eyes: Music's Power to Connect, a documentary about the BPYO's 2017 tour of Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay, illustrates the power of music education in its ability to transform lives through connection and by breaking down barriers and building bridges between cultures. BPYO alumna Emily

ORCHESTRA
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Your Money, Your Independence

Summer, Summer, Summertime - Time To Sit Back and... Experience Spend



Glenn Brown, CFP

Recall your age 21 summer? Mine had DJ Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince's "Summertime" as a soundtrack. Days spent gathering with friends at backyard BBQ's, a pool or restaurant patios in Portsmouth, then 6 nights a week "working" as a DJ in various clubs on Hampton Beach.

When we reminisce about our past, we recall experiences. Examine further, you'll likely realize the small windows of opportunity to enjoy them. For example, two years later I'd be in Florida, working for a minor league baseball team and able to see just one of those friends.

Life is constantly evolving, and moments once passed cannot be relived. Embracing experience spending encourages individuals to seize opportunities to enjoy life while they can. It shifts focus from material wealth to emotional wealth — the happiness, satisfaction, and memories that come from

shared experiences and personal adventures.

Why experience spending?

Beyond the concept of having greater value for experiences versus things, studies find people misjudge what purchases will make them happy, how happy they will feel, and how long that happiness lasts.

Spending money on experiences creates more and longer-lasting happiness than spending on material goods, which people are more prone to comparisons and buyer's remorse. Also, objects tend to deteriorate with time, while experiences can create lasting memories and become part of your identity.

The challenges of getting advice to spend money.

The financial industry, in particular investment management and financial planning, places too little emphasis on helping clients spend money for today's experiences.

There are various reasons as to why. Advisors paid solely by % of Assets Under Management don't want assets taken out, as it results in them earning less. For financial planners, it's easier (and safer) to model goals 15-20 years out, whereas spending now makes analysis harder to balance future outcomes. Furthermore, clients see the impact of recommendations immediately and can judge accordingly.

Timing of experiences is critical.

Consider the family vacation to Disney, it is a different shared experience for all going when kids are 6 & 8 versus late teens.

Or the HS senior and family trip you've been meaning to do. What's their availability (and desire) once in college to go on a family trip with mom and dad? That window's closing.

It's not limited to just travel.

Saving up for a big purchase is admirable. But in terms of your happiness, is this the best way to allocate finite resources? For many, happiness is more closely aligned to the frequency and variations as opposed to intensity.

Ask yourself if you'd be happier with a few big-ticket items, such as a luxury car, or rather indulge frequently in small purchases, such as cooking clubs, memberships, kid's activities, and spa days?

Financial considerations.

While experience spending prioritizes moments over materialism, it also requires mindful financial planning of your resources. Budgeting involves allocating funds for activities that align with personal values and goals. It encourages responsible spending by focusing on the long-term benefits of enriching experiences while balancing your financial stability and security.

For instance, imagine parents trying to make up for lost time, now wanting to take the family on a luxury vacation. Sure, they could choose to do that. But would it have been better to have done prudent financial planning all those years of sacrifice by assessing current financial health, setting a realistic budget, and exploring cost-effective alternatives that still deliver a memorable experience? Furthermore, this approach removes the build-up of unre-

alistic expectations and places the focus on making memories together.

I hope you enjoy your "summer, summer, summertime" and may you have "time to sit back and unwind" together.

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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This program is supported in part by a grant from the Natick Cul-

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ORCHESTRA

continued from page 8

Chen also expressed, "One indispensable reason why we go on tour is to share our music beyond the Boston music scene. We may be young people, but we have been given the chance to change the world with love, music, and possibility."

About the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra

The BPYO was formed in 2012 by Conductor Benjamin Zander under the auspices of the Boston Philharmonic with the motto "Shaping Future Leaders Through Music." The Orchestra's 120 enthusiastic and talented young musicians range from age 12 to 21, affording younger members of the orchestra the chance to collaborate with older students who are beginning their professional careers. In turn, collegiate members of the group are offered the opportunity to nurture and coach the future generations.



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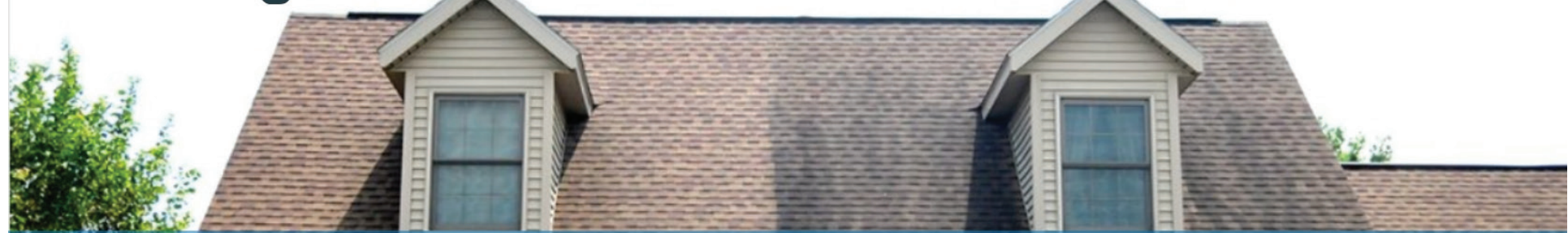


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Sports

Summer No Time For NHS Football Coach To Relax

Mortarelli Stays Focused On Many Areas

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Now that summer has arrived, ever wonder what a high school football coach thinks about in July or August?

Family vacations are proba-

and requires lots of preparation to realize success in the fall.

Natick High's Mark Mortarelli, who'll begin his 15th season as the Redhawks' head coach in September, shared some thoughts and insight on what occupies a football coach's mind in



Natick High's four captains (from left) are Simon Pedrelli, Nolan Cloutier, Sam Hubbard and Ronnie Sadm who know their leadership skills will be observed closely during the summer.

bly scheduled around dates that correspond to summer football activities and events. And, it also seems that football likely rules the summer months for coaches because the sport is so demanding

the summer months leading up to the start of the regular season.

A native of Natick, the 50-year-old Mortarelli played football, hockey and competed in track at

Natick High and later was a tight end at Ithaca College where he majored in sociology. He earned a masters degree from Bridgewater State in special education and has been on Natick High's faculty for 27 years, currently as a special ed teacher. Mortarelli is married and has three children.

The veteran coach has led NHS to 11 playoff appearances in 14 years, one of which ended with the Redhawks losing to Beverly in the 2012 Super Bowl. Here are some of the areas that Mortarelli mulls during the summer:

• **Strength and conditioning:** Natick's program started in late June and continues to Aug. 9. It's not mandatory for football players to attend but it's strongly recommended.

"We want our players in that program because they can improve their speed and strength," Mortarelli said. "Football is all about getting stronger and faster. The program, which is open to all student-athletes, also helps in team building and injury prevention."

• **Summer leagues:** Natick's players will participate in a seven-on-seven passing league at Weston High School on Wednesday nights. The league began play on June 19 and will continue to Aug. 7. Also, on July 13, the Redhawks will compete in the New England Seven-versus-Seven

Tourney at Xaverian High. They will play three 25-minute games in one day.

"About 50 teams will participate," Mortarelli said. "Winning in these events is not our top goal. We want them to be learning experiences. We want the players to get reps, have fun, build team chemistry and have all players compete."

• **The roster:** It's helpful for a coach to know how school choice and transfers are affecting his program. Mortarelli says that at the conclusion of the school year he and his staff know who's leaving and who's arriving.

"The most important thing about the roster is to know what kids are in what positions," he said. "Other areas I think about during the summer are who's working hard, who looks good and who hasn't worked out."

• **Team needs:** A coach has to figure out quickly if help is needed at a specific position. What helps Mortarelli is a depth chart. "We get a skeleton depth chart done in the spring," he emphasized. "In July, our top priority is attitude and effort. We worry about ability when the pads go on."

• **Assistant coaches:** Natick's grid program doesn't have much staff turnover, making Mortarelli's job easier. However, he says July is a time for assistants to focus on their areas of respon-



Natick coach Mark Mortarelli has led the Redhawks to 11 playoff appearances in 14 years.

sibility. "Many of our assistants work at the strength and conditioning program," he noted, "and they get a good indication on how the players are progressing."

• **Injuries:** Any NHS player who's been injured or is recovering from surgery can expect a call from Mortarelli or one of his assistants. "We're always monitoring the players," he said. "We also check in with the trainer often. We want our players to be mentally and physically healthy."

*Pre-season workouts — Aug. 16 will kick off pre-season workouts for all interscholastic football teams in Massachusetts. Before that date arrives, it a good bet

FOOTBALL

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FOOTBALL

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that much planning and preparation have been done, especially if a coach is implementing a new system or adding several new “wrinkles.”

“It’s imperative that our kids report in shape,” said Mortarelli whose squad finished 6-5 last year after bowing out of the playoffs in the first round to Methuen. “Pre-season is about execution and repetition and we expect the players to know the playbook. On non-contact days, our staff takes advantage of the little details.”

• **Scrimmage:** Natick will scrimmage Holliston and Shrewsbury before opening the regular season against Newton North. “There’s no scouting our opponents,” Mortarelli said. “Scrimmages are all about how we perform. We’re concerned on how we play and how well we execute. Our concern is about ourselves, not the opponent, when we scrimmage.”

• **Football facility:** Four teams will be on the Memorial Field turf during pre-season. They include the football squad,

field hockey and the boys and girls soccer teams. All of those teams’ coaches work with Tim Collins, Natick’s Athletic Director, on the times they will be practicing.

“Our field is a terrific facility,” Mortarelli noted. “All the coaches whose teams use the field work well together. If a specific need arises, all the coaches adjust.”

• **Captains roles:** Mortarelli and his staff observe Natick’s four captains during the summer. “We see them at seven-on-seven drills and know who’s stepping up and displaying leadership,” he offered. “We can see who’s a good communicator, who’s supportive and who’s taking care of group texts. It’s a good time to assess their leadership traits.”

• **Regular season:** Mortarelli said that as July ends and August moves along, any thoughts about the regular season are solely about Newton North, the Redhawks’ opening day opponent (Sept. 6 at Newton North).

“Our entire focus will be on Newton North,” he emphasized. “We’ll review what we know about them and we’ll watch film from last year’s game. “Our non-league games include Wachusett and Walpole, and our Bay

State Conference games against Herget Division opponents are against Walpole and Needham. All of our non-league games are against strong teams that would help us in the power rankings.”

Mortarelli offered more insight on the focus of Natick’s pre-season and in-season sched-

ules.

“Our basic structure for those schedules is modeled after what coach Tom Lamb had done for years,” Mortarelli said. “We try to treat it like a small-college experience where we meet multiple times during the week with the players to watch film, go over the game plan, etc. We also follow the

same basic weekly schedule, so the players know what to expect. Every off-season we visit one or two college practices to watch the structure of practice and see if we can find anything new that may be helpful.”



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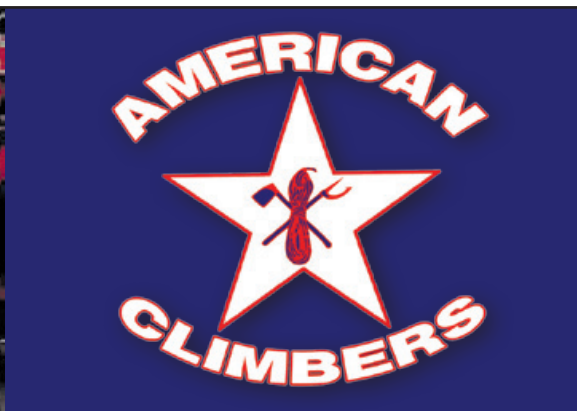
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Real Estate Corner

Selling Your Home: Should You Accept an Offer with a Home Sale Contingency?



John McHugh

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

The highly competitive real estate market has driven buyers and sellers to think creatively, employing innovative strategies to gain a competitive edge and achieve success in today's challenging market.

When considering an offer, sellers should be aware that certain contingencies carry more risk than others. The further an offer is from a cash offer, the higher the risk. Home sale contingencies can

be successful, but they come with higher risks compared to other contingencies. They can be worth considering if:

- It's the only offer on the table and you're facing a lack of interest
- The offer meets all of your other terms and conditions

As a home seller, it's crucial to understand the implications and potential uncertainty of accepting an offer with a home sale contingency. This arrangement allows the buyer to back out of the purchase if they fail to sell their current property, leaving the seller with a stalled sale and lost time. In this article, we'll explore the risks associated with home sale contingencies, the potential consequences for sellers, and alternative solutions to consider.

How Home Sale Contingencies Work

A home sale contingency is a clause in the real estate contract that makes the buyer's purchase contingent on the sale of their

current property. The buyer and seller agree on the terms, including the sale price, earnest deposit, home inspection contingency, appraisal contingency, financing contingency, and closing date. If the buyer fails to sell their property within the specified timeframe, the contract may be terminated or extended at the seller's discretion.

Risks for Sellers

Accepting a home sale contingency offer can be shaky ground for sellers. By doing so, sellers have less control and may be left with a stalled transaction if the buyer's property doesn't sell. This can lead to issues including:

- Reversal of momentum
- Lost time and opportunity costs
- Uncertainty and stress
- Potential price reductions to attract new buyers
- Difficulty in negotiating future offers

Crucial Considerations

Before accepting a home sale contingency offer, sellers should consider the following:

- Is the contingent home priced correctly?
- What if the property doesn't sell?
- What if the home inspection reveals significant issues?

Alternative Solutions

Instead of accepting a home sale contingency offer, sellers may want to consider the following alternatives:

- Request a larger earnest deposit
- Consider a bridge loan or temporary financing
- Negotiate a kick-out clause or right of first refusal
- Request the removal of this contingency

Kick-out clauses allow sellers to continue marketing their property and accept a non-contingent offer if one arises. Right of first refusal gives the seller the option to accept a new offer if the buyer's contingency isn't met.

Home sale contingencies can be a risky proposition for sellers. By understanding the potential consequences and considering alternative solutions, sellers can protect their interests and ensure a smoother transaction. Remember, it's essential to prioritize control over the sale process and be cautious when considering contingencies. You can expect success when you navigate your real estate transaction and the potential challenges with a trusted agent by your side!

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06/14/2024	11 Wilogreen Road	\$915,000
06/14/2024	19 Rockridge Road	\$1.19 mil
06/14/2024	40 Nouvelle Way #N844	\$565,000
06/14/2024	11 Union Street	\$1.50 mil
06/13/2024	42 Water Street	\$915,000
06/13/2024	44 N Main Street #3	\$720,000
06/13/2024	8 Deer Path	\$2.01 mil
06/13/2024	10 Fairway Circle	\$625,000
06/10/2024	48 Silver Hill Lane #21	\$330,000
06/04/2024	21 Fisher Street	\$821,500
06/04/2024	4 Wildwood Place	\$810,000
06/04/2024	15 Kinsman Place	\$1.35 mil
06/04/2024	8 Walcott Street #A	\$1.58 mil
06/03/2024	89 Woodland Street	\$2.45 mil
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05/22/2024	69 Fairway Circle	\$700,000
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05/17/2024	25 Spring Valley Road	\$1.05 mil

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The 3-bed, 2-bath 1,569 square foot house at 42 Water Street in Natick recently sold for \$915,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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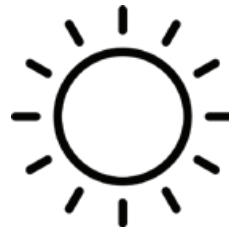
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Step into Summer Checklist

The Summer sunshine is officially here, and we can't wait to enjoy the season in our place. Make the most of it with this list of activities made by Natick natives, for Natick natives!



- Go for a hike at Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary
- Rent a boat for a day on Lake Cochituate
- Walk or bike the Cochituate Rail Trail
- Enjoy the Summer Concert Series on the Common
- Call the Allain Group if you are considering your next move!



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