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Medway commemorates Veterans Day with Dr. Vincent Arone, former member of 42nd Bomber Squadron

103-year-old Hopedale resident recognized by local and state officials, shared memories

BY THERESA KNAPP

Medway VFW Post #1526 held a ceremony on Nov. 11 to commemorate Veterans Day, also known as Armistice Day. Their guest speaker was World War II veteran Dr. Vincent Arone of Hopedale.

The program also included local and state officials, religious leaders, patriotic songs sung by Medway High School students, and a presentation of a flag in memory of Marine John Kingsbury, Jr. (1923-1943), Medway's first veteran killed in action.

As is customary, the ceremony began on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to commemorate the 106th anniversary of the end of World War I.

Junior Vice Commander Robert Saleski served as Master of Ceremonies; he is also the Chairman of the Medway Memorial Committee.

Post Commander Kevin Belows welcomed the crowd.

"We gather today to show our gratitude to the veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Here, and across the nation, Americans are marking this day with expressions of respect for all who have worn the uniform of our country. This is a day of honor...We remember those who served America by fighting and dying on the field of battle, and we remember those veterans who have lived to serve America and their communities in many ways," said Commander Belows.



Dr. Vincent Arone, age 103, of Hopedale was the guest speaker at Medway's Veterans Day program on Nov. 11. He is the last surviving member of his aircrew from the Belle of Texas. Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

"Veterans know that duty and sacrifice are more than words, they know the cost of freedom, they know the time spent away

VETERANS
continued on page 2

Millis Senior Center to host Holiday Tea and performance

On Dec. 10, the Millis Senior Center will host a tea and performance to celebrate the holidays. Over lunch, guests will step into Victorian America to explore holiday traditions as well as some conundrums

and joys of life during the age of corsets, calling cards, and decorum.

The event will take place at

HOLIDAY TEA
continued on page 2



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HOLIDAY TEA

continued from page 2

the Millis Senior Center, 900 Main St., Millis from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and will include tea, sandwiches, and treats.

Tea attire (e.g. hats, gloves) is encouraged but not required.

Fictional character "The Etiquette Expert of 1890" will be their guide. Guests will sip tea and nibble on sandwiches and treats, as they discover the intricacies of Victorian tea etiquette, fan language, fashion for men and women, the tribulations of the middle-class mother and father, a courtship catastrophe, holiday traditions, and more.

Janet Parnes of Historical Portrayals by Lady J will portray "The Etiquette Expert of 1890." A Millis resident, Janet portrayed Frances Perkins at the Millis Senior Center earlier this year.

The event is free to attend, but registration is required. To register, call the Millis Senior Center at 508-376-7051.

VETERANS

continued from page 1

from family and friends and the names and faces of the men and women who have paid for it. If you are a veteran, you stand watch over the memory of great events and of brave Americans... You have a special place in the

life of America and America is proud of you," he said.

State Proclamation

Massachusetts Senate President Karen Spilka thanked the VFW for hosting the event and presented a proclamation, signed by Governor Maura Healey, declaring the day to be Veterans Day. She also thanked Dr. Arone for his service, noting her father

had served in World War II. "It's really special to have you here, Dr. Arone, to share; and thank you so much from the bottom of all of our hearts."

Sen. Spilka said Massachusetts is known nationwide as having the strongest laws related to its 300,000 veterans and their families. She said the state legislature, in August, passed the

"HERO Act" which is "the most comprehensive veterans legislation in over 20 years." It expands benefits to Massachusetts veterans and their families. [see page 4]

"In Flanders Field"

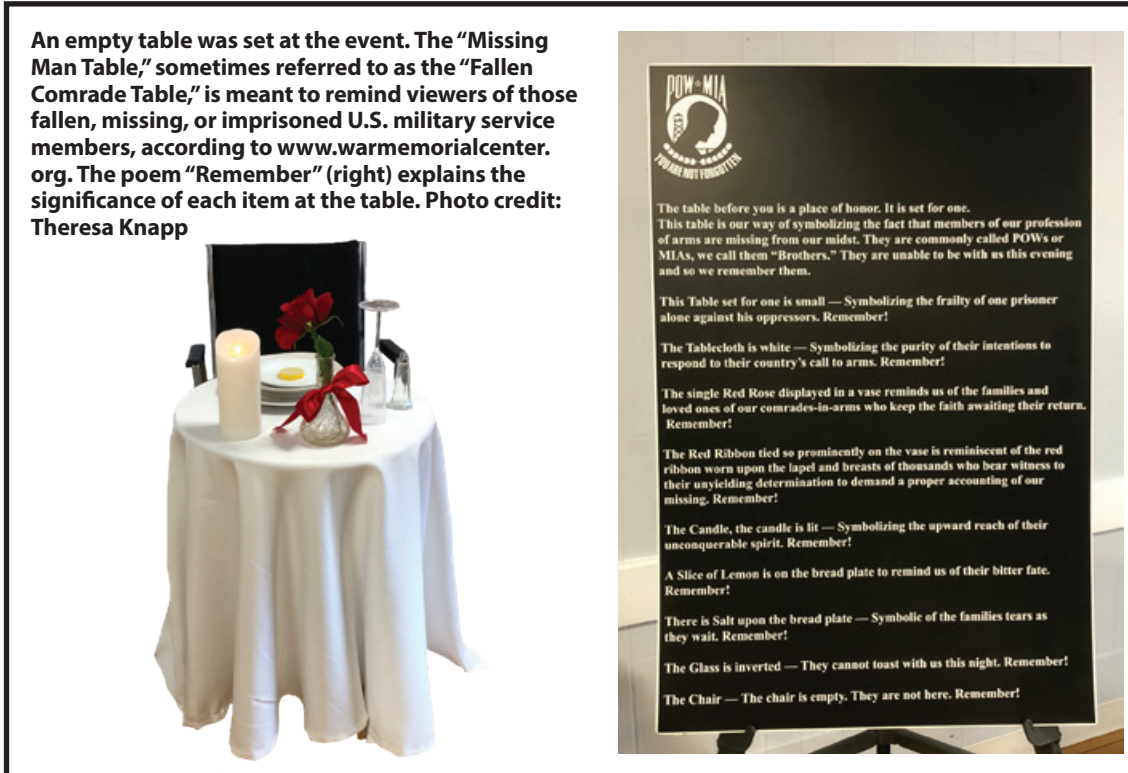
Medway Memorial Committee's Richard Parrella, wearing a red poppy on his lapel, read the poem "In Flanders Field" by Lt. Col. John McCrae.

According to the American Legion Auxiliary, after the poem was published in 1915, the red poppy became a symbol of the blood shed by those who fought and those who continue to fight for our country.

"Missing Man Table"

JVC Saleski explained the significance of the empty table set for one at the front of the room. "That is set up in remembrance of what they consider to be a missing man or POW [prisoner of war]."

Commander Bellows read the poem "Remember," which explains the significance of each part of the display, including the



VETERANS
continued on page 3

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VETERANS

continued from page 2

small table, white tablecloth, single red rose, red ribbon, lighted candle, slice of lemon, salt, inverted glass, and empty chair.

the rank of Staff Sergeant and received many decorations and commendations. At 103 years old, he is the last surviving member of his aircrew on the Belle of Texas.

“I appreciate you inviting me to be here,” said Dr. Arone. “I’ve got some very interesting stories

lice Group; and Tarawa, part of the Gilbert Islands in the Central Pacific. He recalled the physical strength needed to navigate the plane (it took two men), and the logistics of being able to fly only 1,000 miles before running out of fuel.

He told the story about invading Tarawa.

“The United States decided

that, because [Tarawa] was such an important fortified island, that they would have to invade it and they sent, believe it or not, 17 aircraft carriers, 12 battleships, 12 cruisers, 66 destroyers, 36 transporters to get the soldiers on the island, and it was just a horror,” said Dr. Arone. “We lost 1,037 boys, American boys were killed in the first hour because of the

riptide.”

He said the transporters were supposed to bring 1,000 men to shore but could not because of the coral reef, so the soldiers had to wade to shore, carrying 60 pounds of equipment.

“The short of it is that 1,037

VETERANS

continued on page 4



Medway High School students Nora Keavany and AnneMarie Schmitt sang patriotic songs at the event. Photo credit: Medway Cable

Town Proclamation

Medway Select Board member Glenn Trindade read a proclamation from the board extending its deepest gratitude to all United States veterans and their service.

to tell but, with time constraints, I can’t tell them all.”

Dr. Arone was born and raised in Watertown, Mass. He knew he would be drafted so he had his father take him to enlist. The government asked what job he wanted and he said he would like to fly an airplane. He had one year of extensive training and was then sent to the Central Pacific.

He told many stories, and included many fun facts - including many U.S. planes were named after characters in the comic strip Li'l Abner by cartoonist Al Capp - but he primarily focused on his time in Funafuti, part of the EL-

Guest Speaker

Dr. Vincent Arone

Mr. Parella introduced Dr. Arone who was a member of the Army Air Force from Sept. 22, 1942 to Dec. 31, 1945.

Dr. Arone served in the Central Pacific Theater as a radio operator and belly gunner on the aircrew of the 42nd Bomber Squadron on a four-engine bomber aircraft. He achieved

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VETERANS

continued from page 3

boys were killed the first hour, it was horrible," said Dr. Arone. "And here we were in the sky looking for a place to land because we didn't have enough fuel [to get back to Funafuti after a bombing mission in Nauru]. And we were told Tarawa was 700 miles closer to our home base so let's go to Tarawa. We didn't know we were supposed to invade on the same day."

Dr. Arone recalled trying to rescue fellow soldiers in distress. "The Dog Patch Express was one of the ships that was hit. For some reason or other, the Japanese were waiting...They shot the plane down and I took pictures of it going down and cracking up into three places and sank immediately."

Dr. Arone's commanding officer said they would go back to help. "We knew all of the 10 guys, I still remember their names - Shopko, Paradise - and they all died. I think they were saying their rosary beads at the waist windows when they real-



Private First Class Marine John G. Kingsbury, Jr. of Medway was the town's first veteran killed in action. The Kingsbury family presented the memorial flag and purple heart presented to the family after the soldier's death to VFW Post #1526 and the Medway Memorial Committee. Here, VFW Post Commander Kevin Bellows accepts the gifts and entrusts them to Medway Historical Society President Sheila Dubrawski for permanent preservation. Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

ized it was the end. And they did, they sank, immediately."

Dr. Arone recalled making history when they landed the Belle of Texas with the help of parachutes.

The aircraft had come under heavy fire on one of their return trips and they had to make an emergency landing. The hydraulic system was out, and the guns and radio weren't working.

"We had the tail gunner and the two waist gunners blow parachutes to slow us down because the runway was only 4,400 square feet and you need at least 5,000 to land a plane...We landed with the parachute and there were some Seabees swim-

ming, in their birthday suits, who saw the parachutes open and they rushed to the scene."

Dr. Arone was stuck in the ball turret and it took some time to get him out. The Seabees helped repair the aircraft. "They counted 300 hits on the airplane, it's unheard of."

Dr. Arone summarized his speech by saying, "The short of it is that we took the island back, we kept it, and we won the war."

Marine John Gilbert Kingsbury, Jr., Medway's first veteran killed in action

Private First Class Marine John Gilbert Kingsbury, Jr. was

Medway's first veteran killed in action (July 1943). At the event on Nov. 11, PFC Kingsbury's cousins donated the memorial flag and purple heart that were given to the Kingsbury family after the soldier's death. The items were presented to the VFW and the Medway Memorial Committee, and were then given to the Medway Historical Society for permanent preservation.

Medway Historical Society President Sheila Dubrawski accepted the donation. "We're honored to hold these and preserve these and cherish these items along with the other mili-



Senate President Karen Spilka presented a proclamation from Governor Maura Healey declaring Nov. 11, 2024, to be Veterans Day. Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

tary items from our brave soldiers from Medway, thank you."

The hour-long program concluded with a luncheon.

To watch a full recording of the event, visit bit.ly/Medway-CableArone2024.

Massachusetts' HERO Act was signed into law in August 2024

The HERO Act is the most comprehensive and expansive legislative package dedicated to the welfare of veterans in Massachusetts history, according to www.mass.gov.

- Benefits include:
- Expands behavioral health treatment
 - Increases the disabled veteran annuity
 - Increases the Vet-Hire Tax Credit
 - Extends Active-Duty Buyback Program
 - Prevents the [cost of living] "COLA Cliff"
 - Increases local flexibility for veterans property tax exemptions
 - Protects access to sales tax exemption
 - Increases support for military-connected students
 - Creates a Military Family Advocacy Program
 - Broadens the Chapter 115 definition of veteran
 - Expands the scope of the Veterans Equality Review Board
 - Expands the definition of veteran dependent
 - Codifies dental assistance benefits
 - Codifies medical assistance benefits
 - Codifies authority for veterans cemeteries
 - Modernizes statute language
 - Initiates a study on alternative therapies for mental health
 - Expands Gold Star Families Recognition
 - Establishes United States Space Force Day (Dec. 20)
 - Establishes United States Merchant Marine Day (May 22)

The HERO Act also updates the half-staff flag requirement which requires flags to be flown at half-staff from the day of death until the day of interment for any military service member residing in Massachusetts.

For full details, visit www.mass.gov/info-details/hero-act.

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Fiddle & Find: Children's Consignment Boutique Delivers Stylish and Sustainable Fashion

BY: JENNIFER RUSSO

Right in the heart of Holliston is a new must-visit hotspot for parents and caregivers seeking stylish and affordable clothing for their kids. Much more than your average consignment shop, Fiddle & Find offers a carefully curated selection of gently worn, high-quality children's apparel.

Though some may associate consignment stores with large rooms of racks crammed too full of dated secondhand items, walking into Fiddle & Find gives that instant boutique experience, with a light, bright color palette and expertly displayed outfits that are on-trend and look brand new. There are even some items that are new with tags. The shop sells clothing in infant sizes through children's size 12/14, and, like any specialty clothing store, rotates its selection to match the season. There is also a selection of toys and infant items, maternity items, and some athletic wear.

The boutique is owned and operated by Caitlin Shannon, a pediatric and labor and delivery nurse with a passion for sustainability.

"I love nursing and will never give up my nursing license, but I was itching for a change," shares Caitlin.

With inspiration from a consignment shop in New Hampshire she loves, Caitlin decided to launch a similar business herself, bringing to the area something that she felt would be valuable for busy and budget-conscious families who love a good buy.



"I honestly think the future is consignment. Having kids of my own, I love shopping this way. I come from a background of really enjoying retail, but also understanding the importance of being frugal. While I think it's great to splurge sometimes on something new, there is so much waste, and kids grow so quickly out of their clothing sizes. Consignment teaches them to be eco-friendly and promotes being strategic about how we shop," says Caitlin.

Calling the shop Fiddle & Find came from a conversation with a good friend. Caitlin really wanted to focus on all the great finds that would be a part of the shop and then the popular nursery rhyme *Hey Diddle Diddle, The Cat and the Fiddle* gave some inspiration for a fun, kid-centered name.

Safety and sanitation are a priority, and the store does not sell any items with an imperfection of any kind. Pre-washed clothing donations in great condition are accepted and consigners are able to receive 40% on the sale price of items when they complete a consigner contract. Anything that is not curated for resale at the shop is donated to



Fiddle & Find offers a consignment boutique experience. Come in and see what they have today - you never know what you'll find!

nearby Project Just Because in Hopkinton. So really, it helps people in more ways than one.

This is important to Caitlin, who is passionate about growing the community. This is really such a great spot to be in – "I did a pop-up with Green Compass recently and I've collaborated with The Bird & Bear Collective which is just down the street. I also collaborated with The Herd, a postpartum support group, on a Fall Flip/Mom's Night Out event. I am looking forward to doing more things like this so people can benefit from all of these great businesses in town," she shares.

Available now in store is a beautiful winter collection, with lots of brand name long-sleeved shirts and pants, outerwear, snow-play clothing, boots, and more. The selection is constantly changing, and you never know what you'll find at Fiddle & Find, but that's the fun part!

To learn more about Fiddle & Find, you can check out their website at www.fiddleandfind-kids.com and follow their Facebook and Instagram accounts at @FiddleandFindKids

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Happy Hatter Diner ... fresh food with a friendly smile

Dermot Doran doesn't listen to naysayers. When he decided to open the Happy Hatter Diner in the Medway Plaza in 2022 people said he was crazy to start such a risky business on the heels of the pandemic. "Well, I might be a little crazy but I know what I'm good at.... I'm a great cook and I love running a restaurant where people feel at home."



Originally from Castledermot Ireland, Dermot speaks with a heavy brogue that is both disarming and welcoming. "I have been working in the restaurant business most of my life, in Ireland I began at age 16 and worked my way up to head chef."

Beyond his experience in the kitchen, Dermot also brought along his brand of Irish hospitality "Back home we treat everyone like an old friend, I like to think that's a special gift I brought with me to the Happy Hatter," he said.

Although his journey has had its bumps, the support of the Medway community has kept him pushing forward.

Since the beginning he's been working to overcome limited visibility from Route 109 traffic. Add to that the recent construction at the plaza and one can see why the presence of regulars has been so important.

"I started this place on a shoestring... and if it were not for local folks, I'm not sure I would have made it." But now, after 2 years in business, the positive signs are finally all around him.

"I've found that Medway folks love an underdog and they really love fresh, home cooked meals. I am a stickler

for fresh ingredients and careful preparation. I cook every meal myself and I love to see people coming back as regulars...it's the ultimate compliment."

It's true that repeat customers are the lifeblood of every restaurant and, judging by the familiar faces he sees weekly, the list of regulars just keeps growing.

One of the things that separates Happy Hatter from a typical diner is the menu. Although the stuffed omelettes and jumbo breakfasts are his signature, Dermot's menu is an amazing collection of freshness and unexpected variety.

From lobster rolls to corned beef paninis and daily prime rib to fish and chips, he's got all the bases covered. In fact, one area that the Happy Hatter really shines is with its gluten-free menu.

"There's no reason that people with gluten intolerance can't enjoy a great meal...we take the gluten out but leave the flavor in. People tell me all the time that they appreciate



Dermot Doran, owner and head chef.

our focus on special diets."

Like every great eatery, the staff is friendly and welcoming. There's a team atmosphere that makes guests feel right at home. It's not unusual to hear the greeting "welcome back my friend!...what can I get you?" or, "are you having the usual today?" as patrons walk through the door.

So what's next for Dermot and the Happy Hatter? "I'm going to keep doing what I do best...serving up great food

with great prices in a friendly environment...that's been the key to success so far and I plan to keep building on it."

The Happy Hatter is located at 98 Main Street (Route 109) in the Medway Plaza. (12 doors to the right of Ocean State Job Lot) The diner is open Mon.-Sun.7-5. Take-out is always available by calling 508-538-8035.

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Consider these year-end financial moves



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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As we enter the holiday season, your life may well become busier. Still, you might want to take the time to consider some financial moves before we turn the calendar to 2025.

Here are a few suggestions:

- **Review your investment portfolio.** As you look at your portfolio, ask these questions: Has its perfor-

mance met my expectations this year? Does it still reflect my goals, risk tolerance and time horizon? Do I need to rebalance? You might find that working with a financial professional can help you answer these and other questions you may have about your investments.

- **Add to your 401(k) and HSA.** If you can afford it, and your employer allows it, consider putting more money into your 401(k) before the year ends — including “catch-up” contributions if you’re 50 or older. You might also want to add to your health savings account (HSA) by the tax-filing deadline in April.
- **Use your FSA dollars.** Unlike an HSA, a flexible spending account (FSA) works on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis, meaning you lose any unspent funds at the end of the year. So, if you still have funds left in your account,

try to use them up in 2024. (Employers may grant a 2½ month extension, so check with your human resources area to see if this is the case where you work.)

- **Contribute to a 529 plan.** If you haven’t opened a 529 education savings plan for your children, think about doing so this year. With a 529 plan, your earnings can grow tax deferred, and your withdrawals are federally tax free when used for qualified education expenses — tuition, fees, books and so on. And if you invest in your own state’s 529 plan, you might be able to deduct your contributions from your state income tax or receive a state tax credit.
- **Build your emergency fund.** It’s generally a good idea to keep up to six months’ worth of living expenses in an emergency fund, with the money held in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a

fund in place, you might be forced to dip into your retirement funds to pay for short-term needs, such as a major car or home repair.

- **Review your estate plans.** If you’ve experienced any changes in your family situation this year, such as marriage, remarriage or the birth of a child, you may want to update your estate-planning documents to reflect your new situation. It’s also important to look at the beneficiary designations on your investment accounts, retirement plans, IRAs and insurance policies, as these designations can sometimes even supersede the instructions you’ve left in your will. And if you haven’t started estate planning, there’s no time like the present.
- **Take your RMDs.** If you’re 73 or older, you will likely need to take withdrawals — called required minimum distri-

butions, or RMDs — from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA. If you don’t take these withdrawals each year, you could be subject to penalties.

These aren’t the only moves you can make, but they may prove helpful not only for 2024 but in the years to come.

Contact Mark today to discuss this topic or any of your financial goals.

Mark Freeman, CEPA
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BY LINDA CHUSS

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Business spotlight

home for the season. "Life is hectic, we are all so busy in our daily lives that we don't notice how quickly we are being overrun with junk" said Jason Schadler, who founded the business in this area 20 years ago. "It's nice to park your car in the garage during the cold months, but maybe you need to make room there first, and we can help with that."

With Affordable Junk Removal, you can rent a dumpster or have their Junk Removal Professionals come to haul away items that have been gathering dust and taking up precious space. Setting an end-of-year or New Year's resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. You can even put a dumpster rental on your gift list. Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing where to begin, and that is where Affordable comes in.

"You can load your own dumpster or have our truck guys do all of the work for you," Schadler explained. "And rest assured, we don't just take everything to the landfill. We try and recycle as much as possible. Clothing and household items are donated to local organiza-



tions that help our friends and neighbors. We also take some items to Resellables secondhand store in Bellingham. That keeps them out of landfills, gives them a new life, and helps us keep our prices down. We're always looking for ways to be more cost effective because customers appreciate our reasonable prices."

Changes in legislation have made it increasingly more difficult to dispose of certain items, like mattresses, for example. It is now state law that most textiles and mattresses must be recycled. "Finding places to take mattresses is a challenge and the fees for disposal have gone through the roof," said Schadler. Items like these carry a separate recycling fee that the commercial transfer stations charge because of how labor intensive that recycling is. "People are usually shocked at the cost, and we find ourselves educating the customer as to why these fees exist. Here at

Affordable, we view ourselves as an avenue our clients can turn to when they have these items and want them disposed of legally, safely and properly."

Affordable has many repeat customers. "When people call, they reach me, not some automated corporate call center," he said. "They know me and the crew and trust us. We do a good job, are fast, efficient, and reliable. We come when we say we will and if anything unexpected comes up, we communicate. We live here too, we are your friends and neighbors, we sponsor your little league teams and run into you at the grocery store. We are your local guys." A quick look at the many years of positive online reviews attests to this.

For more information, visit AffordableJunkRemoval.com. For an estimate or appointment, call or text 774-287-1133.

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Your Money, Your Independence

Holiday Cheer and Roth Conversions: A Gift to Your Future Self



Glenn Brown, CFP

However, once in a Roth, it gifts:

- Tax-free growth
- Tax-free withdrawals in retirement
- Removal of Required Minimum Distributions
- Tax-free distributions for non-spousal beneficiaries

Make Modeling a Roth Conversion Joyous.

Just as giving perfect holiday gifts require planning, so does Roth conversion.

In working with clients, ideally we build or update their Roth conversion model in February or March using prior year data with intentions of waiting until December to run again with actual tax data and execute.

Beyond the adage “measure twice, cut once” and making it less stressful during the holidays, this provides readiness for opportunities. One such example is converting in a steep market decline during the year. If you’re going to hang onto the same security/strategy, why not convert some at a lower value (equals less taxation) and allow for time to bring price recovery inside the Roth IRA instead?

How You Model Makes a Difference

Modeling a Roth conversion is like preparing a delicious holiday feast - attention to detail and coordinated foresight can make all the difference. Beyond current tax situation, age, goals, and cash to pay taxes, there are several future questions to answer in analysis.

In the near-term, will future years have lower taxable earnings to more favorably convert? Will your state of residence change and if so, does your taxation change? What are projected growth rates for Roth, are they more aggressive? Should they be?

For retirement, have you projected RMDs at age 73 (75) and resulting new tax bracket? Does conversion help or hurt Social Security and Medicare taxation?

What’s your expectation of future taxation by governments?

What are your estate planning wishes?

Respect The Grinch

The pro-rata rule. When converting, the IRS combines all traditional IRA balances and asks about nondeductible contributions, as this portion is not taxable. Understand the IRS doesn’t allow for conversion of just after-tax money.

It is what it is. Once a Roth Conversion is done, it’s done, as IRS no longer lets you unwind (recharacterize).

Not all-or-nothing. You can

develop a plan to spread conversions over several years, even skip a year or two as needed pending AGI levels and ability to pay the IRS with non-IRA assets.

The Gift of Time and Independence

Consistent and well-timed Roth conversions can be the gifts that keeps on giving — tax-free growth, tax-free withdrawals, and the peace of mind that comes with control.

May the holiday season bring you good cheer and health throughout the coming year.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general infor-

mation only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of Plan-Dynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. 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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Ah, the holiday season... a time for joy, gratitude and (unfortunately) for some the ritual of cramming late nights to ensure they don’t pay more in taxes than necessary now and in retirement.

Sure, they could be planning for family get-togethers, attending holiday parties with friends or enjoying eggnog by the fire. But no, that’s all too festive and cheerful.

Instead, they build spreadsheets, search IRS interpretations, and obsess about miscalculating their household adjusted gross income (AGI) and threshold \$ amount to convert to a Roth IRA. Then when the time comes to execute the conversion, there is a feeling of dread. Like that of being outside in the freezing cold and “tripled dog-dared” to stick their tongue to a metal pole.

Let’s discuss a better (and safer) way.

What Is a Roth Conversion?

At its core, Roth conversion is like wrapping up retirement savings into a tidy, tax-advantaged gift package. You take funds from a traditional IRA or 401(k) — accounts taxed when you withdraw in retirement — and convert them into a Roth IRA. In doing so, you pay taxes on the converted amount now at your income brackets.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

WE'VE GOT THE GIFTS!

BY GINA WOELFEL

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio is your holiday headquarters this year! Move over, Santa—b.LUXE is “sleighbing” the holiday season with the gifts everyone secretly (or not-so-secretly) wants!

Ah, the holidays, where the only thing more tangled than that string of lights is our to-do lists!

Well, think of b.LUXE as your festive fairy godmothers! With just the click of a button, our Holiday Gift Card Packages simplify your shopping and take the hassle out of your holiday hustle.

This season's Gift Card Packages add a touch of magic to every holiday wishlist. Treat your loved ones (or yourself!) to an experience not soon forgotten. This year, b.LUXE offers a specially priced **Luxury Hair Treatment Package for \$100**, a **Scalp Spa Package for \$100**, and our **Ultimate Facial Package for \$150**. These aren't just gifts—they're the moments of relaxation and beauty we all need.

Still undecided about a gift? Let your loved one choose their own service with a **Custom Gift Card!** We offer options to fit every style and budget, and our gift cards can be purchased in any amount. This year, skip the crowded malls and long lines and give the gift of glamour. After all, nothing says “Happy Holidays” like looking and feeling your best!

Each gift card purchase includes an entry into our **Weekly \$100 Spa Gift Card Giveaway!** Starting November 30th, one lucky winner will be drawn each week for a chance to win! So grab your gift cards today. (Last drawing on December 21st!) b.LUXE and our merry little elves have wrapped this season in beauty and style! So, stay cozy, and let us make this your easiest holiday season ever!

The b.LUXE Team wishes you a joyful and healthy holiday season surrounded by family, friends, and peace.

We look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

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- Heather Cohen, Owner b.LUXE



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Keep an Eye Out For Signs of a Rodent Infestation This Fall

WPC Pest and Termite Control and the National Pest Management Association are sharing the top seven signs that rodents have taken up residence in your home

PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS

It's that time of year again — football season, trips to your local farm, and crisp, fall weather.

But before you break out your favorite pumpkin spice-flavored treats, it's important to remember to keep alert for uninvited guests looking to join in on the fun. As temperatures begin to cool,

WPC Pest and Termite Control, in partnership with the National Pest Management Association, is sharing signs homeowners should look out for that could signal a rodent infestation.

"Disgusting odors that permeate from insulation in attics and basements are a sure sign that rodents are present," said Jim Mazzuchelli, owner of WPC. "While rodent infestations are common throughout the year, they are particularly troublesome as colder weather arrives and food sources diminish. These stark changes to their environment make homes the ideal spot for them to hide out in.

Rodents are able to transmit more than 35 diseases to humans, posing a serious health

threat to you and your family should they find their way into your homes insulation. Contamination from urine and droppings will cause serious respiratory issues, such as the deadly **Hantavirus**.

To help keep your family protected this fall, WPC is offering **FREE** rodent inspections and suggestions on decontaminating your home.

WPC and the NPMA have identified the following top seven telltale signs of a rodent infestation:

- **Droppings:** Finding droppings in the home is one of the most common signs of a rodent infestation. Homeowners often find these where food is stored, such as kitchen cabinets or pantries, as well as under sinks, inside chewed cardboard boxes and along baseboards.
- **Gnaw marks:** Rodents will chew through almost any type of material to obtain food or water, causing serious damage to a home. Rats are also known to gnaw on wires behind walls, potentially resulting in dangerous house fires.
- **Nests:** Rodents prefer to hide in dark, secluded areas

of the home and will use any materials available to build their nest. If you see items such as paper products or cotton strewn about, it might be a sign of a rodent infestation.

- **Tracks or rub marks:** As rats follow a trail between their nest and food sources throughout a home, they will often leave dark grease or dirt marks along walls and floorboards.
- **Strange noises:** Hearing strange noises at night could be attributed to a family of mice scurrying about the house, between the walls and up in attics and crawlspaces.
- **An actual rodent:** Mice are known to reproduce quickly, as a female house mouse can give birth to a half-dozen babies every three weeks or up to 35 young per year. Chances are, if you see one mouse in the house, there are more hidden behind the walls!



- **Contamination:** Odors and staining of ceiling tiles and basement insulation is a sign of what could be droppings and urine caused by nesting rodents having their young.

For more information about

rodent infestations, visit www.nobugsnopests.com or CALL 508-435-2211 or contact a licensed pest control professional.

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Living Healthy

Government Oversight in Ensuring Ethical Referrals Between Optometrists and Ophthalmologists

Ethical referral practices between optometrists and ophthalmologists are vital to maintaining trust in the medical profession and safeguarding patient welfare. However, financial incentives, kickbacks, and other self-serving practices often threaten these principles. In such cases, government intervention becomes essential to uphold ethical standards and enforce legal compliance. High-profile cases, such as those in Rhode Island, Texas, and Louisiana, highlight the significance of government oversight in addressing violations and protecting patients.

The Importance of Patient-Centered Referrals

Optometrists are ethically and legally obligated to prioritize patient well-being when making referrals. Considerations like quality of care, proximity, and insurance network compat-

ibility should guide these decisions. Unfortunately, certain practices undermine this ethical standard:

Referrals Outside the Insurance Network

Some optometrists refer patients to providers outside their insurance networks, leading to avoidable out-of-pocket expenses. When motivated by financial gain or kickbacks, such referrals prioritize profits over patient interests.

Conditional Referrals Based on Financial Agreements

In some cases, referrals are tied to agreements where ophthalmologists return patients post-surgery, regardless of clinical necessity. Often, these arrangements include expectations of eyeglass purchases from the referring optometrist's office.

Quid Pro Quo Referrals

Financial incentives between

optometrists and ophthalmologists create biased referral patterns. These quid pro quo arrangements prioritize mutual financial benefit rather than the best interests of the patient.

Referrals to Office-Based Cataract Surgery (OBS)

Optometrists sometimes refer patients to ophthalmologists performing surgeries in office-based settings instead of accredited centers. These office setups lack MD anesthesiologists, compromise emergency readiness, and charge extra fees not covered by Medicare. Patients are frequently unaware of these risks or additional costs, leaving them vulnerable to suboptimal care.

Government's Role in Preventing Unethical Practices

To counter unethical referrals, federal laws like the Anti-Kickback Statute and the False



Claims Act (FCA) play a crucial role:

Anti-Kickback Statute

This law prohibits any form of payment or incentive to influence referrals. For example, in Rhode Island, Dr. Paul Koch faced allegations of accepting kickbacks for patient referrals. The government's investigation resulted in a settlement, underscoring the importance of holding violators accountable.

False Claims Act (FCA)

Referring patients out of network for financial gain can lead to fraudulent billing practices. In Texas and Louisiana, healthcare providers faced legal action for filing false claims tied

to unethical referral arrangements, resulting in significant settlements.

Education and Monitoring as Preventative Measures

Governmental agencies like the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and state Attorneys General must promote transparency in referral practices. Routine audits, mandatory reporting, and educational initiatives help identify and prevent unethical behavior. Collaboration between professional societies, licensing boards, and regulatory bodies

EYES

continued on page 13

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Millis Senior Center December Events

The Millis Senior Center is located at 900 Main Street on the lower level of the Veterans Memorial Building. The Center is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30-4:00 PM, and Fridays 8:30-12:30 PM. For more information call (508) 376-7051. www.millisma.gov/council-aging

Boxwood Tree Making

Make a tabletop boxwood tree to add to your holiday decor.

All materials provided. Bring clippers if you have them.

Cost: \$10 at time of sign-up. 1 tree per person.

Monday, December 2 at 1:00 PM. Sign up: (508) 376-7051

Victorian Tea: The Etiquette Expert Of 1890

Janet Parnes will transport us back to Victorian America in this historical performance about tea etiquette, fan language, courtship, and holiday traditions of the past for ladies and gentlemen. Hats and gloves are welcomed! Teatime treats.

Tuesday, December 10 at 12:00 PM. Sign up: (508) 376-7051

Medway Garden Club create Thanksgiving centerpieces

The November meeting of the Medway Garden Club had the members delightfully engaged in creating Thanksgiving centerpieces with step-by-step instructions from the proprietors of Ole Exit 17 Farm in Franklin.

December will find the club continuing the traditional Holiday Party and Yankee swap. This year, the party will also feature cookies to enjoy and swap. In January the club will enjoy a night of pampering at Molly's Apothecary.

The Medway Garden Club is a community organization that brings together gardening enthusiasts of all skill levels. The club's mission is to provide a social and educational experience for members and support garden-related civic development in Medway.

Explore With Susan: D-Day

On June 12, 1941 the Japanese Navy launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor to cripple the U.S. Fleet in the Pacific. President Roosevelt declared it "a day which will live in infamy". Susan will present a video that will discuss the events and losses of that day and explore the legacy that still resonates in our history.

Thursday, December 19 at 10:00 AM

New Year's Eve At Noon Party

Countdown to 2025 starting at 11:00 AM with light bites, desserts, and live music by Millis' Mike Tarara!

Tuesday, December 31 at 11:00 AM. Sign up: (508) 376-7051

Stay Warm This Winter

Contact Lisa Kirby, Senior Services/Outreach Coordinator at Millis Senior Center (508) 376-7051 for assistance with home heating, food resources, and housing.



(L to R) Dale Bickford, Wendy Joseph, Jennifer McPhee, Kathy Brink. Courtesy photo

The club maintains various town garden areas, including the Medway Public Library, police and fire stations, planter boxes at 176 Main St, and traffic islands at the intersection of Holliston Street and Route 109. Please like and follow us on Facebook @MedwayGardenClub. New members are always welcome.

EYES

continued from page 12

can establish clearer guidelines and ensure widespread compliance. If you sense unethical referral by your optometrist you are encouraged to refer this optometrist to the OIG.

Ensuring Ethical Referrals: Questions Patients Should Ask

Patients can protect themselves by asking critical questions when receiving referrals from an optometrist to a specific ophthalmologist and no one else:

- Why are you referring me to this specific ophthalmologist or surgeon?
- Why aren't you giving me a choice of multiple ophthalmologists/ surgeons so I can choose based on my best interest?
- Is the surgeon you're referring me to within my insurance network?
- Why not refer me to a local ophthalmologist who is closer and in-network?

- Does the surgeon perform surgeries in a licensed, accredited center or an office-based setting?

- Are there additional out-of-pocket costs for the recommended surgery in this ophthalmologist office-based surgery center?

- Is the surgeon local, or part of a distant franchise practice?

- Where will I be seen in case of an emergency—locally or hours away?

- My neighbors and friends had excellent results with local ophthalmologists—why not refer me to one of them?

Asking these questions empowers patients to make informed decisions about their care.

The Milford-Franklin Eye Center Difference

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center and the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, our mission is clear: to provide ethical, patient-focused care in a licensed and accredited surgery center closer to home. Our local

ophthalmologists are in-network, community-based, and have served the region for over 40 years.

Unlike office-based surgery models, our accredited and licensed surgery center features:

- A full-time MD anesthesiologist for every procedure.
- IV-based anesthesia for optimal safety and comfort.
- No hidden fees or out-of-pocket costs for Medicare-covered procedures.

Patients being referred for cataract surgery in office-based settings are advised to seek a second opinion. Always question what your optometrist recommends. If you have doubts, call us. We will answer your questions. At our center, you'll receive world-class care close to home. Our commitment to your safety and well-being is unwavering. You always come first.

For more details, see our ad on page 12.

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December Events at the Medway Senior Center

Purchase Tribute Bricks:
Honor your loved ones by purchasing a tribute brick that will be engraved and added to the Center's front patio. Order forms are available now at the Medway Senior Center. The inscription can be up to 20 characters per line with a max of 3 lines. The cost is \$100.00 per brick.

Homeland Security Investigations

Common Fraud Schemes Targeting the Elderly
Anyone can be the victim of financial scams, but older individuals are common targets. Homeland Security Investigations (HIS) is the investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. They protect the public from crimes of victimization, focusing on individuals and networks who target vulnerable populations. On Wednesday, December 4th, at 10:00 AM, Sean Garvey, Assistant Special Agent in Charge HIS New England, will join us to discuss how we can protect ourselves from financial scams.

Call or stop by the Center to sign up for this informative ses-

sion. 508-533-3210

Wii Bowling

Every Tuesday at 10:00 AM join the Alley Cats for lots of fun and plenty of laughs! Wii bowling is easy to learn and anyone can play.

As more people join in on the fun, we hope to create other teams and start a monthly tournament. Win or lose, we can guarantee you'll have a great time!

Weekly Exercise Classes

- Monday
 - 9:30 AM Dance Cardio \$5
 - 11:00 AM Strength Exercise \$4
- Tuesday
 - 11:00 AM Line Dancing \$4
 - 12:30 PM Strength & Power \$5
- Wednesday
 - 9:30 AM Yoga \$3
 - 11:30 AM Sword Tai Chi \$10
 - 1:00 PM Chair Exercise \$3
- Thursday
 - 11:00 AM Zumba Exercise \$5
- Friday
 - 12:20 PM Chair Exercise \$3

Outreach Department

Did you know that the Senior Center has two part-time Outreach workers? The Outreach Department can meet with seniors, families, or any individual.

We can explain community programs and benefits, assist with applications for designated programs, aid in the search for services, and act as an advocate to support individuals in need.

Examples of what the department can help with include but are not limited to:

- SNAP (food stamps) applications
- Fuel assistance applications
- Referrals for Home Care Services
- Internet Discount
- Mass Health applications

If you need assistance, call the Center and ask for Cathy Carvalho or Sue O'Connor in the Outreach Department.

Metrowest VETERANS Services

Do you have questions about the benefits you are entitled to as a Veteran? Do you need assistance with applications to apply for programs such as Burial benefits, Disability Compensation, Veterans' Pensions, Enrollment in VA Healthcare, etc.?

Call 508-429-0629 to schedule an appointment to meet with Veterans Service agent, Richard Sabonjain, at the Center on Thursdays from 12 - 3:00 PM.

'A Novel Occasion' fundraiser to feature bestselling authors on Jan. 25

MILLIS - Tickets are on sale now for the 5th annual "A Novel Occasion" virtual "live" experience. This fundraising event, hosted by The Friends of the Millis Public Library, will take place on Sat., Jan. 25, 2025, from 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

At this fun and interactive Zoom event, guests will hear bestselling authors, receive a swag box including a book, and participate in two intimate author roundtables. This year's authors include Chris Bohjalian, Gareth Brown, Hank Phillippi

Ryan, Jamie Brenner, Jayne Ann Krentz, Piper Huguley, Rebecca Sanford, and Tess Gerritsen. Additional authors to be announced.

Early Bird Tickets to this one-of-a-kind event are \$60 per person and can be purchased at www.anoveloccasion.com/.

The Friends of the Millis Public Library is a nonprofit 501 (3) (c) organization (tax ID#04-3268133) and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.



On Nov. 7, the Massachusetts Fire Academy graduated 23 new firefighters, representing 16 communities across the Commonwealth. Sean Kubacki of the Millis Fire Department is a member of Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Class #114. Source: mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-fire-services

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Dogtopia – A Tail-Wagging Good Time for Your Precious Pups

By JENNIFER RUSSO

According to a recent study published by Forbes, over 65 million US households own a dog. What's more, almost all pet owners consider their pet to be a true part of their family, because... well, they really are. From making sure they get the best in vet care to researching what is in the food we give them, and even replacing a favorite toy again and again when it is chewed beyond recognition, the love we have for them goes beyond words. So, when it comes to making sure they are cared for while we are at work or on a trip, we only want the absolute best.

The good news is that there is a new home away from home for those canine companions that exemplifies the ideal in dog care. It combines a state-of-the-art facility, impeccable safety standards, certified animal-loving team members that are trained to meet the needs of your pup, and a true commitment to the happiness and welfare of your furry, four-legged relatives.

Dogtopia, located in the Franklin Village shopping area, aims to be a haven for dogs by creating a fun and engaging environment for them while their owners are busy with work, errands, vacations, or other responsibilities.

"We treat your pup to fun-filled days of safe socialization with other dogs while they are interacting with our caring team, with exercising and burning off their pent-up energy, as well as basic education to help them improve behavior both inside and outside of your home. We believe daycare and overnight stays should be more than just a place to leave your dog when you are unable to be with them. It should be a place where your dog feels safe and loved while learning valuable socialization skills," says Dogtopia manager Keri Saccoia-Beggs.

Keri is no stranger to the world of canines, coming from a family which bred, raised, and showed Boxers and spending much of her teen years traveling to dog shows.

"You learn a lot about dogs when you are seeing hundreds a day! Now at Dogtopia, I get to

meet and play with all breeds of dogs in our playrooms," shares Keri.

That said, Dogtopia understands that not all dogs are the same and they have organized their facility in such a way that they can meet the needs of different dogs. Each dog needs to be fit for an open play environment, and they conduct a thorough temperament test during the first visit (called a Meet & Greet). Once they are ready for a fun-filled day, they are separated into one of three spacious playrooms based on similar size, temperament and play style. There is even a dedicated area called the "Wee Pen" for dogs under 8 pounds.

"Safety is always our number one priority," shares Keri. "Our team is certified by two nationally recognized associations in canine behavior and each member has 80+ hours of training. All dogs need to be at least 12 weeks of age and must be up to date on all required vaccinations (Rabies, Canine Influenza, DHPP, and Bordetella). Dogs 7 months old and up must also be spayed/neutered. If you don't have the records on hand, we can even call your vet for you!"

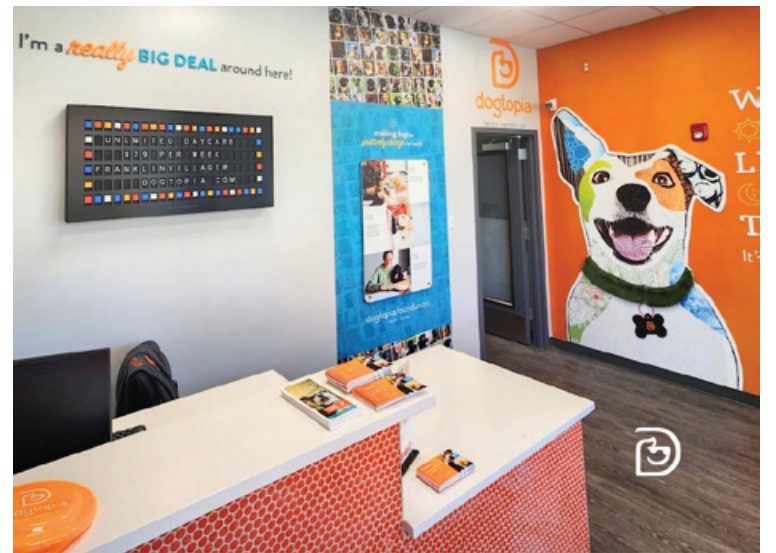
The innovative facility is climate-controlled, with compressed rubber flooring to minimize impact on your dog's joints.

Leaving a pet in the care of someone else can be stressful for some owners, but Dogtopia promises true peace of mind. With live webcams in every playroom, owners can check in on their furry family members and watch them play at anytime throughout the day. Owners will also receive periodic report cards to keep them in the loop.

In addition to day care, boarding and spa services are also available. Boarding crates are set up comfortably for rest and that feeling of "home away from home" and pups can even be pampered with a bath, nail trim and blueberry facial!

"We create a safe environment to give owners a trusted second home for their dogs. We can't wait to meet more dogs in the Franklin area! We have some fun events happening in December, including Ugly Sweater photos on 12/11, Taylor Swift's birth-

Business spotlight



day dance party on 12/13, Craft Day: Letters to Santa on 12/17, and Photos with Santa on 12/20. We have holiday boarding spots still available, book now as they are filling fast!" says Keri.

In addition to helping the community by caring for local pets, the Dogtopia Foundation also comes together to raise money for important causes. Currently, they are sharing a goal with the community to sponsor a service dog for a veteran, aiming to raise \$6,000 by the end of

the year and truly enable dogs to positively impact the world.

Have a pup that could benefit from a place that brings socialization, exercise, love, and all-day fun? Learn more about Dogtopia of Franklin Village and their amazing services by visiting www.dogtopia.com/FranklinVillage and for more information on the Dogtopia Foundation, visit www.DogtopiaFoundation.org.

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Hospital gave her brother a second chance, now Medway woman is giving back

Heather Bliss to hold gift-wrapping fundraiser on Dec. 19

By J.D. O'GARA

On an average day in September last year, Heather Bliss, of Medway, got a call from her 47-year-old brother, Peter, in Florida. He had not been feeling well for the past 24 hours. Listening to his symptoms, Heather, a nurse, realized he was suffering from a heart attack. She urged him to call 911.

Peter ended up in a Florida ICU, having suffered a “widow’s maker” heart attack, where major arteries are completely blocked. Although he went home, Peter later suffered further health decline, so Bliss took him back to Boston, to Brigham & Women’s Hospital, which immediately admitted him.

“They explained that ... ultimately, he would need a heart transplant,” says Bliss, “So, we

celebrated his birthday in January, and we celebrated Christmas as if it were his last. It was probably the hardest year of my life, my mother’s, my sister’s, when your loved one is just clinging to a miracle.”

Peter begged to stay on the organ donor list when he ended up in the hospital and an infection threatened his suitability for the procedure, but on March 21st, after he had voiced premonition he’d be having the transplant the day before, a heart became available through whom Bliss refers to as “Peter’s angel.”

“We always feel we’re forever indebted to (Brigham & Women’s) and their kindness,” says Bliss, who was approached by hospital to join its Stepping Strong 2025 Boston Marathon team, which will raise funds for the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Foundation, which aims to catalyze trauma innovation for injured civilians and military heroes at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Gillian Reny’s life and legs were saved in 2013 after she was hit by shrapnel during the Boston Marathon bombing.

Although the foundation was not directly related to her brother’s treatment, Bliss didn’t hesitate to join the team. “Everyone (on the team) is running for some

reason they want to give back. Everybody has the same underlying gratitude,” she says.

Peter is now doing okay, although the cocktail of medications he needed damaged his kidneys to the point Bliss and her twin sister Samantha were considering donating theirs. Peter may need a kidney transplant in the future, but Bliss says, “He’s very grateful that he has been given a second chance and thinks about his organ donor all the time.”

Now, Bliss must raise funds for her Brigham & Women team. Her first fundraiser will take place on December 19th, from 3:30 - 8 p.m. at the Franklin VFW Post 3402 at 1034 Pond St., Franklin. She and her team of elves (high school students) will wrap Christmas gifts for a \$20-\$30 donation per bag of gifts. Folks can drop off that day or sign up ahead by emailing blissheather34@yahoo.com.

Later, on January 10th, Urban



Heather Bliss, of Medway, is shown here with her brother Peter, after his heart transplant at Brigham & Women’s Hospital. Bliss will run the 2025 Boston Marathon for the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Foundation, and her first fundraiser will be a Christmas wrapping fundraiser at Franklin VFW Post 3402 on December 19th.

Air will donate 20% of admission proceeds to Bliss’ marathon fundraiser if they mention it at the door.

Can’t make the fundraisers? No problem. Donations can also be made through the following link bit.ly/BlissSteppingStrong2025.

A gift-wrapping fundraiser will be held on Dec. 19 from 3:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Franklin VFW Post 3402 at 1034 Pond St. in Franklin. Proceeds will benefit the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation. Donations can also be made at bit.ly/BlissSteppingStrong2025.

Ryan’s holding Food Drive for Millis Food Pantry

Bring in donation, receive \$5 game card for arcade play

MILLIS - Ryan’s in Millis is running a food drive to support the Millis Ecumenical Food Pantry. Through the end of the year, any customer who brings in a donation for the pantry will be

rewarded with a \$5 game card to play in the arcade. One game card per person, per donation.

All items should be shelf-stable and non-perishable (no refrigerated or frozen items, please). At

this time, the pantry is particularly in need of soup, pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, and rice.

“This is an easy way to help feed our neighbors who are facing food insecurity this holiday season,” said Beth Jones, Ryan’s Millis Manager. “The free arcade play will be in the form of a

game card so customers can use it anytime they’d like. It could be a great stocking stuffer!”

The Millis Ecumenical Food Pantry has been in continuous operation since 1991. Their mission is to provide 3 days of non-perishable food items to clients every 2 weeks. Located in the

Church of Christ, they rely on residents, churches, civic organizations, school groups, and local businesses for funding and food donations.

Donations can be brought to Ryan’s at 1170 Main Street in Millis through Dec. 31.

Join Charles River Bank in Bringing Holiday Joy to Local Children

Every year, Charles River Bank proudly participates in the Angel Tree Program offered through The Salvation Army of Milford. The bank pledges to adopt between 30 and 40 children each holiday season.

Bank employees, as well as generous customers and community members, are matched up with various children of local families in need.

Sponsors are then given a wish list that a child has created

and purchase items specifically requested by that child. Wish list tags will be available in Charles River Bank’s Medway, Bellingham and Mendon offices listing a child’s first name, their age, their clothing size and some toy

and gift requests. Visit one of Charles River Bank’s branches to pick up a child’s wish list or contact info@charlesriverbank.com if you would like a wish list sent to you.

All gifts must be returned to

Charles River Bank’s Medway office by the beginning of December. Gifts must be new, unwrapped, and in a large bag with the wish list tag attached to the outside.

Submitted by Charles River Bank

Charles River Chorale winter concert on Dec. 8

The Charles River Chorale and the Charles River Children’s Choir will present their Winter Concert on Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. in the Medway High School Auditorium. Doors open at 1:30 p.m.

The theme of this season’s concert is “Let It Snow!” The concert will include winter standards like “Sleigh Ride” and “Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow,” as well as more mod-

ern pieces like “It Feels New” by Pinkzebra and “Amid the Falling Snow” by Enya. The choir will be accompanied on some songs by a bassist, a cellist and a percussionist.

Under the leadership of director Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the Charles River Chorale is celebrating 40 years as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Membership is at an all-time high of over

100 dedicated singers who hail from Millis, Medway, and other neighboring towns. For tickets, our.show/charlesriverchorale



Photos from the scene of the extensive brush fire on the Medway/Franklin line (Populatic St and Village St) on Nov. 17, 2024. Crews from multiple mutual aid agencies assisted in the operation. Brush trucks from Medway, Franklin, Milford, Bellingham, Millis, Mendon, and Holliston. Tankers from Medway, Sharon, Norfolk, Plainville, and Hopkinton. Engine crews from Medway, Franklin, Walpole, Holliston, and North Attleboro. Additionally, an ATV crew from North Attleboro and PVD Canteen were on scene. The cause of the fire was under investigation at press time. Source: Facebook @ MedwayFireDepartment



Photographer and author to share new book on Dec. 10

Medway Library will host photographer and author Barry Schneier who will share his new book, *The Song Is Still Being Written: The Folk Music Portrait Project*, in the Cole Room at the Medway Public Library on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m.

Mr. Schneier is an internationally recognized photographer who has been immersed in the music scene since the mid-1970s. His work has been exhibited in multiple shows and

is in the permanent collection of the Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music, the Folk American Roots Hall of Fame, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2020, he set out to photograph iconic musicians who set the Folk Revival of the 1960s in motion, along with the artists who are redefining what folk music is today.

To register, please call the Medway Library at 508-533-3217. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Artists invited to create cover page for 2024 Millis Annual Report, submissions due Jan. 10

The Millis Cultural Council announces a unique opportunity for artists and photographers.

Needed: An original photographic and/or original artistic design for the 2024 Millis Annual Report, a booklet available to all Millis residents. The theme is "Millis" and can include Millis in the past, Millis in the present and visions for Millis of the future. Use your creativity and our beautiful town for inspiration!

Photographs and artwork

should be in high resolution JPEG or PNG and sent as an attachment. Submissions are due by Jan. 10, 2025, and are to be made to the Millis Cultural Council at millisculturalcouncil@gmail.com. Submissions may also be uploaded via Google forms by clicking the QR code below.

Entries will be judged by members of the Millis Cultural Council and the final selection will be done by Feb. 20, 2025.

Attribution to the creator of the cover page will be included in the Report. Previous Annual Reports are available at the Millis Library and the Town Clerk's Office.



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Sports

Grattan dismisses rebuilding for Millis' girls quintet

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Rebuilding is a word that's rarely used to describe a girls basketball season at Millis High.

After all, the Mohawks have won three state championships, finished as state runners-up twice, captured eight district titles, and qualified for 15 playoff berths during coach Dave Fallon's 16 years on the job.

The 2024-25 campaign, however, seems like it's ripe for a

"We want to qualify for the tourney and advance as far as possible," said the 5-foot-4 point guard. "We also want to improve every day and battle for the Tri Valley League Small Division title."

Grattan, who also was a captain in soccer, firmly believes that any thoughts about rebuilding will vanish as the season moves along.

"Yes, we're young and we've got a lot of sophomores," she

thedral of Boston, the eventual state champ.

Fallon knows he'll be leaning on Grattan again — especially to encourage and support her younger teammates. She averaged 10.5 points last year and tallied 4.6 assists and 3.1 steals per game. A TVL all-star as a junior, Grattan's strengths include an instinctive nature, a high basketball IQ, great athleticism and a dynamic skill set.

"Lindsey is an outstanding

Grattan, a captain who leads by example and by being supportive and communicative, will share the leadership role with senior forward Abby Wallace and junior forward/center Grace Higgins. The trio of captains is a good mix.

"Abby is a vocal leader who's energetic and positive," said Grattan, "and she's very effective on defense. Grace can rebound, block shots and get points in the paint. She leads by example and by being positive and vocal."

The 17-year-old Grattan is a four-year varsity veteran who credits her coach for much of Millis' success. "Coach Fallon is a superb motivator and a very good strategist," she noted. "He's also very encouraging and cares about his players."

A native of Millis, Grattan rates a game as a sophomore as her best.

"We were facing Hoosac Valley in the Final Four," she said. "I sank 10 free throws in the final quarter and we beat them, 54-47, to advance to the state final where we lost to Springfield International. I finished with 20 points and got my share of assists and steals. I was pleased with the way I handled the pressure at the free-throw line."

Her most thrilling moment on the court occurred in a loss. Grattan said that even though Millis lost to Springfield International in the state final, "It was a great learning experience and it was exciting."

An elite-eight tourney victory last year over Littleton also rates as a thrilling encounter. "We trailed, 11-0, at the start but we bounced back at home and won 42-38," she recalled. "That win enabled us to advance against Cathedral in the Final Four where we got beat. Against Littleton, we all played solid defense and worked together for a great come-from-behind win."

A 3.83 GPA also makes Grattan an academic all-star. She plans on majoring in early childhood education and is considering colleges like Salve Regina University and Endicott College.

Relying on a competitive philosophy that combines winning, reaching one's potential and having fun, Grattan says: "The most



Lindsey Grattan plans on majoring in early childhood education and is considering Salve Regina University and Endicott College.



Lindsey Grattan says she enjoys playing point guard because "it's where key decisions are made and I like passing and finding open teammates."

rebuild. Five seniors have graduated from last year's squad that advanced to the Final Four, and three of them were starters. This year's contingent has only two seniors, one junior and a plethora of sophomores.

Senior captain Lindsey Grattan, the only returning starter, knows the Mohawks are young and inexperienced but her goals for this year's squad are admirable and don't take rebuilding into consideration.

said. "But, three of our sophomores got playing time last year. Our younger players are talented, coachable and want to live up to the tradition of the program. I'm optimistic that our transition from a young team to one with experience will be smooth."

Last year, Grattan ran the offense and directed the team to a 15-7 regular season record and a No. 4 seed in the Division 4 tourney. The Mohawks got to the Final Four where they lost to Ca-

point guard," Fallon said. "Her speed, intelligence, passing and shooting range make her a very dangerous player. She's also a well-rounded student-athlete who's been an integral player for the softball and soccer teams. A National Honor Society student, she's also the co-president of the Mohawk Council, a student-run group dedicated to studying Indigenous history and culture."

Grattan started playing basketball at the age of six and has always been a point guard.

"I like playing the point because it's where key decisions are made," she noted. "You're like a quarterback. I like passing and searching out open teammates. I'll shoot when there's room but driving to the hoop for a lay-up is my first option."

Her 3.1 steals average is a testament to her defensive ability. "I'll go for a steal often," she said. "I enjoy disrupting an offense."

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Sports

5 reasons young families need life insurance now

When it comes to money matters, young parents who are just starting out have a lot to juggle: They may be paying off student debt and saving for their first home, all while raising kids. But it's also a time when young families may be the most financially vulnerable should the unexpected strike. To ensure that they have financial protection when they need it most, purchasing a life insurance policy should be top of mind.

Here are five reasons why young families need life insurance:

- 1. You just never know.** While it's not the most pleasant thing to ponder, an emergency situation could quickly put your family's finances under water. In fact, nearly 6 in 10 of U.S. adults are uncomfortable with their level of emergency savings, with less than half (44 percent) stating they would have enough savings to cover three months' worth of expenses in the case of an emergency.¹ When you're starting out, not having protection in case something happens to a family's breadwinner is even scarier.
- 2. The earlier you opt in, the more affordable it may be.** Because age is one of the factors that affects the cost of your premiums, the younger you are when you purchase a policy, the less you'll generally be paying each year.
- 3. It may not be as expensive as you think.** If you're on a budget and are convinced you can't afford life insurance, consider term life insurance. It provides protection for a set amount of time provided premiums are paid when due. Since it's not designed to last a lifetime, the annual premiums are generally lower when you are younger.
- 4. It lets you concentrate on other goals.** Once you have the peace of mind and financial protection that life insurance grants you, you may feel secure enough to fund long-term goals, like buying a home, saving for your nest egg, or going back to school.
- 5. You can always upgrade at a later date.** Don't let the fear of making the wrong decision deter you from purchasing a policy now. The policy

you purchase today isn't intended to be set in stone. As your family's needs change, you have the option of considering other policies.

¹Lane Gillespie, "Bankrate's 2024 Annual Emergency Savings Report," Bankrate, June 20, 2024. <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/emergency-savings-report/>

We know it's not easy for young families to make their life insurance needs a priority, given all their competing financial ob-



ligations. However, permanent life insurance can be a vehicle for protection that can help your family in the event of your untimely passing.

This educational, third-party article is provided as a courtesy by Michael T. Damon, Agent, New York Life Insurance Com-

pany. To learn more about the information or topics discussed, please contact Damon Financial at (505) 321-2101.

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Millis Recreation programs in December

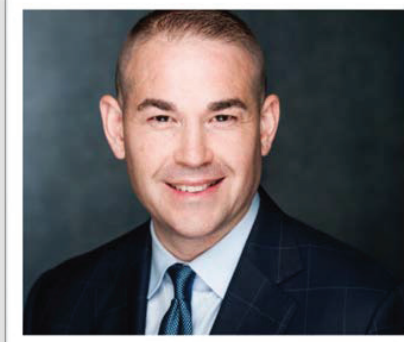
Millis Recreation Department has some fun classes in December including:

Dec. 7, 5 p.m., Millis Town Park Bandstand, 900 Main St., Millis. Santa's Parade and photos with Santa, plus Santa's Elves have a special treat for those who attend.

Dec. 30 and Dec. 31, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Veterans Memorial Building, 900 Main St., Room 130, Millis. December Break with Chess Wizards, for ages 5 to 12. Fee \$140. Enjoy tons of challenging chess lessons and exciting games. You'll improve your chess skills, meet new

friends, and work out your most powerful muscle - your brain! Our camps include fun team chess games, recess time, snacks, tournaments, and puzzles. We include all materials. Register at millisrecreation.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs

For more information, contact Kris Fogarty at kfogarty@millisma.gov or call 508-376-7050. You can also register at millisrecreation.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs



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Santa to visit Hope Chest on Dec. 14

Millis charity thrift shop also seeks volunteers

MILLIS – On Sat., Dec. 14, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. the Bethany House Hope Chest at 1134 Main Street Millis will welcome Santa Claus. Children are invited to visit with Santa, have their picture taken, and receive a free special gift bag.

The Hope Chest is an eclectic second-hand store where customers will find some amazing bargains; a visit is sure to appeal to people of all ages. The store is operated by the Bethany House Ministries, a non-profit organiza-

tion whose mission is to “provide a compassionate, healing environment of hope and to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to those facing challenges, especially those impacted by the harsh realities of prison.”

“We run groups in the prisons, help with reentry, provide clothing and basic needs for folks being released from prison. The shop also provides household items and furniture for people leaving prison who are setting up their apartments for the first

time,” says Sister Ruth Raichle of Bethany House Ministries. “Right now, we are working on purchasing over 3,000 holiday gifts for folks in prisons and Boston shelters.”

The Bethany House Hope Chest is also looking for volunteers. To learn more visit <https://bethanyhouseministries.org> or talk to our staff and volunteers at this special event. What better way to immerse yourself in the Holiday Spirit than by supporting this ministry and saying hello to Santa?

Charles River Bank Begins Annual Holiday Food Drive

A long-standing holiday tradition at Charles River Bank is the annual Food Drive. Every year during the month of December, Charles River Bank branch offices set up donation tables in their lobbies for customers, community members, and bank staff to make food donations to the Medway, Bellingham and Mendon Food Pantries. The donations are brought to the food pantries just before the New Year to help restock after the holidays.

Items most needed by the Food Pantries include: canned meats, soups, stews; dry foods such as cereal and pasta; other non-perishable food items; paper goods, diapers and personal hygiene items. Bring your donation to your local Charles River Bank branch December 1st through December 31st. Branch locations can be found at www.charlesriverbank.com.

Charles River Bank—with assets of \$305 million—was

founded in 1915, and continues to offer a wide range of individual and business banking services. The Bank’s Main Office is located at 70 Main Street in Medway, with state-of-the-art branches located on the Bellingham/Franklin town line on



Route 140, and in Mendon at 1 Hastings Street, at the intersection of Rte. 16 and North Avenue. Charles River Bank also operates a branch in Medway High School. In 2023, Charles River Bank contributed more than \$42,000 to community non-profit organizations.

For more information call 508-533-8661 or visit www.charlesriverbank.com.



Flags flying on Veterans Day in front of the Veterans Memorial Building in Millis. Photo credit: Theresa Knapp

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Norfolk County Registry of Deeds 2024 Toys for Tots Drive

Believing that the true spirit of the holidays lies in giving rather than receiving, Norfolk County Register of Deeds William P. O'Donnell is sponsoring the Registry's 17th annual U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive.

"The Registry of Deeds is proud to partner with the United States Marine Corps Reserve to help deliver a happy Christmas to children this holiday season," Register O'Donnell said. "This act of kindness can help spread joy and make a positive impact on those in need. Those engaging in this selfless act can know that they are part of what makes this time of year so special and hopefully inspire others to do the same."

Donations of new toys and games can be brought directly to the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds building, located at 649 High St. in Dedham, through Tuesday, December 10, at 10 a.m. A marked donation bin will be

set up in the lobby, which is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

"The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve plays a vital role in ensuring that donated toys reach children in need during the holiday season," Register O'Donnell said. "Their dedication and commitment to the goal of making sure no child goes without a present on Christmas is truly commendable. We thank the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and all our military personnel for their dedication and service to our country."

This year marks the 77th anniversary of Toys for Tots. The program was established in 1947 when the wife of a Marine major wanted to donate a Raggedy Ann doll for Christmas but couldn't find an organization to accept it. Since then, the national program has delivered over 677 million toys.

"Every holiday season, the

Registry witnesses firsthand the many acts of kindness and Christmas spirit as numerous people drop off gifts for the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive," Register O'Donnell noted. "It's truly wonderful to see so many people dropping off gifts, from Registry employees, to title examiners, to attorneys, and members of the general public because no family should have to struggle to enjoy their holiday season."

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program's mission is to help less fortunate children experience the joy and happiness associated with Christmas. The program operates in more than 800 cities and towns throughout all 50 states.

"It means everything any time the local community can come out

TOYS FOR TOTS

continued on page 23

Happy Holidays!

Greetings,

With the Holidays upon us, I reflect upon another great year and just how blessed I am to have clients and friends like you! Your continued support is the keystone to my success.

I hope your celebration of the season is filled with peace and laughter with the ones you love.

May the New Year bring you health, happiness and good times.

Warmest wishes,

Joleen Rose

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Recent Home Sales

Date	Medway	Amount
11/14/2024	3 Wild Turkey Run	\$1.23 mil
11/12/2024	23 Willow Pond Cir.	\$777,579
11/07/2024	11 Puddingstone Ln.	\$800,000
11/06/2024	177 Holliston St.	\$770,000
11/01/2024	14 Sanford St. #5	\$475,000
10/31/2024	5 Pine Meadow Rd.	\$925,000
10/30/2024	8 Kingston Ln. #5	\$583,000
10/28/2024	257 Village St.	\$689,900
10/28/2024	11 Oak St.	\$650,000

Date	Millis	Amount
11/13/2024	23 Country Village Way	\$405,000
11/12/2024	650 Bullard Ln.	\$850,000
11/01/2024	34 May Rd.	\$1.06 mil
11/01/2024	22 Jameson Dr.	\$1.35 mil
10/31/2024	19 Bayberry Cir.	\$389,500
10/31/2024	30 Country Village Way	\$432,000
10/25/2024	204 Orchard St.	\$341,250
10/25/2024	15 Rockville Meadows	\$735,000
10/24/2024	4 Plimpton Farm Rd. #242	\$1.01 mil
10/22/2024	6 Plimpton Farm Rd. #243	\$905,601
10/17/2024	13 Pine View	\$380,000

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

TOYS FOR TOTS

continued from page 22

and help support Toys for Tots," Cpl. Christopher Todd, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines said. "By doing an event like this, you get to witness the best side of people and know that these donations are going towards giving someone a happy Christmas."

Since 2007, the Registry of Deeds has collected over 1,700 toy donations for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots

program.

"We all have the power to make a child's Christmas something special," Register O'Donnell concluded. "Not only does donating to Toys for Tots bring joy to children in need, but it also reminds us of the true spirit of the holiday season. It's a chance for us to come together as a community and make a difference, and therefore, giving to the Toys for Tots drive just might make it the best Christmas present you can give yourself this holiday season."

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Recent Home Sale



The 5-bed, 4-bath, 4,771-square-foot unit at 68 Bullard Lane in Millis recently sold for \$850,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Over 445 homes sold!

UNDER AGREEMENT



36 Lakin Street
Needham - \$2,574,000

NEW CONSTRUCTION



Lake Front, 3 living levels, 3400sf
Norfolk - \$1.175M

UNDER AGREEMENT



11-13 Pleasant Street
Medfield - \$850,000

SOLD



53 Wingate Road,
Holliston - \$799,900

NEW LISTING



83 Eliot Street
South Natick - \$1,900,000

SOLD



6 Litchfield Way
Walpole - \$1,700,000



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FRESHLY PAINTED
\$659,900
136 Pleasant Street, Millis
Jennifer (McMahon) Colella



SALE PENDING
\$499,900
118 Lovering Street, Medway
Laina Regan Kaplan



SOLD
\$687,000
6 Independence Lane, Millis
Sue Kuphal



3 BR TOWNHOME
\$587,000
14 Tuckerdale Way, Millis
Jennifer (McMahon) Colella



SALE PENDING
\$949,900
14 Paddock Lane, Millis
Jennifer (McMahon) Colella



SALE PENDING
\$414,900
19 Country Village Way, Millis
Jennifer/Team Signature



SALE PENDING
\$994,900
88 Manthorne Road, West Roxbury
Laina Regan Kaplan



SOLD
\$562,000
24 Lexington Lane, Millis
Sue Kuphal



SOLD
\$1,070,000
25 Fairway Lane, Medway
Laina Regan Kaplan



SOLD
\$1,000,000
2 Catalpa Lane, Mendon
Laina Regan Kaplan



SOLD
\$1,125,000
23 B Summer Street, Medway
Jennifer (McMahon) Colella



SOLD
\$784,400
118-120 Curve Street, Millis
Jennifer/Team Signature



SOLD
\$705,000
13 Liberty Road, Medway
Laina Regan Kaplan



SOLD
\$810,000
135 Red Fox Run, Wrentham
Laina Regan Kaplan



SALE PENDING
\$1,150,000
91 Norfolk Street, Holliston
Jennifer (McMahon) Colella



SOLD
\$568,000
10 Rosenfeld Road, Millis
Sue Kuphal

*We would like to thank our clients,
friends and family for
another successful year.*



SOLD
\$925,000
11 Liberty Road, Medway
Laina Regan Kaplan

*We wish you and your family
a wonderful holiday season
and a very Happy New Year!*



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