

Coyote Clues

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

“Howl at the tone,” ended John Maguranis’ voicemail message.

I’d called him to talk coyotes, and he picked up his phone halfway through my reply.

Now semi-retired after a long career caring for and learning about animals, Maguranis serves as the Massachusetts represen-

tative for Project Coyote. That group’s mission is to educate the public about the animals, foster a peaceful coexistence between them and their human neighbors.

Maguranis served for two decades as a veterinary technician in the U.S. Army, then as an animal control officer just outside of Boston.

Pay any attention to your local neighborhood networking app, and you’ll find coyotes making frequent special guest star appearances. One that waltzed nonchalantly through a certain backyard, or another that “stared down” a resident.

I neighbor a house that has



acres sits behind the house where I live. On that night I donned a headlamp and went out back, scanning through the trees and darkness. Several sets of disembodied eyes shone in the dim. They glowed a ghoulish green, seeming to float in the distance.

They indeed stared back, likely puzzled and wary of the beam of white light that had pierced their protective darkness.

“They’re just curious,” said Maguranis. Coy-oats, he calls them. “The fear of coyotes is overblown.” That said, the veteran veterinarian added that there’s always cause for common-sense caution.

Small children and dogs, ones that can be comfortably carried by people, may be seen as prey by the animals.

Here in Natick, the town’s sprawling Hunnewell Forest provides a refuge for local wildlife. During a recent hike through those woods, I crossed paths with two people wrangling about a half-dozen dogs between them. A few were leashed; several other small ones led the pack, trailing

COYOTES

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Town Considering A Ban On Leaf Blowing

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

It’s a sound synonymous with New England autumn.

The drone of a small gas-powered engine paired with the moan of high-speed air driven through a plastic tube. The instrument is the gas-powered leaf blower, and the symphony of sounds it produces can land as a seasonal assault to the senses of some residents.

The leaf-blower’s whir is distinct from a lawn mower’s low hum, and the whistle of a weed whacker slicing through air and vegetation. Aside from the signature tone of this landscaping tool, another feature that frays the nerves of neighbors is how long the tune is sustained.

Landscapers make quick work of lawns, cutting grass in a matter of minutes. But corralling and hauling away those uncountable leaves often requires leaf blowers to drone on and on.

Natick recently joined a growing roster of communities that have or are considering bans on the machines.

The town of Concord ad-

opted the first phase of its ban in June, which prohibits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on residential lots smaller than 1.5 acres. The ban applies to “hand-held” devices, which include popular backpack blowers.

But that ban as it stands is fairly toothless, as it makes an exception for their use during autumn months. That of course, is when leaves come down.

The Concord measure starts to look like an authentic ban in 2028, when it prohibits the use of gas-powered blowers by landscapers. Two years after that, the ban is scheduled to bar their use by residents as well.

In the short term, that Concord ban seems to largely be a messaging measure. Its slow rollout and seasonal carveouts put landscapers and residents on notice that winds of change are beginning to blow.

That timeframe allows those parties a grace period to tinker with and grow accustomed to

LEAF BLOWING

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He recounted a situation in

The Arlingtonians seemed to have made something of a party out of it. Like our ancestors of old, the village assembled to cast out the other, though here their

"Knowledge conquers fears," he said. "It's really good to put good information out there. I do what I can."



Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is located at 101 Summer St., Holliston. There is no charge for this event. Gift shop hours will be extended throughout the festival of lights: 11 AM to 9 PM.

A festive Christmas card for Barber Real Estate Group. The card features a large, stylized "MERRY CHRISTMAS" title in red and black. Below it, the text "From All Of Us At Barber Real Estate Group" is written in red. The card is decorated with two Christmas trees, one on each side, adorned with lights, ornaments, and candy canes. In the center, Santa Claus and a reindeer are depicted. The bottom left shows a photo of four real estate professionals. The bottom right contains the contact information for William Raveis, Barber Real Estate Group, including a phone number and website.

Join SPARK Dec. 11, Learn How To Come Together

Join Spark Kindness on Wednesday, Dec. 11, at 7pm, at the Natick Community Senior Center for an inspiring evening and opportunity to informally connect around the unifying power of gratitude! This FREE in-person event is all about building stronger connections and a closer community. We'll share ways to show gratitude and support one another while enjoying light refreshments. Bring a friend and share the SPARK! To RSVP, visit www.sparkkindness.org.

LEAF BLOWING

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new technologies and techniques. Battery-powered leaf blowers have been commercially available for years, and are not subject to the bans being considered.

Natick Town Meeting debated a likeminded measure recently, deciding to shelve the ban while legislators and stakeholders take more time to study and consider the matter.

Like Concord's measure, the ban proposed for Natick would have provided for carveouts during spring and autumn. Starting in 2025 if adopted as written, the use of gas-powered blowers would still have been allowed between March 15th and May 15th, and October 1st through December 1st.

The ban was written to bar use of the machines year-round starting in 2027, with exceptions carved out for properties larger than 1.5 acres.

"The objective is good," said Bruce Evans. "The intent is good."

Evans is Vice-Chair of Natick's Select Board, and spoke

to the environmental impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers, "which are admittedly pretty polluting."

But Evans was also convinced of the limits of current battery-powered blowers. They're not yet practical for landscaping companies, he said, which may service dozens of lawns on a given day. The ban being considered, he added, wasn't nuanced enough to address those concerns.

During the comment portion of the meeting, representatives of landscaping businesses rose to voice their objections to the measure.

"There was no real differentiation between residential users and landscapers," Evans said.

Also of concern was the enforcement side of the equation. Evans said the Police Department and Board of Health would need to play a role in implementing the ban, but that neither had yet been included in the deliberations.

"I'd want to have their input," said Evans. Police would conceivably be called upon to deliver citations for violations of the ban. "Is that how we want our policemen to spend their time?"

The proposed ban provided

for a warning for a first violation, and small fines for subsequent infractions.

Yet several residents and members voiced support for the spirit of the measure, citing its soft rollout and carveouts. Outright adoption of the ban wasn't on the table at the meeting, as proper prior community notice hadn't been given. A referral vote was the best the ban's proponents could hope for at the time.

"I rise in support of referral," said David Krentzman at the meeting. He is a member of the town's Community Preservation

Committee. "Just like most things that need innovation, there is definitely resistance to change."

And like Concord's and other community efforts to move forward, Krentzman noted that the proposals are a first step in a long-term and deliberative decision.

"Getting to more of an electric society, less polluting society. I applaud the effort to start the process."

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December Events At Natick Community Senior Center

Please register for all programs.
Call 508-647-6540 or come by the center, 117 East Central St, Natick

MONDAYS AT A MUSEUM DECEMBER-HYBRID

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

December 2- O’Keeffe and the Stieglitz Circle, Chicago art Institute

December 9- Picasso The Mask Within the Model, Art Institute Chicago

December 16- Korean Art, Portland Art Museum

December 23- J. Pierpont Morgan’s Early Collecting

December 30- Hodler and Rothko: Italian Renaissance, Morgan Library

WONDRIUM- HYBRID

Tuesday, 11:00am-12:00pm, free

-December 3- Leonardo the Inventor and Engineerthrough his designs for moveable walls, machines for raising columns and grinding needles, a self-propelled cart, hydraulic devices, bridges, and more.

-December 10- Leonardo the Military Scientistincluding his designs for defensive castle walls and towers, siege-busting bridges, human-powered tanks, repeating canons, giant crossbows, and even a submarine.

-December 17- The Making of The Last Supper his grand masterpiece.

-December 24- The Surprising Origins of Christmas Traditions- Christmas in Victorian America- dangerous parades held, cracking whips at children while they tried to collect candy and nuts, and a jolly, friendly version of Santa Claus all grew from the American melting pot.

-December 31- Edith Wharton’s Gilded Age New York, Tour the scenes and sights of the New York City of Wharton’s time.

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION- HYBRID

Join Sharon every Monday and Thursday, 2:00-2:40pm, free for some quiet meditation sitting and some guided meditation.

MEET UP AT SPELLMAN STAMP MUSEUM, WESTON

Wednesday, December 4, 10:00am, \$5.00 payable at registration

Please join us at the Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History, 241 Wellesley St, Weston, MA 02493, parking available next to the building located on the Regis College campus. We’ll get a tour of the facility and exhibits, including stamps about Airships including the Hindenburg, and exhibits on postal history locally and nationally.

VICTORIAN CAROLLERS

Monday, December 9, 2:00-3:00pm, free

Festive seasonal music is performed acapella by a quartet of accomplished singers dressed in Victorian costume. They sing a wide-variety of songs, ranging from traditional carols to classic favorites and some with contemporary arrangements. We love to take requests and lead sing-alongs. It would be our pleasure to celebrate with you this Holiday Season!

DAY TRIP BOSTON HOLIDAY POPS

Tuesday, December 10, \$176.00pp, non-refundable, payable at registration. Luxury bus departs from Fisk Methodist Church, 106 Walnut St, Natick at 3:30 pm, returns approximately 10:30 pm.

This annual holiday tradition continues at historic Symphony Hall for an evening performance

with the Boston Holiday POPS and first balcony seats. The POPS play holiday music favorites, a sing-a-long and even a visit from jolly old St Nick! Before the concert, we go to the Cheesecake Factory for a delicious lunch - order what you want from the menu, which includes entrée, slice of cheesecake, non-alcoholic beverage. Reserve early, this sold out last year. Registration deadline Thursday, December 5.

HOLIDAY FASHION THROUGH THE YEARS WITH SPIRITS OF FASHION

Wednesday, December 11, 11:30-12:30, free

Do you ever wonder what people wore for their holiday celebrations in the Victorian Era? How did the styles change in the 20 th Century? Join us as we travel through the 19 th and 20 th centuries to discover which fashions were popular and how clothing and accessories were worn

during the holiday seasons of the past. Vintage Fashion expert, Ren, brings many items of vintage clothing and accessories to tell the story. Feel free to bring some of your own too! Karen (Ren) Antonowicz received her Master’s Degree in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising, and Design, with a concentration in Historic Costume & Textiles from the University of RI. She then taught History of Fashion and other courses full time at the college level for 13 years, and taught part time in the CE Program at the RI School of Design.

HOLIDAY MUSIC PROGRAM WITH MICHAEL GOODWIN

Wednesday, December 11, 1:30pm, free

Michael’s infectious holiday spirit will buoy your spirits and please sing along! It’s a multi-media presentation with performance, lecture and video clips from classic films.

CELEBRATING HANUKKAH

With Rav Hazzan Ken Richmond- In person

Thursday, December 12, 10:00-11:00am, free, call to register 508-647-6540

Join Rabbi Ken, Temple Israel’s co-senior rabbi and longtime

cantor, for a fun celebration of Hanukkah with songs, snacks, stories and sharing.

FEATURE FILMS

Fly Me To the Moon
Tuesday, December 17, 1:00-3:00 pm, free

Enjoy a holiday cookie, coffee and our feature film, Fly Me to the Moon, 2024, PG13, 134 minutes. Marketing maven Kelly Jones wreaks havoc on launch director Cole Davis’s already difficult task. When the White House deems the mission too important to fail, the countdown truly begins. Stars Scarlett Johansson, Channing Tatum, Woody Harrelson.

TEAM TRIVIA GAME WITH KEVIN RICHMAN

Wednesday, December 18, 10:00-11:00am, free

Test your knowledge against other contestants and win prizes! You know more than you think you do and it’s a team sport! Kevin brings a variety of questions and lots of fun to this game. Refreshments and prizes.

CULTURALLY CURIOUS

Snowy Scapes & Celebrations: The Artists Holiday

Wednesday, December 18, 1:30-2:30pm, free

Through the years, artists have created works both grand and intimate, Religious and secular in response to the “most wonderful time of the year.” Enjoy this special overview of the variety of ways artists have captured the magic of the season. This program includes works by Grandma Moses, Salvador Dali, and Andy Warhol. Thank you to Whitney Place for sponsoring this program!

NEW YEAR’S EVE MUSIC WITH PIANIST RICHARD TRAVERS

Tuesday, December 31, 2:00-3:00 pm, free

Join pianist Richard Travers to celebrate New Year’s Eve day with music from the Great American Songbook, light jazz and pop tunes. Richard shares his exuberant personality with stories and tidbits about the music.

localtownpages

Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the
Community of Natick
Circulation: 16,442
households & businesses

Publisher

Chuck Tashjian

Editorial

Susan Manning

Send Editorial to:

editor@naticktownnews.com

Advertising Sales

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508-954-8148
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Creative Design & Layout

Michelle McSherry
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Ad Deadline is the
15th of each month.

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Family Promise Metrowest Honored as Nonprofit Partner of the Year by MetroWest Chamber of Commerce

Natick, MA – November 21, 2024 – On November 20, Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) was recognized as the Nonprofit Partner of the Year at the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce’s 2024 Annual Meeting, celebrating the organization’s contributions to addressing family homelessness and housing instability in the MetroWest community.

This award underscores FPM’s impact and its commitment to fostering collaboration with local businesses, faith communities, and individuals to create pathways into sustainable housing.

Danielle Conti, Executive Director of Family Promise Metrowest, reflected on the honor: “At Family Promise Metrowest, we work every day to lift up families facing overwhelming challenges, and we do it by partnering with a community that shares our vision of a brighter future for all. Being named the Non-profit Partner of the Year is a profound reminder of the power of collaboration.

Together, we have tackled some of the most pressing issues of our time—family homelessness, the skyrocketing costs of housing and childcare, and the toll of low wages. And the impact is life-changing, especially for the children. Every time we help a family find stability, we’re giving their children the chance to dream again, to learn without fear of losing their home, and to grow up in a world where they feel supported and valued.”

In 2024 alone, Family Promise Metrowest has expanded its reach significantly, serving more families than ever through programs like the Local Initiative for Family Empowerment (LIFE), which saw a 50% increase in families served this year. The organization has also provided critical assistance with shelter, eviction prevention, and educational scholarships, ensuring families can achieve long-term stability.

The MetroWest Chamber of Commerce’s recognition shines a spotlight on the role that FPM plays in the community. This award further energizes the organization’s mission to transform lives through the power of community-driven support.

To learn more about the Family Promise Metrowest programs, and how to become involved, please visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org or email info@familypromisemetrowest.org.

Founded in 2008, Family Promise Metrowest provides comprehensive services to families facing housing instability and homelessness. From its Natick-based shelter to regional prevention and diversion programs, FPM helps families secure stable housing, employment, childcare, and education. Through partnerships with local businesses, congregations, schools, and volunteers, FPM delivers impactful solutions to the housing crisis.



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Bacon Free Library December 2024

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Saturdays 9:30-1:30
Curbside pickup is available during all open hours
Check our website for the most up-to-date information and to register for programs: <https://baconfreelibrary.org>

Children’s Programs

Story Time -- Mondays and Tuesdays @ 10am -- We’ll feature a combination of stories for listening and songs for singing & dancing.
Baby Time -- Wednesdays @ 10am -- Join us for a cozy story time filled with lap bounces, rhymes, songs, and simple stories. Geared toward infants and young toddlers with their grownups.
Jammin with You -- Fridays, Dec 6th & Dec 20th @ 10:30am -- Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam your way through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun! **Registration is required
Playful Engineers: Chain

Reactions & Creative Contraptions -- Friday, Dec 27 @ 10:30am -- Hands-on, play-based, STEAM-powered learning with Playful Engineers! Design, build, test, and play with chain reactions and creative contraptions, like Rube Goldberg machines, paper constructions, domino towers, and more. This program is geared toward kids ages 5 and up. **Registration is required
Clay Melted Snowman Craft -- Monday, Dec 30 @ 2pm -- Embrace the fun of winter with this class led by Pop Up Art School! Create a whimsical melted snowman using air-dry clay, and bring your piece to life with vibrant acrylic paints—all in one session. You’ll leave the class with a completed, playful winter decoration that’s ready to display. This program is geared toward kids and teens ages 8 and up. **Registration is required
All Ages Programs
Featured art display:
October 31 - December 11, 2025: Lia Vito Nature Photography -- Lia Vito has brought

the autumnal beauty of Acadia National Park to the walls of the BFL. Come in to enjoy her photography featuring the rich golden hues of the Maine foliage along with up-close and personal peaks into wild birds in action.
Instrument Petting Zoo -- Saturday, Dec 28 @ 1pm -- Bach to Rock (B2R) of Wellesely will bring a variety of musical instruments to the BFL to give people of all ages a chance to learn about instruments and experience playing them. Please stop by to try out an instrument, or two, that you’re curious about.
Adult Programs
Carols by Candlelight with Diane Taraz - Sunday, Dec 1st @ 4pm -- Join us to hear Diane Taraz perform traditional Victorian Christmas carols this holiday season. Many of our holiday traditions and Christmas music were revived or created during the Victorian era in the mid-1800s. Diane will present these beloved carols and fascinating stories about their origins as she performs in a hand-sewn

1850s dress and accompanies herself on guitar and dulcimer. This program will be held in the Natick Historical Society (downstairs from the BFL). Please register in advance.
Food Explorers: Spring Rolls - Tues, Dec 10th @ 4pm -- Join Food Explorers for a delicious cooking program! You’ll be making spring rolls with a registered dietitian. Learn how to soak and wrap your spring rolls and fill with an assortment of fresh veggies, rice noodles, and soy sauce. The recipe is nut free but will contain soy.
This in-person cooking class is for ages 16 and older. Registration is required.
Adult Book & Film Clubs - registration required for all clubs <https://baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/>
Mystery Book Club -- first Thursday of the month @ 1pm on Zoom
December 5th: The Last Mona Lisa by Jonathan Santlofer
Tuesday Book Club -- Tuesday, Dec 10th @ 7pm at the li-

brary
The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride
History Book Club -- second Thursday of the month @ 11am on Zoom
December 12th: White House Wild Child: How Alice Roosevelt broke all the rules and won the heart of America by Shelley Frazer Mickle
Environmental Book Club -- third Tuesday of the month @ 7pm on Zoom
December 17th: Alfie & me: what owls know, what humans believe by Carl Safina
Cinephile Mondays -- last Monday of the month @ 4pm on Zoom; watch and discuss films. Check the BFL website for the film of the month and to register.

Museum Passes

The Bacon Free Library and Morse Institute Library offer passes for free or reduced-admission to 30 local museums. Check one out and plan your next day trip!

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It's the most wonderful time of the year to use Affordable Junk Removal

BY LINDA CHUSS

With so much to do around the holidays, give yourself the gift of space by using Affordable Junk Removal to help prepare your 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 organizations 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

Business spotlight

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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Mudville Madrigal Singers Holiday Concert

The Mudville Madrigal Singers will perform in Holliston this holiday season at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Holliston on Friday night, December 13th. They are a ten person a cappella singing group. This is their thirty-first year singing together. The upcoming concert will feature Byrd, Elgar, Vittoria, Pärt, Kerensa Briggs, and Tamsin Jones.

The concert is supported by a grant from the Holliston Cultural Council.

The Lutheran Church is at 600 Central Street in Holliston. The concert will start at 8 pm. Admission is free, but donations are gratefully accepted. They hope you will join them to celebrate the holiday season.

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MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau Partners with Tailbox to Launch Innovative AI-Powered Travel App

Framingham, MA (Nov. 22, 2024): The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) is thrilled to announce its partnership with Tailbox, an innovative AI-powered travel app, to launch the MetroWest Boston VisiTOURS. This cutting-edge app is designed to transform the way visitors explore the MetroWest region, offering personalized, interactive experiences that uncover the area's rich history, hidden gems, and must-see attractions.

With the new app, powered by Tailbox's advanced AI technology, visitors can dive deeper into MetroWest's landmarks, historical sites, and cultural attractions. Whether you're a local resident or visiting for the first

time, the MetroWest Boston VisiTOURS will provide customized walking and driving tours, audio guides, interactive Q&A features, and real-time updates, making it the ultimate digital travel companion.

"Tailbox matches travelers with unique experiences tailored to their preferences, interests, and location. Through custom recommendations and immersive stories, Tailbox provides a seamless blend of exploration, discovery, and connection," said Bayazid Malikov, co-founder of Tailbox.

"We are excited to partner with Tailbox to enhance how visitors and locals experience MetroWest," said Stacey David, Executive Director of the MetroWest Boston Visitors

Bureau. "This app brings our region's history and culture to life in a fun and engaging way, giving users a deeper and more personalized experience."

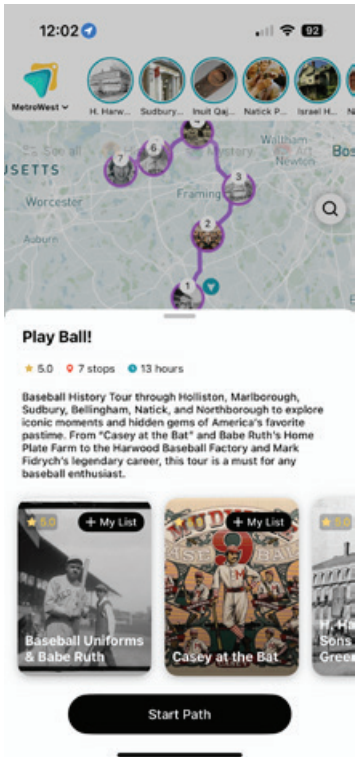
With a soft launch this fall for iOS users and a full launch in January 2025 for both Apple and Android devices, the app is perfect for all types of travelers—whether you're a family, solo traveler, history buff, or adventurer—offering a fresh and engaging way to experience the charm and attractions of MetroWest.

About MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau is the region's official organization for tourism promotion, dedicated to high-

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We are planning the fourth New Year's Eve event on the CRT on Tuesday, Dec. 31, from 4:30-7:30, with fire pits, food, fun and entertainment. Want to participate, or have ideas or questions? Please let us know up today!

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Your Money, Your Independence

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



Glenn Brown, CFP

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 conver-

sion 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.

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 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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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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High School Speech & Debate Team Hosts Tournament

Under the guidance of Head Coach Sarah Donnelly, the Natick High Speech & Debate Team hosted the annual Gracia Burkill Speech & Debate Tournament on Nov. 16. Named in memory of a beloved former English teacher and speech coach, the event attracted several hundred students, coaches and volunteers from high schools across Massachusetts. This photo features approximately two-thirds of the Natick team.

High School Band Marched In Veterans Day Parade

The high school marching band participated in the Veterans Day parade this year.



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How to Create a Beautiful Landscape in New England’s Fickle Climate

Start making plans now for the spring.



Chris Hopkins

LANDSCAPE INSIGHTS

New England’s weather can be both a blessing and a curse for landscape design. From frigid winter nights to sweltering summer days, the climate offers a challenging backdrop for gardeners and homeowners looking to create a vibrant, year-round landscape. But with the right strategies, it’s possible to design a space that not only survives but thrives through every season.

Here are some essential tips to help you create a stunning landscape that can handle New England’s intense seasonal changes:

1. Choose Hardy Plants for Year-Round Resilience

When it comes to New England gardens, plant selection is key. The harsh winters and unpredictable summers mean you need to opt for species that are hardy enough to withstand temperature fluctuations and severe weather. Look for plants rated for USDA Hardiness Zones 4 and 5, which cover much of New England.

Consider native plants, as they are more adapted to the local climate and typically require less maintenance. Plants such as perennials, annuals and ornamental grasses not only add color and texture to your garden but can also tolerate a range of conditions, from frost to heat.

2. Design with Seasonal Interest in Mind

One of the most rewarding aspects of a New England landscape is the dramatic change in seasons. While this can pose challenges for gardeners, it also offers opportunities to design a space that evolves throughout the year. Incorporate plants that bloom at different times—such as spring daffodils, summer day-lilies, and autumn asters—to ensure your garden looks beautiful from the first signs of spring until the first snow.

In addition, think about using trees and shrubs with colorful bark or interesting silhouettes that stand out during the winter months. This will add structure and beauty even when the rest of your landscape is dormant.

3. Integrating water features and rocks

Adding decorative rocks and sound into your New England garden is a fantastic way to enhance its texture and visual appeal. Whether you’re creat-

ing a peaceful pond, a flowing stream, or a rock garden that echoes the natural beauty of New England’s landscapes, these elements can transform your outdoor space into something truly special. And, with the proper planning, your water features and rocks will thrive through the seasons, adding beauty, movement, and texture to your landscape year-round.

Final Thoughts

With a little planning and foresight, it’s entirely possible

to create a landscape that’s not only beautiful but also resilient enough to handle New England’s fluctuating weather. By selecting the right plants, considering seasonal changes, adding water features and rocks, and protecting your garden from extreme weather, you’ll be well on your way to a landscape that thrives all year long.

Happy gardening!

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Greater Milford Ballet Company Presents The Nutcracker

You won’t want to miss this holiday season’s 44th annual “The Nutcracker” which returns to the Milford High School stage and is being presented by the Greater Milford Ballet Company on December 14 and 15, 2024 at 2:00 PM at Milford High School auditorium. The Greater Milford Ballet (GMBA) and the Deane School of Dance were founded by the late Miss Georgia

Deane.

Tickets are priced at \$25 and \$30. Ticket sales are available by calling the Deane Dance Studio at 508-473-3354 or at Charles River Bank located at 16 Hastings Street in Mendon. Tickets at Charles River Bank will be available from November 19 until December 14. Discount sales for Council on Aging and non-profit 501(c)3 groups of (10) or more

can be arranged by calling Colleen O’Brien at (508) 954-4756. Tickets will be sold at the auditorium depending on availability.

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Sports

Cogliano: A Captain Who's Upbeat About NHS Hockey

3-sport Athlete Great Ambassador For School, Community

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Tate Cogliano is not only a top-notch three-sport athlete at Natick High, but he's also a dynamic ambassador for his school and community.

The 18-year-old Cogliano, who's also a defensive midfielder in lacrosse, doesn't limit his activities to athletics. He's more. Much more.

Cogliano is a National Honor Society student who's



Tate Cogliano says he's "a defensive defenseman who's aggressive when moving the puck."

The 5-foot-6 senior, who was a captain in golf during the fall, now is gearing up for his fourth and final varsity season of hockey where he'll be counted on to play a major role for the Redhawks as they aim to improve on last year's 8-11-2 record. A dynamic defenseman who's also a captain, Cogliano is optimistic that NHS will qualify again for the state tourney after losing in the opening round to Catholic Memorial last year.

president of the NHS Mentorship Program. "We help incoming freshman with their transition from middle school to high school," he said.

Cogliano, who began playing hockey at age five in the Natick Comets instructional program, helped form the Junior Redhawks. "The three hockey captains this season started a hockey clinic for younger skaters," Cogliano noted. "It's run by varsity players and it aims to bring the Comets organization and

Natick High hockey closer. I love Natick and this is a way to give back to the community."

Natick's hockey coach, Karl Infanger, admires Cogliano's versatile leadership style.

"He's the first player to arrive at practice and the last to leave," Infanger said. "He's a true leader, always making sure his teammates are focused and motivated. He relies on tenacity, a high hockey IQ, sharp instincts, toughness, speed and quickness. He was instrumental last year, helping me establish my system in my first year back as the Redhawks' coach."

Infanger previously was Natick's head coach for five years but left for family reasons. His son and daughter were starting to play high school hockey, so he became head coach of Medway High's girls squad for five years.

Now in his second year at NHS, Infanger is pleased to have Cogliano on board for one more season. "He was a top-notch defenseman last year and now, as a captain, he leads by example and by being vocal," Infanger emphasized.

An effective passer, Cogliano is small but he's physical, especially in the corners where he usually wins control of the puck.

"I'm a defensive defenseman," he said. "I like an up-tempo attack and I'm aggressive when moving the puck. I enjoy playing defense because it's defense that's significant and wins games. The prime attributes for success on defense are mental toughness and intelligence."

Cogliano is goal-oriented and his team objectives this season will be challenging to achieve.

"I want us to win the Carey Division of the Bay State Conference," he said. "I also want us to qualify for the tourney, get a home game and advance as far as possible. I also want to end elimination in the first round. On a personal level, my goals are to contribute more on offense, be a league all-star, be the best captain I can be and make an impact on the program."

"All these goals are realistic because we're a talented and experienced team that's got eight players back, five of whom are defensemen. Last year, five of our 10 regular-season losses were by one goal."

Natick will open its season on Dec. 18 against Framingham at Chase Arena.

Cogliano firmly believes that Natick's other two senior captains will be prime-time contributors. They include center Sam Hubbard and wing/center Alex Peck.

"Sam is a great athlete who also was a captain in football," Cogliano said. "He led the team in goals as a freshman. A tremendous offensive player, his teammates all respect him. Alex is a captain in lacrosse who's a capable two-dimensional player (offense and defense) in hockey. A leader by example, he connects with younger players."

A fan of Infanger's, Cogliano admires his coach's knowledge of hockey and his ability to motivate players. "Coach Infanger knows strategy and he knows how to get the best efforts from his players," Cogliano offered.

During his sophomore season, Cogliano had the best game of his career. "We were playing Falmouth and the game was tied in the third period," he recalled. "It was a dogfight. We scored, then got an empty-net goal for a 6-4 win. I had a good effort, blocking seven shots and assisting on a goal."

His top thrill in hockey was a home-ice victory over arch-rival Framingham last year. "It's always a high-intensity game when we face our top rival," Cogliano said. "Great hockey is played and the environment is always tense. We were ahead, 2-1, then got an empty-net goal for a 3-1 victory. It's always fun to beat Framingham."

A native of Natick, Cogliano plans on majoring in business in college after graduation. "I'm considering about a half-dozen colleges," he said. "It's not likely that I'll play



A two-sport captain, Tate Cogliano is also a member of the National Honor Society.

sports at the collegiate level."

Calling his parents (Lisa and David) role models for their support and encouragement, Cogliano relies on a competitive philosophy of winning, reaching his potential and having fun. "If every player is striving to reach his potential, then winning will follow and that creates fun and enjoyment," he emphasized.

Life lesson can be learned from athletics and Cogliano agrees. "I've learned how to overcome adversity and be resilient, how to lead and be a quality teammate, how to manage my time and to be accountable," he noted.

Cogliano has a favorite pro hockey player and it's not surprising that it's retired Bruins forward Patrice Bergeron. "He was a dynamic leader and a classy competitor," Cogliano noted.

The same can be said of Cogliano. He, too, is classy and a top-notch leader.

Versatile and dedicated to athletics, Tate Cogliano is also the total package — an honor student who's a dynamic ambassador for his school and his community.

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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Frosty 5K Supports NHS CC/TF Boosters Club

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

Runners are preparing to get chilly at the third annual Frosty 5K on Dec. 8.

The fundraising race supports the Natick High School Cross Country and Track and Field Boosters Club.

Race committee member Brinley . Vickers said the funds raised are very important.

“The Frosty 5K is the main fundraiser for the Natick High School XC/TF Boosters club. We are one of the largest, if not the largest, boosters club, supporting over 500 student athletes, both men and women’s teams, JV and varsity, over three seasons – fall cross country, winter indoor track and field, and spring outdoor track and field.

“Supporting this many students is a big job. We run this race so we can help buy new and better equipment (just helped get more indoor track mats and a new team tent), provide senior scholarships, season banquets and athlete awards, needs-based help, supplemental coaches train-

ing, quest speakers series (athlete nutrition needs, healthy living, race mental health and psychology)... and more,” she said.

The route, which is a USATF certified 5K, starts in front of Natick High School and winds around and up to Pond Street, then around the neighborhood behind the high school, finishing at the same place it starts, in front of the high school.

So why support this athletic team? Vickers said there are plenty of reasons.

- there are no try outs and no cuts, any HS student can participate.
- teaches athletes how to work together as a team as well as thrive on an individual level – teaches team and individual work ethic at the same time
- so many different sports under one roof - long distance running, sprinting, hurdles, high jump, triple jump, long jump, pole vault, relays, shot put, javelin
- gives so many students an opportunity to be athletes all

year, instead of just one season, and with an opportunity to do more than one event.

- lots of opportunity for the varsity athletes to mentor the JV athletes, because they all



practice on the same track at the same time

All the work that is put into these teams, pays off.

NHS has state record holders in pole vault and many athletes who make it to post season every year, to Conference, Divisionals, State, and Regional. The Cross Country team just came back

from Nike Cross Regionals in NY where they placed 10th overall, out of all the teams that went from 7 states—the highest in history of the school. They were 2nd in Divisionals and 5th in All States.

“This is a team that really works hard,” said Vickers.

In addition to being very thankful for the local business sponsors, Vickers said they also enjoy their partnership with Spark Kindness.

“They are awesome, and it just makes sense to partner with an organization that brings free programming with a focus on supporting mental wellness, resilience, and connection,” she said.

The race, which drew nearly 600 runners last year, should exceed that this year. Those par-

ticipating came from all over the state as well as a few out of state.

“It’s a fun event that brings the whole community together. Families run together, friends run together, kids get a chance for community service hours by helping, people dress up. And, who doesn’t want to run outside in December in New England?” She said.

The race begins at 9 AM. Those who gather early to either run or cheer on the runners, can enjoy the hot chocolate and other snacks at the start of the race.

Vickers said, “We are always happy to have people line the race course to cheer the runners on!”

“We really see this as a fun community event, as much as it supports our student athletes, it just really is fun, bringing lots of people together,” she said.

For more information and to register, visit: <https://natickxcandtrack.org/frosty-5k/> Or <https://www.racewire.com/register.php?id=14155>

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11/15/2024	37 Fairway Cir.	\$625,000
11/14/2025	18 Belmore Rd.	\$975,000
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11/08/2024	19 Western Ave. #B	\$1.10 mil
11/08/2024	54 Park Ave.	\$715,000
11/07/2024	21 N. Main St.	\$666,000
11/06/2024	83 Felch Rd.	\$630,000
11/05/2024	3 Dotties Ct.	\$1.48 mil
11/04/2024	143 E. Central St.	\$563,000
11/04/2024	5 Village Rock Ln. #14	\$315,000
11/01/2024	44 Harwood Rd.	\$1.86 mil
10/31/2024	58 Beaverdam Rd.	\$690,000
10/31/2024	5 Post Oak Ln. #15	\$420,000
10/31/2024	9 Silver Hill Ln. #16	\$410,000
10/30/2024	54 Washington Ave.	\$1.20 mil
10/30/2024	23 Everett St.	\$855,000
10/29/2024	89 Kendall Ln.	\$1.16 mil
10/24/2024	314 Eliot St.	\$1.5 mil
10/23/2024	92 Woodland St. (0.92 acres)	\$625,000
10/22/2024	13 Park Ave.	\$1.19 mil
10/21/2024	39 Franconia Ave.	\$995,000
10/21/2024	20 Oak St.	\$815,000
10/21/2024	32 Florence St.	\$1.35 mil
10/21/2024	180 Boden Ln.	\$1.48 mil

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



The 5-bed, 5-bath 4,080-square-foot house at 13 Park Avenue in Natick recently sold for \$1,185,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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