



Love is Louder

BY JACQUI MORTON

A gathering at the First Congregational Church on the first of August may have been planned in response to a somber moment, but the feeling in the air was almost joyful.

Declan, age 5, with their mom, Beth, told me a little bit about what brought them that evening: “We go to church here and some flags were hurt. We

talked about the meaning of the flag, which is that love is for everyone, and we felt it’s important to show up, to show our support, and to show that yes, we believe love is for everyone.”

That aligns with an official statement from the Town of Natick, on the community event and the incidents leading up to it: “In the early hours of Sunday, July 28th, two Natick churches were each targeted by an act

of hate, aimed squarely at their support of the LGBTQIA+ community. Both the First Congregational Church of Natick (FCC) & Christ Lutheran Church Natick (CLC) have long been allies of the LGBTQIA+ community and each church strives to foster a congregation anchored in inclusivity. Sunday was a calcu-

LOVE

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Porchfest to Return

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

September seems a segue between summer and autumn. Students are returning to classes, and the sun to its resting place noticeably earlier in the day. Neighbors ask where the season went, what’s in store for autumn.

many a conversation and much quality time shared with family and friends.

For a great primer on that paradox of place (the porch), its origins and charms, give “Inside Out,” a read. It’s a recent “New Yorker” essay by David Owen



The mercury might soar to mid-summer standards or dip to May models on a given day. But in its mellow moods, September is mild. During such days, the month is tailor-made for the New England porch.

Many a sunrise and sunset has been savored in the shelter and serenity of this sacred space,

that airs out all you might want to know, and more, about these screened sanctuaries.

Porches are a place between privacy and publicity, indoors and out. It’s the perfect stage from which to watch precipi-

PORCHFEST

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Claudia Shepherd & Nina Sable

LOVE

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lated act of hate and the Town of Natick stands firmly against all forms of bigotry and hate. Natick is firmly committed to celebrating inclusivity so ALL who call Natick home, and those who visit, feel welcomed and supported.”

Members of the FCC church community were particularly lifted by the show of love. One reflected, “We are celebrating our 20th year as an open and affirming congregation.”

Open and affirming is a technical term, the United Church of Christ’s designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC

which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Nearby Christ Lutheran Church shares a similar mission: We extend God’s own welcome regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, economic status, or other human distinction. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we offer a particular welcome to all gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and we commit to racial equity.

Hate is never easy to understand, but in this instance, it was particularly difficult. Looking around, my new friend in the Adirondack chair added, “it’s great to see that the community so clearly supports the values that we uplift inside this church.”

Though the rainbow flag, or peace flag, is consistently present in front of FCC, one wouldn’t have been able to try to count the rainbows on the lawn or sidewalk on one of the steamiest evenings of the summer. The constant flow of support(ers) was palpable over three hours scheduled for the event across the street from the popular Natick Nights out-

ing. Introducing each other and chatting over smiles, what had resulted from one act of hate was an opportunity for the com-

munity needs. Although the peace flag or rainbow flag is a visible symbol of our values to welcome and celebrate all, it is also

a reminder of the work still ahead. Adolescents who identify as LGBTQ+ remain among those who are at greatest risk for mental health issues and bullying in school.

Organizers for the gathering of unity and love were grateful for the community’s presence. Reverend Cindy at FCC shared, “As someone who is still pretty new to Natick, I’ve loved seeing the sense of community in this town, and was in awe of how present it was. My hope is that members of the queer community who

were there soaked up that love and affirmation. And for folks who couldn’t be there, I hope the feeling ripples out to surround them as well. Huge thanks to town staff, elected officials, and area religious leaders in particular for showing up in their official roles, as an act of public witness. We’ll just keep sharing this message...love is louder.”



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PORCHFEST

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tation play out, a rain or snowstorm, sheltered from the falling elements.

It's also a space that seems to have fallen somewhat out of favor in a culture often frantic to beat rush hour roadways, race from one youth sporting event to another, juggle multiple jobs or gigs.

But porches were reclaimed for a time during the pandemic pause, liminal spaces that became landing places — where neighbors, friends and family could gather during those uncertain days and months.

And if it happens to be one's preoccupation, the porch is a prime perch from which to survey a property line, scolding neighborhood kids and dogs to scam off one's lawn.

In stark contrast to the spirit of that latter function, Natick's Porchfest repurposes this unique space into a stage, onto which residents welcome perfect strangers. There, the guests will play guitar (or other instruments) for audiences gathered on the green of lawns.



Porchfest is a grassroots, hyperlocal music festival, one that puts community center stage. Performers are paired with residents eager to lend their porches for a few hours, providing a venue for local artists to play before the public.

Natick's edition of the concerts have become locally famous, attracting varied and numerous acts and large audiences. The event will return Saturday, September 21st, and run from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. A map of the town's porches and performers will be available on

natickporchfest.org. A unique feature of the events is that performances are pro bono, as are the procurement of porches. The event is jealously guarded as a music-making (not money-making) enterprise.

Porchfest isn't a Natick original. It's a sharing of space and sound that's been a highlight for years in other towns and cities.

The history of Porchfest dates back more than a decade, when the inaugural performances were held in Ithaca, New York in 2007. That first festival fea-

tured about twenty acts, but has evolved into an annual extravaganza sometimes featuring over a hundred performers.

In recent years, many Massachusetts municipalities have hosted their own versions of Porchfest, some adopting the event into an annual ritual of community culture.

Porchfest has also spread since its inception to all corners of the country and beyond, even crossing the border into Canadian provinces.

And while its performers are unpaid and attendance costs

nothing, putting on Porchfest isn't free. The events must be advertised and coordinated, and that involves the work of local professionals.

Enter sponsorships.

Local businesses like Music-Go-Round have adopted Natick's Porchfest for the past few years, donating money and gear to help make the show a reality. The Natick Center Cultural District has also been center stage in planning and publicizing the event.

See you on (or from) the porch!

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State Primary & Special Local Election



The State Primary and Special Town Election will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 3.

The last day to register to vote for this election was Saturday, Aug. 24.

Please note that if you choose to vote at both the State Primary and Special Town Election you will be provided with two separate ballots. One ballot will cover the state primary including the senate in congress, representative in congress among other elected offices. The other ballot will cover the Special Town Election including the Associate Member of the

Planning Board.

On election day the polls will be open from 7AM-8PM. If you are unsure whether you're registered to vote or where you vote you may check online to view your voting status and polling locations. You may always call the office at (508) 647-6430 x4 and someone can check your voter status and polling location.

Absentee Ballots are now available

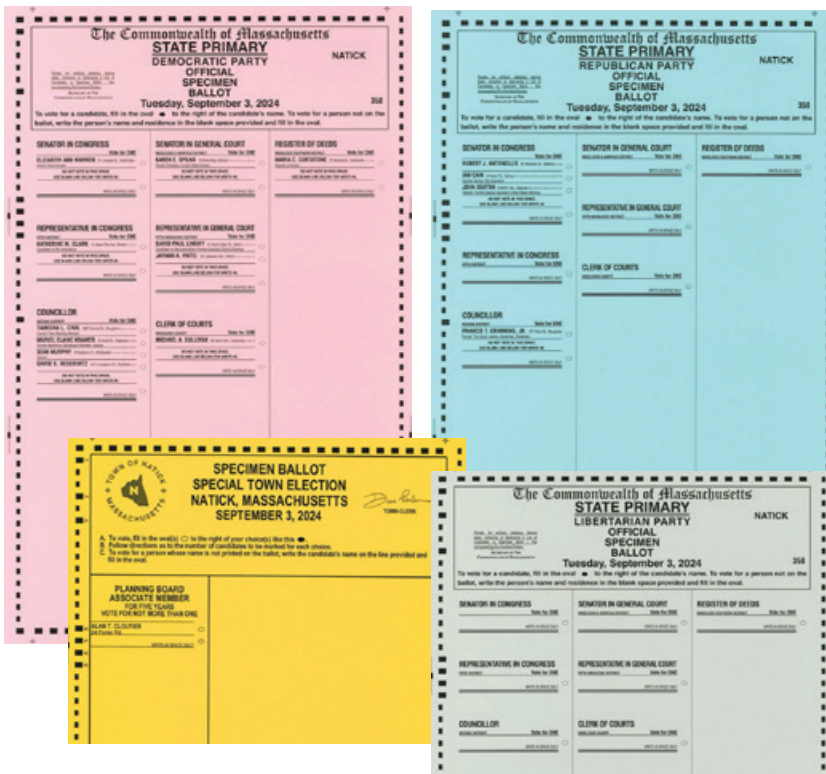
Massachusetts allows registered voters to vote by absentee ballot if they:

- will be absent from the city on election day, and/or
- have a physical disability that prevents voting at polls, and/or
- cannot vote at the polls due to religious beliefs

Here is more information about Absentee Voting;

Who can vote absentee?

- Any voter who will be absent from Natick on election day,
- if a physical disability prevents him/her from voting at



the polling place or

- for religious beliefs which prevent the voter from voting on election day.

How can I get an absentee ballot application?

You can pick up an applica-

tion in the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall located at 13 East Central St.

Send a signed note by mail or email to the Town Clerk's office requesting a ballot. The note MUST be signed by the voter or a family member.

How do I receive the ballot?

The ballot maybe mailed to you at the address at which you are registered;

The ballot may be mailed to

you at an address designated on the application; or

You may vote over the counter in the Town Clerk's office. A ballot may not be removed from the office. It must either be mailed or voted in the office.

This election is a primary do I get to choose which ballot I would like? If you are registered in a political party (Democrat, Republican, Green-Rainbow or Libertarian), you must vote the ballot of the party in which you are registered. Anyone registered as Unenrolled or in a political designation my choose which ballot they would like to vote.

Sample Ballots

The Secretary of the Commonwealth has information regarding voting for persons with disabilities <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleaccessible/accessibleidx.htm>

In Natick, every polling location has an Automark voting machine that is an accessible machine that will mark the ballot. The voter may also have the ballot read to them through this machine.

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Natick Art Association Announces Open Studios

The Natick Art Association will hold its annual "Natick Artists Open Studios" on the weekend of Oct. 19-20 from 11am-5pm both days.

This is an opportunity for the public to meet and visit with artists living or working in Natick in informal settings to learn about their art and to purchase unique

photographers, and mixed media artists. Many of the organization's members will participate in this year's Open Studio weekend.

Traditionally held the third weekend in October, this year marks the 22nd anniversary of this town-wide event. Open studios are held at several group locations in Natick Center and at



artistic creations directly from the artists.

The Natick Art Association is presently comprised of more than seventy artists working in a broad array of artistic mediums. They include painters, printmakers, sculptors, potters, mosaic artists, jewelry makers, fiber artists,

private studios all across town.

Some artists will offer live demonstrations during the open studio weekend and refreshments will be offered. For more information, visit <https://www.natickartassociation.org/>

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Natick 101 Sessions

Natick 101 Sessions is a meeting series (in-person + streaming video) to learn about Town departments & services, as well as local government & community organizations. All sessions will be led by Town Department Heads (or other Town leaders).

In basic terms, Town staff is seeking to develop engaging content that gives a high-level introduction into each Town department (as well as related boards, committees,

and NGOs). The content will include: [1] introductions, [2] organizational structure, [3] key responsibilities, [4] budget, [5] challenges, & [6] engagement opportunities.

A Brief History:
Town staff previously hosted a "Citizen's Leadership Academy" (CLA) for a 6-year period, 2015-2020. Like many MA communities, this CLA program was an application-only process that established a cohort of residents

to learn about Town departments/topics over a ~10-wk period. This program was well-received; that said, Town staff believes that there is an opportunity for change (please read below).

Goal of Natick 101 Sessions:

- More informed residents
- More engaged residents

NATICK 101

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Discover when and how to install plantings in your yard



Chris Hopkins

Where and why-

You're looking through your favorite gardening magazine and you come across a plant you are not familiar with. It seems like it would be the perfect fit for an open space you are looking to fill in. When we are looking at what to install in our garden we often focus on color and texture. While those are key factors, there are other things we need to consider as well. One of the most important factors is the hardiness zone (Natick MA. 6a and 6b) and why selecting a plant from your zone is so important as well as other characteristics to keep an eye out for. Before choosing a plant, you must consider wind, soil condition, sunlight, drainage, soil PH, and nutrient availability. It is also important to factor in what size space you want the plant to fill, maintenance needs, pest resistance and functionality. If you want a perennial, shrub, or tree to survive, it must tolerate year-round conditions in your area. Plants with no significant pest prob-

lems, drought tolerance, and beauty in at least two seasons are top of the list.

How-

Once you have selected a plant, it is important to install it properly. Improper planting, particularly planted too low, or too high are found to be major causes of tree mortality in managed landscapes. When planting the hole for the new plant it should be 2-3 times the size of the root ball and the root ball itself should be installed on undisturbed ground. While backfilling with native soil, the plant should be watered when half-way through, the water should be allowed to drain and rewater when backfilling is complete. In some situations, you will want to mix in some peat moss or compost. Once the plant is installed it is important to keep a proper watering regimen based on existing weather conditions.

When-

Planting broadleaf evergreen

shrubs in the fall might be better avoided until spring planting is possible. Mostly because they need more time to prepare for winter sun and strong winds. The stress of these elements can be extremely hard on the plants. When planting evergreens, you want to make sure they are installed by mid-October, ideally six weeks before the ground freezes, and you want to be careful not to disturb the root ball to give your new planting the best chance to survive. Deciduous plants on the other hand can be installed if the ground is workable. Warm air

in the fall and damp soil conditions promote vigorous root growth. Select trees and bushes are considered a fall dig hazard and should only be installed in the spring.

Information provided by Chris Hopkins, Greenleaf Landscaping LLC — experts at fall lawn care. And for more information on any of these topics, contact Greenleaf today. Talk to Greenleaf today: 774-421-9570.

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LANDSCAPE INSIGHTS

Summer is quickly coming to an end and fall will officially be here later this month. When is the best time to install new plantings? In the spring or fall? There is no simple answer, but by evaluating your needs you can make an educated decision based on several factors.

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Car Show for Cancer

**Eleventh Annual KiddeFenwal Car Show
Sept. 14**



September has arrived and the Relay for Life Team of KiddeFenwal is well prepared for its annual Car Show. The show will take place on its spacious grounds at 400 Main Street in Ashland on Sept. 14, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event, which is in its 11th year, is held to raise funds for cancer research.

“Last year the show attracted over 300 cars and over 900 spectators, our largest turnout to date, and I fully expect to beat that record this year” said Peter Kamitian, Relay for Life Team Captain for KiddeFenwal.

KiddeFenwal, which has produced fire detection, suppression and temperature control equipment for commercial and indus-

trial applications in Ashland since the mid-’80s, is well known for giving back to the community by lending its fields to many of the town’s local youth programs. Its Relay for Life Team has raised over \$300K throughout the years.

“Car owners and spectators get hooked when they come to our show for the first time, with all types of cars, trucks and motorcycles dating from early 1900s to the latest Lamborghini, all in a family friendly environment,” said Kamitian. “Attendees are entertained by music from DJ Bryan Rivas Dipas and The Romeos Duo! and breakfast and lunch is available from the Ashland Lions and of course Refreshing Concessions ice cream truck. There is

something for everyone.”

Over 100 trophies/awards will be given out to award winning vehicles, thanks in part to the many Show sponsors.

“I cannot thank our show sponsors enough as well as and all the people who have attended the show in the past who have donated money to the Cause. We are making a difference” added Peter.

If you or your company would like to be a show sponsor, contact Peter Kamitian at 774-279-0497.

NATICK 101

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- More Town-wide volunteers
- Primary Changes (v. prior program)
- Open invitation for all sessions (ie. no application or registration required)
- Readily-available content (all presentation materials & video library to be archived & readily available)
- Streamlined content (not overly dense materials)

Clear direction of how residents can engage / get involved!

Increased volume of community input / feedback (both pre-meeting & post-meeting)

This program will exist in perpetuity... upon establishing the Natick 101 Sessions in September 2024, the plan is to host a monthly meeting until 2025-ish (or until we pivot to something better aimed at a similar goal)

Keep cozy this Fall Season!



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KINDNESS WEEK is a time to shine the spotlight on the good that happens every day and inspire people to spread kindness through their own actions and connect with others. In partnership with organizations 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 kindness! If your business, community group, or non-profit would like to participate and learn more about Kindness Week please send an email to KindnessWeek@SPARKKindness.org. SPARK Kindness would love for YOU to join our team! In-

terested in learning about ways to engage with SPARK? Email: Elizabeth at enolangreer@spark-kindness.org. Learn more about all of SPARK's FREE programs, community events and resources at www.SPARKKindness.org

Screenagers Next Chapter: Supporting Adolescent Mental Health

A film screening and panel discussion focused on supporting teen mental health and helping develop crucial skills in our digital age. Tuesday, September 10 at 7pm, Kennedy Middle School, Natick.



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Mastering the College Admissions Process



Glenn Brown, CFP

Navigating the college admissions process can be a complex and stressful experience for both students and parents.

Understanding nuances of early action and early decision, exploring merit-based aid, and utilizing 529 plans and loans effectively can impact this journey. Here's a guide to help clarify these crucial financial aspects.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

When it comes to college applications, Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED) are two options usually due November 1st, but they have distinct differences.

Early Action (EA) allows students to apply earlier than the regular deadline and receive a decision sooner, but they do not

have to commit immediately. This means students can apply to multiple schools under EA and weigh their options.

Early Decision (ED) is a binding commitment as students agree to attend that college if admitted. Applying ED can enhance acceptance chances because admissions committees view ED applicants as highly motivated. However, it is crucial to request any needed merit aid in the application process, as later requests of needing aid to attend can jeopardize the acceptance.

Focus on Merit-Based Aid

Merit-based aid is financial assistance awarded based on a student's academic, athletic, or artistic achievements rather than financial need. To maximize merit-based aid:

Take The Road Less Traveled: The "trophy schools" aren't giving a lot of merit, because they receive many applications and don't need to incentivize top students. Therefore, look for niche colleges and/or programs in big schools that excite your student and align to their strengths.

Build Student/Recruiter Relationships: Merit is a relationship business, where personal interactions influence rewards. Encourage students to proactively connect with local recruiters and express their interest in specific programs. Ongoing communication leads to sharing campus visit plans, allowing the recruiter to set up meetings with professor(s) and admissions. Upon applying EA or ED, your student shares with the recruiter and admissions personnel their enthusiasm, application, and calculation of merit needed to attend. Now admissions has a personality with a name and need, plus the local recruiter is making your student's case.

Students must lead these communications, as recruiters are turned off when parents are writing, editing, and/or speaking for the student.

Using 529 Funds
Contributions to a 529 plan grow tax-free, and withdrawals for qualified education expenses are tax-free. To use funds from a 529 plan effectively:

Using 529 Funds

Adjust Investment Strategies: If your child is only a couple of years from starting college, then shift a portion of future expenditures into more stable investments, such as bond funds or money markets, to help minimize

future volatility and potential losses.

Qualified Expenses: Ensure that withdrawals are used for qualified expenses like tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Using funds for non-qualified expenses can result in penalties and taxation at the parent's AGI rate.

Exploring Loan Options

Understanding the different types of loans can help in managing student debt:

Federal Student Loans: Typically offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment terms compared to private loans. They include Direct Subsidized Loans, where the government covers interest while the student is in school, and Direct Unsubsidized Loans, where interest accrues immediately.

Parent PLUS Loans: These are federal loans parents can take out. They have a fixed interest rate and offer flexible repayment terms but place the financial burden on parents.

Private Loans: Offered by banks or private lenders, have higher interest rates and fewer repayment protections than federal loans, so they should be the last resort.

In conclusion, informed parents and proactive students can achieve better financial outcomes and a smoother transition to college life. To learn more, talk with your Certified Financial Planner.

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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Sewing Comfort For Those In Need

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

It's always nice when you can get back to the community simply by doing something you love.

Such is the case for Holliston resident Diana Hatch, and the rest of the Yankee Quilters.

Hatch discovered the group nearly 16 years ago.

"I got involved in 2008 when I retired," she said.

Yankee Quilters is a local charitable quilt group that has members and activities throughout the towns volunteer work delivering

quilts to patients at Dana Farber in Milford.

Hatch said the comfort quilts committee had been started two or three years before she joined the organization by Franklin resident Joan Hallet.

"I enjoy quilting and sharing the art form of it... And, I also enjoy the camaraderie of the friends I've made. It's a pretty tight-knit group... and I enjoy it today as much as I did back 16 years ago!" said the quilter.

Volunteer Susan Speers said having Hatch in the group has been wonderful.

"Diana is one of our more expert quilters, with a long history of sewing and always ready to lend a hand if someone has a question about a technique or a fabric," she said.

For those interested, Yankee Quilters will begin its program year on Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 7 p.m. at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in the Horace Mann Plaza in Franklin. Quilters from new to experienced are welcome to join throughout the year.

Yankee's Comfort Quilts team of dedicated members work together to create beautiful quilts for Dana Farber cancer patients, homeless/displaced children and for international aid groups through the "Wrap the World in Quilts" organization.

Yankee members also contribute quilt blocks for Quilts of Valor for veterans.

Each of these charity projects is a great opportunity for learning and practicing quilt skills with friendly volunteers using fabric provided by the guild.

Comfort Quilts meets Mondays 10 - 2 at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in Franklin.

Newcomers are encouraged to come and help get beautiful quilts into the hands of people who truly appreciate the gift. The nurses at Dana Farber - Milford recently sent a thank you note to the Yankee volunteers with confirmation that the quilts bring much joy. One nurse wrote "Our patients treasure them and feel the love. You all are making a difference."

In addition to monthly meetings on the second Tuesday, the group offers speaker programs, member "show and tell" demonstrations and opportunities to sew together throughout the year including a four-day sewing vacation in the spring. Updates are posted on the group's Facebook page.

In October, Yankee will collect used clothing, "soft goods" such as sheets and blankets, and books to raise funds for guild activities. Members use mostly donated materials to make these quilts; however, funds are needed



for batting which adds warmth and texture to the quilt. This fundraiser also helps pay for lectures to improve members' skills. The collection day will be Saturday, October 5th from 9 am to Noon at Prime Storage, Route 126, in Bellingham. Details are available by writing to Yankeequilters11@gmail.com for drop-off or pick-up.

The regular Guild meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 8, will include a potluck supper; and a presentation on quilts that Yankee volunteers have donated for children. The first meeting for newcomers is free; annual dues for new members are \$40; returning members \$30.

For those in Holliston, this year's Fall Staycation will be Friday Oct. 18, to Sunday Oct. 20, at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 600 Central St., Holliston. Three different craft techniques will be offered including a Scrappy Log Cabin pattern, Barn Quilt Painting on wood, and Glass Etching. Prices, food and sign-up information are posted on Yankee's page.

In November, a clinic on how to fix problem quilts will be given. Speakers Lynn Thibault of Leominster and Nancy Sullivan of Phillipston encourage members to bring quilts that need help, rulers that are difficult to use and questions about patterns.

For more information about any of these events, please contact YankeeQuilters11@gmail.com

Yankee Quilters Guild is a 501-c-3 charitable organization based in Franklin with members throughout the region. The Guild meets on the second Tuesday each month at Emma's Quilt Cupboard in Franklin, Horace Mann Plaza, East Central Street, Franklin in space generously donated by the store. Donations to the Guild are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by current law.

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Bringing Generations Together through Music

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

Since 2012, members of Sound & Spirit have been coming together to bridge the age gap, and bring sweet melodies to the community.

According to member Beth Barach, there are more than 100 members of the group.

“[We have] approximately 100 members across our three choirs kids, teens and adults. We also have an advanced readers ensemble for members who are looking for more challenging opportunities to grow within the choir,” said Barach.

Ranging in age from 8 to 80, rehearsals take place separately

during the holiday season,” she said.

From popular music to Broadway show tunes, the singers cover a lot of ground.

“Our members range not only in age but also in musical and

the shower or in the car. We are all brought together by our love and joy of music and our sense of community,” said Barach.

What makes this organization stand out from others?

“We are a nonprofit, inter-



generational choir, welcoming both aspiring and accomplished musicians of all ages. Serving the Metrowest community, the choir presents a wide variety of musical styles, creating joyful performances. We’re welcoming to all musicians, regardless of experience. No audition required! A truly magical group for all involved,” said Barach.

For those interested, there will be open rehearsals Sept. 4 and 11. Rehearsals take place at the common Street spiritual center in Natick, on Wednesdays. more information can be found here: soundandspirit.net.

“We are always [looking] to have new members join,” she said.

based on age groups, but the performances include everyone.

“We have two performances a year - a winter and spring show, but we also do other singing - such as caroling at nursing homes

performance experience - we have very experienced performers who read music and have performing experience to those who don’t read music and just sing in

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Struggling With Acne?

BY LISA MASSIMIANO,
LICENSED ESTHETICIAN AND
CERTIFIED ACNE SPECIALIST

If you have been diagnosed with acne and haven’t been satisfied with drug store products or the suggested treatment from your doctor, consider seeing an Acne Specialist.

What is an Acne Specialist?

An Acne Specialist is a licensed skin care professional who is specially trained to treat acne using a combination of clinical treatments, home care protocols and regular follow-up during the process of clearing acne prone skin.

Most physicians don’t have the time to spend educating patients on the root cause of their acne. They often prescribe oral antibiotics and strong topical retinoids that can leave skin dry, red and irritated. Patients get frustrated with these side effects and stop using the products.

How an Acne Specialist Can Help You.

An Acne Specialist will assess your individual skin type, and the type of acne you have,

to develop a plan of action specifically for you. They will take the time to teach you about the root cause of acne and provide information on lifestyle, diet, medications, and ingredients in makeup and skin care products that exacerbate acne. They help you to get your skin clear and teach you how to keep your acne under control.

For people struggling with acne, it can be frustrating to try and communicate with their doctor on a timely basis. My clients tell me that the best part of working with an Acne Specialist is that we are there for them to answer their questions and provide support while they go through the process of getting their skin clear.

Questions about acne? Email Lisa Massimiano, owner Skin Smart Salon and Acne Clinic at skinsmartsalon@aol.com or call 508 881-1180. Visit the website skinsmartsalon.com for information about Skin Smart’s acne program and other services.

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Sports

Hubbard Aims To Uphold Family Tradition In Football

Natick Captain Adept At Halfback, Linebacker

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Mark Mortarelli knows there's no worries about the kind of season Sam Hubbard will have for

and linebacker and was a teammate of Mortarelli. Hubbard's older brother (Jack), who played center, was a captain in 2022. His grandfather (Bob) was a 1954 NHS graduate who played foot-

“Like Sam, they were quiet, team-first players and tough as nails. Jack was an undersized center, but one of the best linemen in the league. Chris was really tough at guard and linebacker. He also was a terrific center on our hockey team and had a nose for the net.”

Hubbard, who also will be a captain in hockey, has definitely lived up to his relatives' excellence on the gridiron. He carved out a very impressive niche last year as a running back and linebacker. The 5-foot-8, 190-pound Hubbard, who rushed for 690 yards on 102 carries for 10 touchdowns, also excelled on defense, helping him earn berths on the BSC and Metrowest Daily News all-star teams as a junior.

“It's an honor for me to follow my grandfather, father and brother,” Hubbard said. “I'm excited about my final season and eager to uphold the family tradition.”

Hubbard's skills and techniques, coupled with his leadership ability, are attributes that Mortarelli admires.

“Sam is the definition of old-school,” he noted. “Quiet, dependable, tough as they come and a complete player, he runs very well between the tackles and has tremendous balance and vision. He's also very physical on

both sides of the ball. A punishing blocker on offense, he can also catch the ball. On defense, he has outstanding instincts and finds the ball very quickly. Sam will be one of the top players in the league this fall.”

Hubbard's goals for the 2024 campaign are not only impressive, but he also calls them “realistic.”

“I want us to improve daily by working hard and remaining dedicated,” he said. “I also want us to win the Carey Division title, beat Framingham, qualify for the playoffs and make a deep run. Personally, I want to be the best captain I can be, score more touchdowns, gain more yards, make more tackles, and repeat as a league all-star.”

Last year, the Redhawks compiled a 6-5 record, then lost in the first round of the playoffs to Methuen.

“My goals are realistic and we can go on a deep run because we're talented, have depth and are experienced,” Hubbard offered.

Three players Hubbard is sure will be prime contributors this season are Natick's other captains — Simon Pedrelli (tight end/defensive line), Nolan Cloutier (receiver/safety), and Ronnie Sadam (defensive line).

Hubbard, who intends to lead by example and by being communicative and supportive, is honored to be part of the Redhawks' leadership team. “Simon, Nolan and Ronnie are quality leaders and they're well-skilled,” he said. “They've also got experience, are athletic and also dedicated and determined.”

Hubbard also is upbeat about Mortarelli's ability to lead the Redhawks. “He's a great motivator,” he said, “and he not only knows the game, but he also gives



Sam Hubbard plans to play either football or hockey in college.

very inspiring pep talks.”

Relying on a high football IQ and field vision, Hubbard has no preference on what side of the ball he plays. He started at linebacker as a sophomore and last year started at linebacker and running back. Able to compete aggressively, Hubbard is adept at adjusting his style to a more analytical and finesse approach.

“I like being physical when running the ball,” he said. “And, I enjoy it when defenders miss tackling me. At linebacker, I like pursuing whoever has the ball and I like blitzing, hitting and getting sacks.”

Hubbard's best game so far was a decisive victory over Newton North last year when he excelled on both sides of the ball. “I scored four TDs, the longest for about 30 yards,” Hubbard recalled. “I also blocked and tackled well.”

As for his top thrill, Hubbard says his selection as a captain is No. 1. “Voted by the coaches and



Sam Hubbard rushed for 690 yards on 102 carries for 10 touchdowns last year.

Natick High's football team because the senior captain's bloodlines tell the Redhawks' coach all he needs to know.

The 17-year-old Hubbard is the fourth athlete in his family to play football for Natick. His father (Chris) was a captain during the 1990 season, played guard

ball and wrestled.

Chris and Jack were captains in football and hockey at NHS and were Bay State Conference all-stars in both sports,” Mortarelli said. “Chris graduated in 1991. His senior year we were 7-3 in football. We were 9-2 in Jack's junior year in 2021 and 6-5 his senior year.

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SPORTS

continued on page 13

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Sports

SPORTS

continued from page 12

my teammates shows trust,” he said. “I’m honored and I’m serious about providing leadership.”

A solid student, Hubbard has yet to decide where he’ll attend college and what he’ll major in. “I hope to play either football or hockey in college,” he said. “A Division 2 or 3 college is likely in my future.” Hubbard is an outstanding center in hockey. Last year, he scored 20 goals and had 10 assists and was named to the BSC all-star team.

Hubbard, who worked diligently all summer on strength and conditioning drills and seven-on-seven competition, relies on an athletic philosophy that combines winning, reaching one’s potential and having fun. “Reaching my potential and enjoying competition leads to winning but winning really results from hard work,” he said.

Life lessons learned in sports can be valuable and Hubbard

has a half dozen he recognizes. “Sports teach how to overcome adversity, how to lead and be a good teammate and how to be resilient,” he emphasized. “Accountability and how to manage time are other good lessons.”

Calling his parents (Chris and Sarah) role models for their support and encouragement, Hubbard is active when either the hockey or football teams get involved with community service. “I try to participate any time we have a fund-raiser or a food drive,” he said. “I’ve also helped to hang flags on Memorial Day.”

Bloodlines often reveal the extent of one’s abilities or how effective an individual can be in fulfilling goals and objective. In Hubbard’s case, his lineage speaks volumes about his athleticism and commitment.

For Sam Hubbard, a solid junior season is in the books and now the spotlight is on him to uphold and enhance the family tradition in what should be an outstanding senior season.

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Real Estate Corner

Kitchen Trends That Sell: Maximizing Value and Appeal



John McHugh

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

As I accompany buyers on home tours and consult with clients for market analyses, one question consistently arises: What is the potential of the

kitchen? With an overwhelming array of styles, choices, and options available, homeowners and prospective buyers alike are eager to strike the perfect balance between personal preference, increased value, and broad appeal. A well received article published in my newsletter explores how to create a kitchen that not only brings joy to its users but also enhances the property's value and salability; it's a great start!

As we navigate the ever-changing landscape of interior design, one thing remains constant - the kitchen is the heart of the home. Whether you're building from scratch or renovating your existing space, staying on top of the latest trends can make all the difference. Here are some kitchen trends that are making waves in 2024 and beyond.

Warm Tones as a Focal Point

Warm-toned kitchens can increase the perceived value of a home by 10-15% (source: Zillow) Gone are the days of all-white kitchens. This year, warm tones are taking center stage, bringing a sense of warmth and coziness to the space. From cream colored backsplash tiles to gold fixtures, incorporating warm hues can make your kitchen feel inviting and calming. Don't be afraid to experiment with different shades to find the perfect balance for your space.

Concrete Makes a Comeback

Concrete sinks and countertops can increase the durability and sustainability of a kitchen (source: Concrete Network) Concrete is having a moment in

kitchen design. Its subtle yet stylish appeal is making it a popular choice for homeowners looking to add a touch of modernity to their space. Consider swapping out traditional porcelain or stainless steel sinks for a concrete one, or opt for concrete countertops for a truly unique look.

Personalization is Key

Personalized kitchens can increase the emotional connection homeowners have with their space, leading to a 20-30% increase in satisfaction. (source: Harvard Business Review) In recent years, spotless countertops and a minimalist aesthetic have been all the rage. However, 2024 is shaping up to be the year of personalization in kitchen design. It's time to break free from the cookie-cutter look and make your kitchen truly yours. Add personal touches like family

photos, unique decor, and artwork to create a space that reflects your personality and style.

By incorporating these trends into your kitchen design, you'll be well on your way to creating a space that's both beautiful and functional. Remember, the most important thing is to listen to your heart and make your kitchen a reflection of your unique taste and style.

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John McHugh has been a Senior Agent with Coldwell Banker for 24 years • 978.902.5646 JohnSellsNow@Gmail.com JohnMcHughRealEstate.com

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Real Estate Corner

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08/09/2024	9 Emerson Street	\$1.22 mil
08/09/2024	192 Speen Street	\$860,000
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08/08/2024	14-14A Chester Street	\$920,000
08/07/2024	38 Pond Street	\$839,000
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08/01/2024	36 Walden Dr. #20	\$436,500
08/01/2024	8 Rockwood Road	\$2.15 mil
08/01/2024	28 Stacey St. #B	\$1.48 mil
07/31/2024	31 Jennings Pond Road	\$1.65 mil
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07/29/2024	16 Surrey Lane	\$910,000
07/29/2024	8 Allison Way	\$962,500
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07/24/2024	57 Algonquian Drive	\$1.46 mil
07/23/2024	7 Morgan Drive #309	\$795,000
07/19/2024	15 Walden Drive #16	\$375,000
07/19/2024	261 Eliot Street	\$1.00 mil
07/19/2024	91 Kendall Lane	\$1.24 mil
07/19/2024	3 Appleton Road	\$2.00 mil

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages



The 3-bed, 1-bath 1,228 square foot unit at 3 Appleton Road in Natick recently sold for \$2.0 million, according to zillow.com. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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